

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AIDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northern Moor, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105519

Headteacher: Miss M Tansey

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Rodger
10347

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 6th October 2000

Inspection number: 193141

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary and nursery

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rackhouse Road
Northern Moor
Wythenshawe
Manchester

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Telephone number: 0161 9984126

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Tipping

Date of previous inspection: 10th – 13th December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs R Rodger (10347)	Registered inspector	English Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
Mr J Acaster (9970)	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Ms J Denton (23610)	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	
Miss J Peek (25281)	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Equality of opportunity English as an additional language	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
Mr C Brace (32065)	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Aidan's Catholic Primary School is a caring and thriving community. The school serves a socially mixed area with social and economic disadvantages. It is part of the Wythenshawe Education Action Zone. The school has 230 pupils on roll and there are 39 children attending the nursery. Eleven children attend part-time and 28 attend full-time. There are 45 pupils on the register of special educational needs which is above the national average, and no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The pupils come from predominantly white backgrounds. There are nine pupils with English as an additional language: they speak English fluently and do not require additional external support. An above average number of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average with a large number of children having delayed language development. By the time the children start school in the reception classes their attainment is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in raising standards which have improved consistently in the past three years. By the end of the juniors a much higher proportion of children than average achieve high standards. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to promote a caring, Catholic community in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability. The school has an average level of income and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are very high, largely as a result of the school's commitment to good teaching and all pupils achieving high standards.
- The school community is very orderly and pupils are very well behaved both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are keen and interested in their work; this contributes well to the good progress they make in lessons.
- Literacy and numeracy are promoted well in the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- A wide range of out of school activities is provided.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and is well supported by the senior staff in managing the school.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are well promoted.
- The school has a strong and caring Christian ethos.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved in writing at Key Stage 1.
- The lack of resources for literacy throughout the school, including the nursery.
- Involvement of the governing body in the long-term strategic management of the school.

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 December 1996. The previous inspection identified six key areas for development. Generally, the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection, apart from improving writing at Key Stage 1. Improvement in English, mathematics and science standards at the end of the juniors has been considerable. This is due largely to the very good teaching which is provided at the end of the juniors. The quality of teaching was good for children under five in the last inspection. It is now judged to be satisfactory overall with some good teaching in the reception classes where the children generally make good progress in their learning. A teacher in the school has been given additional responsibilities for gifted and talented pupils which is contributing to the high standards attained at the end of Key Stage 2. Parents are now more fully involved in their children's learning through the home/school and homework policy. Three parents have been trained as classroom assistants.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-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	A	C	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	C	A	A	
Science	B	A	B	A	

The results above are of a group of pupils no longer at the school. The 2000 national test results are now published. They indicate that the standards achieved at the end of the juniors have improved since 1999 in English, mathematics and science. An above average proportion of pupils has attained the highest levels (Level 5). Standards in the 2000 national tests are well above average in relation to all schools. There was no comparative data available to compare the results with schools with similar characteristics at the time of the inspection. Standards in lessons continue to be above national averages at the end of the juniors in English, mathematics and science. Standards achieved at the end of the infants are high in mathematics and science. They are slightly below national averages in reading and writing in the 2000 national tests. Standards in lessons are slightly better than this with pupils working in line with national averages. However, standards in English have declined slightly in the past two years at the end of the infants and could be higher than they are. The school exceeded the targets set for improvement in English and mathematics last year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their work and social life together.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are almost always attentive and well-behaved in lessons and orderly around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Personal development is good.
Attendance	Good; better than the national average and improved since the previous inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the 55 lessons observed teaching was always, at least, satisfactory. In 16 per cent of lessons teaching was very good and in 36 per cent it was good. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils. They have high expectations and pupils are expected to work productively. Teachers do not waste time in lessons. They generally teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. At times the pace in lessons is too slow in the infants and pupils are not given enough time to work independently, particularly in literacy lessons. High attaining pupils are particularly well provided for and so are pupils with special educational needs. They make good progress. Pupils learn effectively because they are well motivated and keen in lessons which are interesting and frequently challenging. Pupils with English as an additional language make the same rate of progress as all other pupils and are well supported in school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A wide range of out of school activities and visitors to the school enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well-supported and make good progress.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	Satisfactory. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual development is a strength of the school which has a strong, caring Christian ethos. Provision for moral development is very good and provision for social development is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are valued. They are very carefully encouraged to have good behaviour and learning habits and their academic performance is checked well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and management by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They both have a very strong commitment to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The recently appointed chair of governors has a good grasp of the day-to-day issues in the school including standards and curricular matters. The governing body has not been involved in deciding the long-term strategic direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has addressed the issue of raising standards well and has a good understanding of the areas for development. Staff carry out rigorous self-evaluation of their work.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The headteacher and governing body are prudent in their management of financial resources. They always take into account best value principles before taking major expenditure decisions. The computer suite is under-used and there are some weaknesses in resources to teach literacy.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed both with qualified teachers and learning support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory. Resources for literacy are inadequate in the nursery and to support teachers throughout the school in their teaching of reading and writing.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are very supportive and approachable • Teaching is good • Children are expected to behave well and to achieve • Behaviour is good; the school maintains a very good ethos • The school is very well led and managed • Their children like school very much. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority of parents would like homework to be increased for more able children • Parents would like more information about out of school activities.

The inspection findings strongly support the positive views of the parents. They disagree with the negative views; an appropriate amount of homework is provided and the school holds a good range of out of school activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. By the end of the Foundation Stage children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning and exceed these in some aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development due to the good teaching in the reception classes. The last inspection found that standards by the time the children started school in the reception classes were above average. Standards are therefore lower now than at the time of the last inspection. There are some missed opportunities to teach children about the basic conventions of print in the nursery. The rate of progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is generally good in the reception classes. Children identify initial sounds in familiar stories, they recognise and write their name and listen attentively. Older children in the nursery can count more than ten and begin to use words such as 'more than' when talking about quantities. Children in the reception class learn that however the same number of objects are rearranged the number always stays the same.
2. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school make good progress against prior attainment and towards the targets set for them. Early identification of pupils' needs ensures they have good support to come close to national averages of attainment by the end of both key stages.
3. Attainment in the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 shows an improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the national average since 1999 in English, mathematics and science. In relation to the 2000 national averages standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average. There is no comparative data available yet to compare standards with schools with similar characteristics, but it is likely that standards will be well above the national average for similar schools. About one third of pupils achieved the higher levels in the 1999 national tests and a similar proportion attained the higher levels in 2000. Trends in standards achieved in national tests shows that standards have been consistently well above the national averages, apart from two years ago when there was a slight decline, caused by a particularly difficult cohort of pupils.
4. At Key Stage 1 in 2000 national tests there was a slight decline in the proportion of pupils achieving the national averages in reading and writing and a similar decline in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Standards are slightly below national averages in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics and science are above national averages in 2000 national tests. In 1999 standards were above average in reading in relation to similar schools and well above average in writing and mathematics. Trends over time at Key Stage 1 show a slight decline in the past two years in reading and writing. Examination of work completed by pupils last year indicates that too little independent writing is expected of the pupils. There is a similar pattern in work completed so far this year. Pupils are not allowed to write independently in their English books. Standards are not as high as they should be at the end of Key Stage 1 in English.
5. The school has exceeded its targets for English and mathematics for 2000 and is on line to exceed them again at the end of 2001. The targets set for mathematics were unambitious. The school is in a strong position to set more challenging targets. Targets achieved this year have exceeded the local education authority targets considerably.
6. Standards in lessons at Key Stage 2 are generally in line with the national test results for 2000. Standards in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 are closer to the national

average than the results of the 2000 national tests. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Achievement is good. Pupils can identify the ways in which author's use language to create effect, for example through the use of alliterative phrases. They redraft their work to improve grammar, punctuation and sentence construction. They take part regularly in whole-school drama productions. For example, pupils use character, action and narrative well combined with singing to convey social issues and emotions in a class assembly on children's rights.

7. In mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils use mental skills to change fractions to equivalent decimals and multiply and divide 100 or 1000 to the correct decimal place. Pupils solve problems from a range of real life situations which involve working out costs or distance when travelling on visits and undertaking surveys of traffic. They can add, subtract, divide and multiply with numbers over 100, including the use of decimals to two and three places. Higher attaining pupils competently use numbers over 1000 and include the use of brackets. All measure quantities by percentage and work out ratio and proportion of numbers. All are able to find co-ordinates in the first quarter of a graph and more able use negative numbers. They measure angles accurately to the nearest degree.
8. In science at Key Stage 2, pupils said that they are given more responsibility for recording their own work, for example in a diary showing plant growth. They can use a key well to help classify plants and carry out practical investigations. Pupils record their own investigations effectively instead of copying from the board. This practice and the good preparation provided prior to the national tests contributes significantly to the high standards achieved. Since the previous inspection standards have improved in mathematics and science at both key stages and have remained broadly the same in English. The standards of the high attainers in Year 6 are higher than at the time of the last inspection.
9. Standards in information and communication technology are average at both key stages, and there is a good rate of progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. Older pupils confidently combine text and graphics. They make appropriate choices when designing the most effective page layout, trying out different font styles to suit the purpose, such as for a poster or greetings card. They collect and analyse data, such as Year 4's favourite pets, and use different types of graphs, including pie charts and block graphs, to display their results. Key Stage 1 pupils can confidently use the mouse and keyboard. They know how to load, type in text, save and print their work. They work independently to find information. Standards in music at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. In geography, history, physical education, art and design and design and technology standards are average at both key stages. Standards in the foundation subjects have remained the same as they were during the last inspection.
10. Standards are higher in the core subjects. This is because the work provided for the pupils is more challenging and teachers generally have higher expectations of pupils. They give a high priority to teaching English and mathematics and make good use of the national frameworks to support their teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils like their school. They generally behave well and enjoy very good relationships with each other and their teachers. Their personal development is good. Attendance is above the national average. In most of these respects standards are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

12. Pupils enjoy their lessons in school. They like its orderliness and sociability. Key Stage 2 pupils very much look forward to the activities it provides outside lessons. Many pupils, for example, enjoy attending the weekly after-school jazz club. Those towards the end of Key Stage 2 regret not having more things to do at lunchtime.
13. Pupils' behaviour is rarely unsatisfactory in lessons. It is normally good, even though the school has some challenging pupils. Behaviour is often very good, when it is characterised by high levels of attention and keenness in lessons in response to very good teaching. Pupils are generally interested in their work, listen well, and show sustained concentration on their tasks. Many enjoy activities that stretch them, like mathematics, and take much pride from real achievements, such as dramatic performance with costume and make-up, in assembly.
14. Behaviour around the school is generally orderly and good-natured. Pupils are very friendly. They are frequently polite and are always pleasant to speak with. A lively and free atmosphere prevails at play times. Canteen assistants speak approvingly of pupils as being very well-mannered. No instances of oppressive behaviour were observed during the inspection week. Parents report that known cases of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The behavioural expectations of the school are very well established. No pupil has ever been excluded. Whole-school assemblies are treated as significant occasions and pupils are well disciplined. The pupils respond to what they see and hear with delightful sincerity.
15. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils willingly co-operate with their teachers and with each other. They enjoy working together in pairs or groups. There is a comradely feeling of community within the school, based on shared values. Pupils reflect upon what they do, even at the level of considering whether a comb is rough. The pleasure they derive from own clothes days is closely associated with the desire to find ways to raise money to help others. School and personal property is treated with respect. Personal development thus has many good features, and the school naturally ensures that pupils imbibe Christian principles of personal and social responsibility. It is a pity, therefore, that in practice pupils experience rather fewer in the way of day-to-day responsibilities or opportunities to help around the school than are commonly found elsewhere.
16. Attendance has improved considerably since the previous inspection, when lateness was a feature. Punctuality is now generally good, with only a few individuals arriving after lessons have started. In the most recent year the school's target for attendance of 95 per cent was very pleasingly attained. This standard is above the likely national average: maintenance of this would strongly benefit both the reputation of the school and the achievements of its pupils. There are several parents who take their children away for holiday during term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Overall the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is consistently good at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music and physical education. It is good at Key Stage 1 in mathematics, science and music. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is generally satisfactory and often good, particularly in the reception classes. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in the nursery. It was judged good in the previous inspection. At times the younger children in the nursery are expected to listen in large groups for too long. Opportunities to teach children about the conventions of reading are missed. Teaching was very good in 16 per cent of lessons, good in 36 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in all other lessons. The proportion of very good teaching has improved since the previous inspection and there is no unsatisfactory teaching now. Overall, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
18. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported by class teachers and support staff in both key stages, but also by extra support from the local education authority support teacher and assistant. Key Stage 1 support is effective within the class to guide pupils to achieve at a similar level to others in the class. In Key Stage 2, classroom support in literacy and numeracy is well supplemented and planned for individuals by small withdrawal groups, supported by the local authority teacher and assistant.
19. The significant strengths of the teaching include the management of pupils, the teaching of basic skills, high expectations and challenges set, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Support staff are used effectively to support groups of pupils with specific learning needs. Pupils work productively, are interested and keen to succeed. This feature and the good knowledge and understanding of the national strategies contributes to the overall good rate of learning by the end of Key Stage 2. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils effectively learned how to find equivalent values for percentages because of the teacher's good use of the spreadsheet resources and targeted questions to keep those not responding involved in the lesson. Lesson plans are completed for the week and evaluated weekly by the staff. The evaluations are generally good and identify next steps for individual pupil's learning. This information is usefully carried forward to the next week's planning to ensure that work provided is more closely matched to the needs of individual pupils. This was a key issue in the previous inspection. There has been good improvement in addressing this key issue. Relationships and discipline are good.
20. There are some minor weaknesses in teaching. In English lessons, expectations are occasionally too low and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to work independently. At times, they complete time-filling tasks such as colouring in worksheets, especially at Key Stage 1. The pace in lessons is too slow and pupils copy too much from the board. At such times the rate of learning of the high attainers is less marked. Marking of pupils' work does not always identify ways to help pupils improve their work.
21. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are generally well taught. Planning in these subjects is detailed and good use is generally made of daily assessments to plan work appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. High attaining pupils are taught well, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The top 20 per cent of pupils in Year 6 have been identified as gifted and talented and will receive additional support in the near future as part of the Education

Action Zone. Support staff are deployed effectively. Pupils with English as an additional language are taught well

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

22. The school provides a stimulating and broad range of good quality learning opportunities for all pupils. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is appropriately planned and covers the six areas of learning. With the help of the local education authority, the nursery and reception class staff are working to a detailed curriculum plan which identifies what children should learn at three, four and five years old. Good account is taken of the outdoor environment to promote learning.
23. The school exceeds statutory requirements for the curriculum at both key stages as it enhances the curriculum by teaching Italian, as well as all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. It has effective strategies for and places a high priority on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This is shown by the well above average results the school achieves in the national tests, and in pupils' good standards of literacy and numeracy across a wide range of other subjects such as science and history. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their reading skills to research different inventions and write up their findings independently on the computer. Pupils record their investigations by using their numeracy skills to draw different types of graphs, as shown by Year 5 pupils' traffic survey in Llandudno.
24. Since the last inspection the quality of planning has improved and the school has fully acted upon this key issue. It now provides clear guidance for all subjects on how it is going to cover the curriculum throughout the school, based appropriately on national and local authority guidance. Teachers clearly identify in their planning what pupils should know, understand and can do, and ensure that work is set at appropriate levels to meet the needs of all pupils, including those having special educational needs. There is effective progression of learning throughout the school. All pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and opportunities to succeed in them. Pupils with English as an additional language are given appropriate extra support if necessary.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly for literacy, but a few children miss the same lesson from withdrawal groups in the afternoon and would benefit from a rota system to avoid this. Pupils with a clear identified need of help are provided with an effective individual education plan to support their learning. These are regularly reviewed and updated with realistic new targets set. Planned activities for higher attaining pupils are being addressed through more challenging work in class and support from the Education Action Zone. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
26. The school enriches pupils' learning by providing a good range of activities at different times outside the school day. For example, it offers a range of sports to boys and girls, jazz and Irish dance, and computer club for parents with a crèche provided for children. Parents are appreciative of these opportunities. Pupils sing in the school choir to a good standard, including at school musical productions and public concerts, such as 'Showcase' in the Royal College of Music. The exchange visits between the school and an Italian school in Bologna, develop their understanding of European life well. Very good use is made of planned educational visits to enhance learning opportunities. For example, pupils visit Wythenshawe Hall and environmental centre.
27. The provision for personal and social education, including health, drug and sex education is good. It has a positive influence on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, such as increasing awareness of safety in the environment by inviting in the railway police to

talk about the dangers of playing near railway lines. The school won a gold award in the Manchester area for promoting health awareness. Health education is planned carefully. Although much work appropriately takes the form of discussion, a scrutiny of pupils' health files shows that too much time is spent colouring in worksheets. A strength of the provision is the very good use of the specialist knowledge of a wide range of visitors. For example, the visiting community dental nurse very effectively taught pupils in the nursery and Year 3 about the importance of caring for their teeth. Pupils' understanding of citizenship is enhanced by activities such as fund-raising for charities.

28. Links with the community are very good and positively contribute to pupils' learning. The school's close links with the church and parish enhances their spiritual and social development. The local library promotes the enjoyment of reading well by holding storytelling sessions and welcomes pupils on visits. Since the last inspection the school has successfully bid to be a member of the Wythenshawe Education Action Zone which includes partnership with other local schools, local employers and colleges. One of its main aims is to improve pupils' learning. Science workshops for pupils and parents are planned in the near future through the 'Inspire' scheme set up by an oil company. The Hallé Orchestra and a concert with local schools offer opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills of singing and performing. A large store promoted the health award scheme.
29. The school has satisfactory relationships with partner institutions overall. The school has had a long association with local initial training institutions. It has no links with pre-school groups feeding into the nursery, but has good links with other local schools for curriculum support, the Education Action Zone and to arrange sports events. These close links ensure that pupils' progress smoothly onto the next stage of their education from nursery through to secondary school. Teachers meet, arrange visits and transfer records appropriately. Parents of the children in the Foundation Stage spoke very positively about the arrangements for the transition of children from the nursery to the reception classes.
30. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the ethos of the school. It is fostered with care and thought thus providing a secure environment in which pupils learn to co-operate and to form good relationships with adults and each other. The Christian ethos is an integral part of school life. Assemblies provide pupils with a sense of belonging and community and are occasions when adults and children spend time together reflecting and sharing their faith. The pupils take part fully on these occasions taking themes from the curriculum to reinforce the Christian ethos. In lessons, the pupils reflect the school's Christian ethos by trying their best in everything as an offering to God. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good.
31. Adults working in the school provide good role models and pupils respond positively to these examples. Good behaviour is promoted through the use and display of individual reward charts and codes of behaviour. The school nurtures a sense of togetherness within which good relationships and respect for others is an expectation of normal behaviour. In this respect the school's well-established tradition of high quality expressive arts is a very strong element in the personal experience and development of many pupils. Although early in the year, pupils in Year 6 were already able to sing and act in a full school assembly in front of parents with very commendable confidence and aplomb. The theme was a powerful one related to Lord Shaftesbury and children's rights.
32. Pupils respond well to the emphasis placed on good behaviour. Classrooms have the

code of behaviour on display and positive behaviour is rewarded through a merit award system. Pupils work and play together, co-operating well in lessons and extra-curricular activities. The after-school clubs are well attended and the pupils appreciate the efforts of the staff providing these opportunities. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility.

33. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. This is generally reflected well in their behaviour and conduct in lessons. Discussions in lessons focus on values of honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice. For example, the work completed in history in Year 6 helped pupils to understand the role of significant historical figures in seeking justice for under-represented groups in society. In Key Stage 1, stories are used to explain moral dilemmas and to help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong.
34. Links with Bologna in Italy and Italian language lessons continue to take place. The encouragement of the 'arts', including music and drama have positive benefits for the pupils and the school has a strong tradition of choral performance work. Few opportunities are provided for the study of other cultural traditions and faiths. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. Some aspects are very good, such as the promotion and monitoring of good attendance and behaviour. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is good, and this is well used in shaping the detailed curriculum. All these represent improvements on the findings of the previous inspection. St Aidan's is a warm and caring Christian community which is successful in providing good personal and academic support for all its pupils.
36. Because of the overall quality of their school life, pupils are keen to attend. The school reminds parents frequently about the importance of regular and prompt attendance. Absences which have not been accounted for by 10 a.m. are promptly followed up by telephone. The educational welfare officer personally monitors registers every fortnight and investigates matters of concern drawn to her attention. Through these measures both absence and lateness have been much improved. Procedures are very good.
37. The school expects a high standard of behaviour. In the foundation classes of nursery and reception, children aged under five are supportively encouraged into good social attitudes. Within the subsequent key stages staff and pupils have regard to a small set of school rules. These are supplemented in some classes by a further set discussed by the pupils. Teachers are generally very consistent in their alertness and care in managing behaviour. The headteacher maintains keen oversight at all times. Any instances of poor behaviour are quickly picked up and firm action taken. Incidents are recorded, and parents are involved as necessary.
38. All other arrangements for the welfare of pupils are good. Staff know and supervise pupils well. Through their interest and care they provide good role models. Pupils' awareness of health and safety is well promoted within lessons and through the visits of a wide variety of outside specialists. Pupils can exercise a healthy eating choice at lunch. Medical matters are well handled, but a written note to parents could usefully record accidental bumps to the head or other accidents of significance. Good child protection arrangements are well established. Appropriate emergency procedures and risk assessments are undertaken. The governing body, through a committee, maintains a satisfactory overview of health and safety.

39. In general personal support and guidance to pupils is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils as individuals. They are keen to include everyone, and to adapt what is done sufficiently to match their developing capabilities and talents. There are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility around the school. The practical development of this in a wider range of responsibilities round the school, and perhaps a school council, could provide an excellent springboard towards citizenship.
40. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. Children under five are assessed on entry to the nursery and again before they leave the nursery in addition to the ongoing assessment taking place informally in sessions. The tick list approach used in the nursery has some weaknesses and is not effective as a means of building up a profile of what the children can do at various points throughout their time in the nursery. In the reception class, statutory baseline assessment is used well to analyse children's needs. Systems to assess standards are effective at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school and local education authority work together well to check the achievements of all pupils in the National Curriculum tests, including boys and girls and gifted and talented pupils. This information is well used to ensure their needs are met, for example, the school examined why boys did less well in writing in the juniors. An effective practice is when teachers match test results, other than National Curriculum tests, against standards expected for pupils' ages, rather than, for example, simply recording the reading book stage reached on a scheme. Results are used well. For instance, to inform planning, identify pupils who need extra support and for making up literacy and numeracy sets. Teachers maintain thorough individual pupil profiles to record progress with termly comments in all aspects of their work, behaviour and personal development. In mathematics, teachers are improving their assessment practice by recording pupils who have not achieved the required learning objectives as part of their weekly curriculum subject evaluation. A slight concern is that assessment systems are becoming too numerous for teachers to manage effectively.
41. Pupils with special educational needs have their needs assessed accurately. They have appropriate individual education plans with clearly defined, achievable targets, to use as tools to guide support staff and improve pupils' learning. The special educational needs register is regularly reviewed and updated. Pupils' academic progress is recorded in detail in annual reports with targets for future improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all aspects of school life, including out of school activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents respect and are pleased by the standards set by the school. They strongly consider the teaching to be good. Their children are expected always to work hard and to achieve well. Parents approve of the fact that good behaviour is required and obtained. They believe the school teaches appropriate values and promotes good all-round progress. They value the school's general approachability and find that any problems raised concerning their children are dealt with very quickly and effectively. They recognise the school to be well led and managed. Their children are unhesitating in liking their school life. All these favourable opinions are confirmed by the inspection.
43. Very few parents have criticisms to make. A minority disagrees with the homework arrangements. A similar number would like more information about the activities provided outside lessons. The inspection considers that what the school provides by way of homework is similar to that expected in many primary schools. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are judged to be much better than in many similar

schools.

44. Information provided to parents is generally satisfactory. The school prospectus is attractively presented. It contains helpful descriptions of the curriculum and explanations of the technical terms encountered as children make progress through the school. The governors' annual report is very informative and warm in tone. Newsletters detail school events and matters of concern.
45. Parents are kept informed about their children's work and progress by a variety of means. They receive, for instance, a brochure with school topics and a list of activities offered outside lessons. Parents are often enabled to keep an eye and comment on progress through their children's reading and homework records. Meetings with the class teacher to discuss progress are held twice a year, but teachers are usually readily available to discuss any concerns at the end of each school day.
46. Teachers present a written report on each child's work at the end of the academic year. Some parents are concerned that the computerisation introduced this year may have led to too much standardisation. The inspection sampling indicates that, while some similarities in the language used occur from time to time, the school's academic reports do closely reflect each pupil as an individual. The quality of the writing is generally good. It reflects what the child knows, understands, and can do in each subject, often recommending what he or she should concentrate on in order to improve. The legal requirements of reporting on the National Curriculum are not, however, fully met. Two subjects (art and design and technology) are inadequately covered.
47. Parents are fully involved in decisions that affect their children with special educational needs. Information is provided for all parents by the school and it works closely with parents to provide support and expertise in identification of special educational needs and planned programmes to aid achievement.
48. The school provides good opportunities for parents to learn about teaching. Most recently the new and important national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been explained at meetings. The school's experience is that disappointingly few parents attend such events. Meetings concerning the National Curriculum tests are better attended. Most parents come to the parents' evenings to look over and discuss the work their child has been able to do. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and carers is satisfactory.
49. The previous inspection identified the need for the school to build on the effective links with parents achieved in the nursery by increasing the accessibility of the staff to parents. This has been achieved successfully.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership for the school. She is held in very high regard by staff, parents and governors. There is a strong ethos of caring and attention to maintaining high standards of behaviour and attainment. At all times pupils are encouraged to achieve their best. All the issues identified in the last inspection have been successfully addressed, apart from improving writing at Key Stage 1. For example, since the previous inspection the headteacher has increased the responsibilities of the curriculum co-ordinators so they now have revised job descriptions and generally carry out their roles and responsibilities very well. She is well supported by a senior management team. Although senior management team meetings are held infrequently, she has more regular meetings with the recently appointed deputy headteacher who has a significant role to play in the financial management of the school. Co-ordinators have their own delegated budgets which are administered and overseen efficiently by the deputy headteacher.
51. The recently appointed chair of the governing body has a good grasp of the immediate concerns for the school. As a recent appointment he has had no involvement in constructing the school improvement plan, nor had the rest of the governing body. The headteacher shoulders the major responsibilities of the school and keeps the governing body informed through her very detailed reports. The chair acknowledges that the role of the governing body has to change to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to help shape the longer-term direction for the school. A committee of governors has been appointed to take on this responsibility, but is in the early stages of this role. Members of the governing body have attended training on performance management and now have a good understanding of the requirements. A recently appointed parent governor has been effective in gathering the support of parents to improve the nursery environment. In other ways this parent is effectively encouraging parents to be more involved in the work of the school. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection where the lack of parental involvement in the infant and junior departments of the school was identified as a weakness.
52. There are rigorous and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. These operate successfully at several levels. A system of self-evaluation is in place and working well. Co-ordinators monitor medium-term planning and the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator for English and the Foundation Stage has a large area of responsibility and is consequently less effective in carrying out some aspects of her role. Teachers evaluate their teaching weekly and frequently identify the next steps for pupils' learning. The headteacher diligently monitors the weekly lesson plans and evaluations. The literacy and numeracy governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the national strategies. They have attended training with the staff, and the numeracy governor has effectively used his professional knowledge to support the mathematics co-ordinator. The governor for special educational needs meets the special educational needs co-ordinator regularly and is well informed of the progress of pupils. The governors are knowledgeable about target-setting and the need to raise the attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. There is good involvement of the governors in monitoring of the curriculum. The headteacher has appraised all staff and set appropriate, individual targets to improve their teaching in the past and is now waiting for performance management arrangements to start following training for the governors later in the term. The governing body has not yet set performance targets for the headteacher.
53. The schools' management of special educational needs is good. There are clear procedures for identification of concerns and all teachers are fully informed of these.

The procedures run smoothly and follow all official guidelines. Good use is made of outside agencies to enhance the school's provision and all adults involved meet regularly to review progress. There is a fully informed governor to support this aspect of work, who participates in information meetings with the co-ordinator of special needs.

54. All aspects of the work of the school reflect the school's mission statement to value and promote a strong Christian ethos in which all pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate fully in society. There is a strong, shared commitment to improvement. Standards are high at the end of Key Stage 2, yet they are below average when the children enter the nursery. The school therefore adds significant educational value. The school's aims are reflected well in the achievements of pupils. The school has worked well to identify areas for improvement, particularly in relation to improving pupils' attainment. The rate of progress as pupils go through the school is good overall and particularly good at Key Stage 2. The headteacher and staff are dedicated to providing pupils with a rich, rewarding and fulfilling experience. In this respect they have been very successful. The school has exceeded the curricular targets set for the 2000 tests by a considerable amount. They have recognised the need to improve the performance of high attaining pupils and this has been done with considerable success; almost one third of Year 6 pupils achieved above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science last year. The additional support provided to the school through its involvement in the local Education Action Zone is proving useful in raising the attainment of gifted and talented pupils.
55. A range of sources of additional funding have increased resources to the school. The school improvement plan cautiously allocates spending priorities. Curriculum co-ordinators each have budget for their subjects and make requests for resources through the deputy headteacher who cross references spending requests to priorities in the school improvement plan. The governing body has acquired support to assist with financial management. The office information technology system not in place at the time of the previous inspection is now running and overseen by the finance committee of the governing body. Resources are purchased after consultation and comparison to ensure best value for money. There is currently a large surplus in the budget which is earmarked for projected improvements to the buildings in the near future.
56. The teaching staff are more than adequate in number and appropriately qualified. They are effectively deployed to teach the National Curriculum. The school buildings are in a good state of repair and decoration and the accommodation is adequate for the needs of the curriculum. The attractive displays in the corridors and classrooms contribute to a welcoming and purposeful atmosphere. The school is clean, tidy and free from litter and graffiti. The grounds are attractive and pleasant but lack grassy marked areas for games.
57. Resources are generally adequate to support the planned curriculum. However, there are insufficient good quality story and picture books in the nursery and for parents to read at home with their children. Since the last inspection an appropriate range of fiction books has been purchased and these are effectively used to develop reading skills especially for the older pupils. There is a recently installed computer suite, but this resource is underused.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The headteacher, staff and governing body should

- Improve standards of writing at Key Stage 1 by:
 - providing the pupils with more opportunities to write independently;
 - reducing the number of worksheet-based tasks;
 - providing pupils with writing frameworks to encourage their independent writing;
 - raising expectations and increasing the rate of learning in lessons;
 - teaching handwriting skills, in addition to the daily literacy hour;
 - including planned opportunities to write in subjects other than English.

(Paragraphs 4, 20, 72, 74, 78, 82, 84)

- Improve the resources for literacy throughout the school by:
 - increasing the number and improving the quality of picture and story books in the nursery;
 - providing more resources for shared writing and reading.

(Paragraphs 57, 65, 67)

- Continue to involve the governing body in the long-term strategic management of the school by:
 - including the governing body in the construction of the school improvement plan.

(Paragraph 51)

Minor Issues

- Review the distribution of staff responsibilities to provide time for the Foundation Stage co-ordinator to carry out her responsibilities more effectively. *(52, 84)*
- Increase the use of the computer suite. *(57, 125)*
- Provide pupils with greater responsibility around the school. *(15, 32, 39)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	36	48	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	230
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	91

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	21	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	11
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	29	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (80)	84 (93)	100 (100)
	National	82 (78)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	9
	Girls	20	21	21
	Total	29	32	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (96)	100 (98)	94 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	23	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	20
	Girls	11	9	10
	Total	28	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (74)	78 (53)	83 (77)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (63)	81 (64)	81 (69)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	222
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	38

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	533,379
Total expenditure	539,516
Expenditure per pupil	1,692
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,217
Balance carried forward to next year	43,030

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	271
Number of questionnaires returned	125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	38	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	50	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	49	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	46	10	2	12
The teaching is good.	60	38	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	50	7	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	54	2	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	61	38	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	41	11	3	17

Other issues raised by parents

One parent asked to have the nursery open at 9.00 rather than 9.10 to be in line with the school. Parents were pleased with the transition between nursery and reception classes and also between the junior and the secondary school. Parents were unanimous in their view that the headteacher and staff are excellent: the headteacher is always available to discuss problems which are dealt with immediately.

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

59. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning with above average attainment in some aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematics. The last inspection found that standards by the time the children started school, at the beginning of the reception year, were above average in all areas of learning. Standards are therefore lower now than at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching then was judged to be good overall; it is now generally satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage with good teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development in the reception classes.
60. The Foundation Stage is organised into three groups of children; one in the nursery building and two in reception classes. There are effective transition arrangements from the nursery into the reception classes which parents value. Parents are closely involved in the nursery and work together to improve the inside of the building. They have raised money to purchase a fixed climbing frame.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Standards are generally below what is expected normally of children the same age when they enter the nursery. The generally satisfactory rate of learning means that by the time they reach the end of the reception year children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals. The rate of learning is good in the reception classes which means there is good progress in the second half of the Foundation Stage. They will have learned many of the rules of school: the difference between right and wrong; how to listen and to take turns; independence in caring for themselves; an understanding of their own culture and beliefs as well as those of other people.
62. The children in the nursery are not yet aged four but are already showing increasing levels of independence as they carry out activities. For example, as they come into the nursery they select what they want to do and are familiar with the routines of putting on aprons to paint. They are curious and watchful of new experiences which is a typical three-year-old response. They enter the nursery willingly, but very few children can express their needs and feelings appropriately. Behaviour is sound and the children are beginning to understand what they can and cannot do. Relationships with other children and staff are developing well. The children are passive when presented with new experiences until directed by an adult. Adults give a high priority to promoting the social well-being of the children and encouraging them to feel safe and secure in the nursery. This area of learning is given high priority in the teaching which is good overall.
63. Children in the Foundation Stage have good attitudes to learning. They are keen and can concentrate well when their interest is engaged. For instance, during the first part of a literacy session the children worked hard to understand the new sounds introduced. They are aware of the consequences of their actions and have generally learned how to behave in lessons. During a listening walk the children were very well behaved. They share well, particularly during story time.

Communication, language and literacy

64. The youngest children have poor speaking skills. Standards are generally below what is expected of children the same age on entry to the nursery. By the time they enter the reception class standards are closer to those of children the same age elsewhere in reading, writing and speaking and listening, but they are still low. They make good progress in the reception class in their rate of learning. It is likely that they will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year with some high attainment in reading.
65. The children are beginning to listen to and join in with favourite rhymes, but generally they are not yet able to sustain the concentration required to do this. Frequent opportunities are provided for listening to stories in small groups. The younger children do not yet discuss the characters in the story. Older children drew pictures of pirates after reading a story and began to understand that pirates wore different clothes. Opportunities are provided daily for the children to explore the outdoor area and to discuss what they see. Such practical activities are helpful in promoting effective language learning. A high priority is given to promoting children's confidence in writing. Children are encouraged to write and trace their name from name cards as well as to recognise their name at different times of the day. Older children in the nursery provided a good range of words such as 'crunchy', 'delicious' and 'juicy' when they observed a range of fruits. The children are encouraged to write their names on their work. Story times are used to interest the younger children in the content of the story, but insufficient emphasis is given to teaching the children that text goes from left to right, that words are read or to draw the children's attention to the text on the page. Overall, the quality of teaching in this area of learning in the nursery is sound.
66. The children in the reception classes follow the structure of the full literacy hour because a minority of the pupils in each class are a year older. This is appropriate because the children demonstrate their learning of the sounds of familiar and unfamiliar words as the lessons progressed. They identify the rhymes in different words and enjoy listening to poems. In a good lesson, a well-resourced classroom full of different alphabet displays and tables targeted for specific activities was ready prior to the start of the lesson. Effective questioning, before the shared text was read, made sure the children listened closely to the rhyming sounds of some words in the poem. With prompting, several pupils could identify the 'ight' rime. A few pupils did not grasp this but the teacher persevered and when 'shed' and 'led' appeared together, she asked other children to name the rhyming sound which they were able to do. The teacher's high expectations contributed to a good rate of learning, particularly for the more able children in the class. The next section of the lesson again effectively focused on encouraging the children to listen to the sounds in a familiar word and provide an alternative word with the same rhyming string. This activity was well matched to the needs of all children. The overall teaching of communication, language and literacy is good in the reception classes and satisfactory in the nursery. A strength of the teaching in the reception class was the good match of independent group activities to the range of abilities in the class and high expectations of the children. Weekly planning and review of what the children have learned is a contributory factor to the good rate of learning. The classroom support assistant is well-deployed. By the end of the reception year the children are likely to achieve high levels of attainment.
67. The resources to promote early reading development are limited in the nursery. There are too few books accessible to the children. Those that are accessible tend to be in one room and not available during the children's free choice time.

Mathematical development

68. Standards of the younger children are low on entry to the nursery, but have improved by the time they start in the reception class and the children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage with some high attainment in numeracy. On entry to the nursery the children are provided with access to a good range of number games and begin to learn to sing number rhymes with confidence. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory. The teaching generally is effective in supporting individual pupils. For example, effective teacher intervention encouraged a child to say whether there were 'a lot more' or not as he counted beads. Opportunities like this were too infrequent as a lot of time is spent on managerial aspects of the nursery day. The nursery nurse is well deployed and effective in supporting children's learning. The children are involved in activities in which they count to five and are beginning to learn that numbers have different values. Children in the reception classes follow the structure of the daily mathematical lesson. For example, in a good lesson the children effectively built on their previous understanding of numbers to five by learning that however the same number of objects are rearranged the number always stays the same. Effective questioning was used to check the children's understanding and thinking. Consequently, they learned the vocabulary associated with more and less than, in a practical way. Teaching in the reception classes is good. By the time the children leave the Foundation Stage they are likely to be achieving high standards.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Standards are generally average on entry to the nursery and remain so throughout the reception year. The school is using the Foundation Stage curriculum guidelines provided by the local education authority which effectively identifies how the nationally recommended stages for learning can be enhanced through access to the outdoor environment. Overall, teaching is satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage in this area of learning. Many opportunities are provided for the nursery and reception children to explore and investigate both indoors and outdoors. For example, nursery children explored the area around the school to identify some familiar features. The children are encouraged to talk about what they have seen. The children are learning how to use a range of tools to help to build and construct model houses and vehicles. The computer is well used in both age groups and the children are confident and learn new skills well when there are adults supporting the activity. Nursery children were less forthcoming on their walk around the school than the older reception class children. This was due mainly to the lack of language skills in the younger nursery children at this stage of the year. The older children in the reception class listened carefully to the sounds in the environment, as part of their topic on senses. They know that you hear with your ears. However, planned activities in this area of learning lack the detail and close attention to what learning is expected of the children. For example, in one class the walk outside to listen to the sounds in the environment was followed by a low level worksheet task for all children, irrespective of their age or ability. There was no review of the session to check what the children had learned.

Physical development

70. The nursery co-ordinator has effectively worked with the reception class teachers to reorganise the use of the nursery's outdoor area to provide the reception class children with almost daily access to the large climbing equipment and soft play area. Attainment throughout the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. By the time children reach the end of the reception year they are likely to have achieved the Early Learning Goals. Younger children working on the large apparatus outdoors need to be reminded to take

turns and show little imagination when they use the equipment. The wheeled toys are used well to promote sharing and co-operation. In the reception classes the outdoor area is used as an extension of playtime and, in the session observed, little teaching took place and the children were inappropriately dressed for climbing on large apparatus. Timetabled physical education lessons in the hall on the other hand are well planned with precise objectives for learning. The children develop satisfactory spatial awareness as they travel around the hall in different directions. The children are beginning to be aware that changes occur in the body with exercise. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the Foundation Stage. Indoors, a range of opportunities are provided to allow the children to use small tools, such as scissors, effectively which they do reasonably well. Children's learning would be improved if there was more attention paid to developing physical skills.

Creative development

71. Attainment is satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage. Good teacher intervention helps the nursery children to take on roles of the pirate. Older children in the reception class discover what happens when two colours of paint are mixed together. Natural materials are used to create patterns and the children in the nursery and reception classes are encouraged to observe closely and draw portraits of themselves. Children can sing a range of simple songs from memory. All three areas include an area for role play. The area in the reception classes is reasonably well-used, although at times too many children play in the area which inhibits the childrens' role play. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage, but would be improved if the children were given more opportunity to experiment and to produce their own end product rather than one determined by the teacher. Resources in the reception classes are not readily available to the children to allow them to explore and make as they wish.

ENGLISH

72. Standards of attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing are high at the end of Key Stage 2 due to the consistently good teaching throughout the key stage. Pupils are achieving secure standards at Level 4 in all three aspects of English and a higher than average proportion achieve features of the higher levels in Year 6 which is a good indicator that by the end of the year standards will be above average. The sampling of work completed in the school indicates that standards in writing were above average. Standards achieved in lessons at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In the previous inspection standards achieved were judged to be above the national average at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1. There has been a slight decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection. Pupils are given very little responsibility for their own work and the rate of learning in lessons could be higher. Pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress and, due to the additional teaching provided to prepare pupils for the national tests, achieve well, with some pupils attaining the national expectation. Effective use is made of classroom support to help younger pupils in Key Stage 2 with their reading as part of the Additional Literacy Support.
73. Attainment in the Key Stage 2 national tests for 2000 shows an improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the national average since 1999. In relation to the national averages for 2000 standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average. It is likely that standards will be well above the national average for similar schools. In the 1999 national tests, standards were well above the national average for similar schools. About one third of pupils achieved the higher levels in the 1999

national tests. A similar proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels in 2000 as in 1999. The general trend in standards in national tests is well above the national average although three years ago there was a slight decline, caused by a particularly difficult cohort of pupils.

74. In the Key Stage 1 national tests in 2000, there was a slight decline in the proportion of pupils achieving the national average in reading and writing and a similar decline in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Standards are slightly below national averages in reading and writing. In 1999 standards were above average in reading in relation to similar schools and well above average in writing in relation to similar schools. Trends over time at Key Stage 1 show a decline in the past two years in reading and writing. An examination of work completed by pupils last year indicates that too little independent writing is expected of the pupils. There is a similar pattern in the work completed so far this year. Pupils are not allowed to write independently in their English books. Standards are not as high as they should be at the end of Key Stage 1. Good attention is given to teaching handwriting which is generally of a high standard. However, the time spent in lessons, particularly the time in literacy lessons, means that the pupils' rate of learning in writing stories independently is not as good as it could be and standards are lower than they should be.
75. Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. The pupils achieve well. Samples of well-known texts are used well to help pupils understand the author's use of a range of techniques and language to create effect. Pupils are encouraged to read their completed drafts to the rest of the class. The rate of progress throughout the key stage is good and is due to the high expectations of the teachers; firm, effective discipline; and the keenness of the pupils in lessons. The pupils are well-motivated by the high quality books used to teach reading. Many opportunities are provided to read interesting books in other subjects, particularly in history. For example, one able pupil in Year 3 compared two accounts of the sinking of the Titanic which he read accurately with considerable fluency and very good expression. Pupils annotate passages of writing well to demonstrate their understanding of particular sentence structures. Lessons provide pupils with the opportunity to read a variety of print; instructions to play a game; persuasive writing; guides, leaflets and letters which they complete to a high standard. Year 6 pupils have conscientiously completed reviews of books read. Anticipation, prediction, reading between the lines, the use of adjectives and different opinions have all been taught throughout the year with the support of a commercial scheme. The Additional Literacy Support (ALS) is used effectively in lessons to support pupils' reading and well in withdrawal sessions when pupils are learning about phonics.
76. Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. Early in the key stage, pupils spend time in literacy lessons colouring in which is inappropriate and detracts from their learning. Otherwise, shared reading is used effectively to identify the sequence of a story. Good attention is given to teaching phonological awareness. Guided reading in the literacy hour is used well to introduce pupils to a range of appropriate texts and to teach common reading strategies. Pupils are encouraged to segment words and put them back together again. Role play is used effectively to help pupils understand familiar stories such as Red Riding Hood. Pupils read hesitantly but with a good level of accuracy. High attainers read their own work to the class accurately. However, inspection evidence suggests that the good work of the later Foundation Stage is not as effectively built upon as it should be and there is some underachievement in Key Stage 1.

77. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are generally above average. Examples of redrafted work included some very good examples of descriptive writing. For example, a pupil in Year 6 wrote 'a tiny spring gushed out of the rock and trickled happily over smooth stones and shiny pebbles'. For example, the use of archaic vocabulary and alliterative phrases were enthusiastically spotted by pupils and used in their own written account to demonstrate how language is used to create effect. Examples of pupils' own writing was used well to improve the construction of sentences, grammar and punctuation. All pupils use a range of punctuation devices accurately. Handwriting throughout the key stage is good. By Year 5, pupils have developed a fluent, well formed style of writing. By the end of last year a large proportion of Year 5 pupils were already achieving the national expectation. A number of Year 4 pupils had their poems accepted for publication as part of a national competition. Next steps in the pupils' learning are well identified in planning in Year 3. Many opportunities are now provided for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects in Key Stage 2. For example, in science pupils record their science investigations independently instead of copying their work from the board.
78. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. Scrutiny of work at the end of last year suggests that pupils are provided with insufficient opportunities to write independently. Much of their writing is copied. They are therefore less confident in their independent writing. Generally, pupils have a very good handwriting style and form letters correctly and with great care. A lot of attention is given to this aspect of writing in Year 2. In writing completed in lessons the pupils wrote independently several unpunctuated sentences and could spell simple words accurately. Generally, pupils formed letters correctly and higher attainers wrote several sentences. Spelling is taught well and pupils are taught how to use a dictionary to help spell accurately in their writing. Pupils throughout the school are articulate and confident.
79. Staff build on this well as they engage pupils in discussion about their work. Younger pupils are provided with time for role play. Pupils listen well, particularly where topics interest them. All classes take part in regular class assemblies for parents and the school. During the inspection the Year 6 pupils re-enacted a scene from the life of Lord Shaftesbury. They confidently and persuasively took on the roles of debaters in parliament and advocates for the banning of children working in the mines. In Year 5, pupils were encouraged to reflect on their ideas before making sensible and articulate contributions to a class discussion on the use of language in poetry. The school has a long tradition of involving pupils in yearly performance for parents and the community which is a valuable way by which pupils' confidence and use of Standard English can be developed. Standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school which is a slight improvement since the previous inspection.
80. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning in lessons supported by the trained classroom assistants. Considerable emphasis is given to teaching phonics which is an area in which they make most progress.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. There is some very good teaching at the beginning and end of Key Stage 2. The positive attitudes and enthusiasm in lessons contributes significantly to the high standards achieved in lessons throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils are generally well-behaved and when they are not, teachers use a range of effective measures to maintain control. Pupils are generally keen and eager to do well throughout the school.
82. Very good understanding of the requirements of the literacy strategy and the teachers' own levels of knowledge of how to teach children to read and to write are consistent

features of the very good teaching. All teachers generally make appropriate use of their weekly lesson evaluations, although some staff focus on their own teaching only and make too little reference to individual pupils' learning. The rate of progress through lessons is linked directly to the high behaviour expectations, clear and precise explanations of tasks and effective questioning to challenge the pupils to reflect and think about the purposes of a task. This was particularly effective in one Year 5 class where the pupils were encouraged to discuss, think and reflect on the three poems read to help them identify different sentence structures. The selection of material to be read in lessons frequently promotes enthusiasm in the pupils and contributes significantly to the rate of learning in the lesson. For example, action poems are used well to encourage pupils to read with expression in Year 3. Homework is an integral part of lesson planning and used well to extend pupils' understanding. The Key Stage 1 staff do not appear to be very familiar with some of the recommendations for learning to write listed in the literacy strategy framework. For example, one lesson each week is used to teach handwriting. This is an inappropriate use of the literacy hour and would be better taught at another time. At times, expectations of the pupils are too low and they are given insufficient opportunities to write in a variety of ways. Teaching is over-directed and pupils are given too little responsibility for their own learning. The impact of this is that the pupils are less confident in their independent writing and in the structure of their stories.

83. Generally, the planning and evaluation of the literacy lessons are good. The best weekly evaluation of learning identifies what pupils need to do next. Planning tends not to take account of the range of abilities in each class because the weekly planning framework does not require teachers to do this. However, teachers adjust their work to cater for the mixed abilities in their class.
84. There are some shortcomings in the resources to teach literacy. Many classrooms are without sufficient whiteboards, flip charts or overhead projectors. This adds to the teachers' workload as they have to struggle with antiquated blackboards. Opportunities for teachers to model writing and engage in shared writing with small groups are restricted by the lack of individual whiteboards for the pupils in some classes. The co-ordinator for English has recently moved to teach in the Foundation Stage for which she has overall responsibility. She attends all the training for literacy which she disseminates to staff. She has limited involvement in the central issues of target setting and analysis of national test results and has not yet completed a literacy action plan for the current year.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages are above what is expected at the ages of seven and eleven. Progress is good and pupils achieve well in all areas of mathematics. This is confirmed by examining present and past work and observation of lessons. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of 1999, Year 6 pupils achieved results above the national average and well above when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments showed a similar picture to these results. Over four years from 1996 to 1999 the school's results have been well above the national average. Year 2 pupils in the 1999 tests achieved results of above the national average and well above when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments also showed a similar picture. Over four years from 1996 to 1999 the school's results for pupils aged seven have been well above the national average. The 1999 results are an improvement for both age groups since the last inspection. Results achieved at ages seven and eleven in the 2000 National Curriculum tests indicate that these achievements are being maintained. This is attributed to the commitment of teachers

to teaching the National Numeracy Strategy, good management of the subject and eager attitudes of the pupils.

86. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils use mental skills to change fractions to equivalent decimals and multiply and divide 100 or 1000 to the correct decimal place. Pupils solve problems from a range of activities including real life situations which derive from costs or distance when travelling on visits and undertaking surveys of traffic with a high degree of accuracy. They add, subtract, divide and multiply with numbers over 100, including the use of decimals to two and three places well. Higher attaining pupils competently use numbers over 1000 and include the use of brackets. All measure quantities by percentage and work out ratio and proportion of numbers. All are able to find co-ordinates in the first quarter of a graph and more able use negative numbers. They measure angles accurately to the nearest degree. They identify and name different kinds of angles and triangles, which they ably draw on grids and with practical experience, reflect on a mirror line. Specific learning of how to record and analyse information is demonstrated to a high level overall through its use in science, history, geography as well as mathematics. Pupils understand how to record and 'compare information' about pulse rates, dates, weather patterns and frequency of traffic flow. Pupils of higher ability are challenged by solving problems of a complex nature in specifically designed books and pupils of lower ability or special educational needs are given good extra support to achieve in line with other pupils or towards the targets set for them.
87. By the end of the Key Stage 1, pupils show a good level of achievement in counting in 2's, 3's and 10's in mental mathematics. The majority solve simple problems successfully through collecting and recording information. They add and subtract numbers to 100, count money to £1 and recognise fractions of a half and quarter. Higher attaining pupils multiply numbers to fifty, give change from more than £1, record numbers to 1000 and recognise patterns in tens. Through practical experience pupils use and compare measures of volume, weight, length and time in recognised units such as two 50g weights balance 100g weight. Pupils know the names of flat and solid shapes and how many corners and sides they have. They collect information about television programmes and record it neatly in tables. More able pupils change traditional clock face time to digital recording securely. When working with shapes, they recognise right angles and turning movements and know if a shape is reflected in a mirror line. Lower ability pupils or those with special educational needs, are well supported to achieve well or meet targets set for them.
88. The quality of teaching overall is good. This is demonstrated by work past and present in pupils' books but is not always reflected in lessons, because in some lessons, the class take a weekly test which takes up the major part of the lesson. Good teaching is well demonstrated in the mental mathematics part of the lesson. Forty per cent of the lessons observed are good or better than that. Ten per cent are very good. A strength of teaching is in the area of mental mathematics. Almost all mental mathematics lessons are well focused on providing good learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities. The rate of learning is good. As a result, pupils are keen to take part by counting, working out a sum mentally, holding up a white board or number cards, or demonstrating their method of calculation on the board. They achieve well. Teachers make good use of pupils' knowledge and participation to guide others in new learning. A good feature of the teaching is the sharing and reviewing of lesson objectives. This is particularly significant in the juniors, where pupils have a good knowledge of their learning. All teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan for different ability groups well, but in some lessons pupils talk if unsure of what to do, or the highest attainers do not begin the lesson on higher work thus reducing progress. Missed

opportunities to demonstrate work on the board slowed progress for small groups of pupils in parts of lessons. However, at the beginning of lessons all teachers give at least satisfactory and often good introductory teaching to a topic, sometimes making it more interesting as in a Year 3 class where the teacher introduced the need for standard measurement through a story. In good or better lessons, precisely targeted work or support for low ability pupils enables pupils to achieve well. Effective activities, such as a homemade game to promote decimal places in a Year 6 lesson, helps pupils to concentrate well, learn at a good pace and enjoy the challenge.

89. Pupils are generally managed well, because different aspects of the lessons are timed well and pupils are given good support. Work is well presented. Teachers make good use of their assessments of work in lessons to adjust planning to allow for pupils developing knowledge and ensure that support workers for lower ability or pupils with special educational needs are fully informed of the learning to be developed.
90. The school plans to have a numerate classroom environment have been met and also to inform parents of pupils' targets for each term. New assessment sheets are in use to provide an overview of progress. These are continuing to support the progress made in mathematics since the last report. Other factors have helped to raise standards, such as the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the enthusiasm and commitment from the staff for its success and regular homework, which returns well presented.
91. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of how to promote mathematical teaching and has attended courses herself and provided them for staff. The subject is very well monitored by the co-ordinator, through checking, planning, observing lessons and promoting assessment skills. This is having a good impact on pupils' rate of learning due to the secure knowledge of the teachers.

SCIENCE

92. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average, with the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 being well above. These results are similar to those achieved in 1999 when a comparison with pupils in similar schools showed that results were well above. Inspection findings show that standards are above average. Standards have improved since the last inspection due to good teaching and increased opportunities for experimental and investigative science. This has also improved pupils' attitudes to science which are now very enthusiastic. Pupils achieve well. At both key stages there is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls.
93. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above the national average with all pupils achieving the expected standards and just over half the pupils achieving the higher Level 3, an improvement on 1999 results. In comparison with those in similar schools, using the latest figures available (for 1999), pupils' results are very high. Inspection findings show that standards are above average. The improvement in standards since the last inspection when they were in line with standards expected, is due to good teaching linked to an increased emphasis on experimental and investigative science.
94. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in ensuring that tasks set are closely matched to the needs of all pupils, and that the more able pupils have increased opportunities to do more challenging work. This is shown by an improvement at both key stages in the results of high attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 6

said that they are given more responsibility for recording their own work, for example, in a diary showing plant growth. There is now appropriate guidance for teachers giving a progression of knowledge and skills throughout the school, backed up by the support of teaching ideas in a commercial scheme. Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to write up experiments, this is no longer a weakness.

95. Pupils use and apply their literacy skills well. The presentation of work is very neat throughout the school and recording of the results of scientific investigations is of high quality, including the use of charts, tables and diagrams. A scrutiny of pupils' books for last year showed that much of the written text was copied by the whole class from a model on the board, but this is not as common this year. This will develop pupils' independent writing skills. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in drawing accurately constructed, labelled graphs to show the results of tests and experiments, such as when Year 3 were recording 'Foods we Like'.
96. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils maintain good progress in their learning across all areas of science. Their knowledge of electricity was least well developed at the time of the inspection as they had not studied this topic for some time. The use of visiting specialists, such as the community dental nurse and the 'Bug Man' raises pupils' interest and scientific learning very effectively. For example, during the visit of the Bug Man, pupils in Year 4 studied a range of living creatures to know which are insects. They compared a praying mantis with a beetle and recognised that some creatures, such as a snail, millipede and scorpion are not insects. They asked a range of interesting questions, using appropriate vocabulary, such as 'antennae'. In Year 6 pupils appreciated the importance of asking good, precise questions in science as part of their investigation to make a chart to classify fruits and vegetables.
97. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made good progress in their learning and show good knowledge and understanding across all aspects of science. They enjoy doing investigations, for instance, exploring a range of materials and sorting them into sets, such as things which are shiny and transparent. They understand that a test must be fair. They show very good ability to observe, draw and label, for example a mackerel.
98. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science. Their learning benefits from the practical approach, enabling them to be fully involved and promoting their understanding well. They have appropriate extra support if necessary from staff, and do work suited to their needs, for example, less written recording.
99. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers expect their pupils to achieve high standards and challenge pupils' understanding by skilled questioning and providing plentiful opportunities for investigations. Teachers make good use of the specialist skills of visitors, and a wide range of resources ensuring that these are accessible to pupils. For example, pupils in Year 3 all used a sterile mirror to observe their partner's teeth. Teachers of Year 2 and Year 6 classes prepare their pupils very thoroughly for the national tests with good results. The purchase of additional teacher resources has improved the teacher's knowledge and understanding of science, for example worksheets with ideas for investigations. These are helpful, but there is now a need to identify how these sheets are used to ensure high attaining pupils are fully challenged. Health education makes a significant contribution to science. Teachers are developing their use of assessment in lessons effectively. Features of less effective teaching are when the pace of a lesson is rather slow so pupils' attention starts to wander, and the same task is set for all pupils with some unable to do the work for too long. In their desire for correct written work which pupils can learn, a few teachers too often provide work for pupils to copy. This restricts opportunities for

pupils to develop their skills of recording.

100. Science is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The 'Inspire Project' is an exciting new initiative to promote science through the Wythenshawe Education Action Zone. Plans are in hand through this project to start a series of workshops for pupils and parents.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Standards attained by pupils at the end of both key stages meet those expected for each age group. The progress made in learning is satisfactory overall in each age group, but some specific examples of work demonstrate good progress in both key stages. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence was used from talking to teachers and children, examining work, displays, photographs and teachers' planning.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils show confidence in the use of colour, as they experience a wide range of opportunities to mix paint, use crayon or pastel and apply them to different kinds of surfaces, including damp paper such as when making a weather picture. When making a collage, they work carefully to use techniques such as weaving with paper, adding material and pipe cleaners for an interesting effect. The pupils discuss how care is taken to produce a piece of work and how they contribute to a joint project, such as the display in the corridor. Pupils' skills in handling tools are improved through three-dimensional work such as marking the windows, doors and brickwork on clay houses and making a collage to depict the cultural life of Italy.
103. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have experienced a wide range of techniques, including the use of paints of different kinds, pastels, chalks, charcoal and pencil. They make observational drawings, such as of a bowl of fruit, which are then carefully painted. Through listening to music such as Stravinsky's 'Adoration of the Earth', they make thoughtfully reproduced repeating patterns. They use pastel delicately to reproduce illustrations of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Pupils work well together to produce collages in a range of media, using paper and textiles to enhance the hall and entrance foyer, such as the themes of inventions and other cultures. They have experienced the possibilities and limitations of clay through making a range of vases and coil pots. When involved in drama productions, pupils use their collage skills to make improvised costumes and make masks or tools to enhance the story.
104. On the basis of evidence available, teaching is satisfactory overall in both the infant and junior age group. Teaching is well focused on the skills to be learned, but recent timetable considerations have left little time for imaginative exploration of art, an area commented upon in the last inspection. There has, however, been an improvement in the teaching of and opportunities to practice and record still life drawings in sketchbooks. Such use has brought enthusiastic response from a Year 5 class, as over three weeks they used different media to draw the same object and compare their own and each other's finished picture. Teachers' planning for specific art lessons show satisfactory knowledge of the skills to be taught ensuring pupils build on their earlier achievement. Observational drawings in pastels produced by a Year 4 class show good gains in the use of line and tone, shape and form with pictures of snowdrops, tulips and other aspects of nature. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and as a result, work they present always has a quality which, when displayed, improves the appearance of the corridors in line with its ethos of promoting the spiritual dimension of the school. Effective methods and resources used ensure pupils make satisfactory gains in knowledge and skills and show improved achievement as

they move through the school. Examples of this are seen in pupils making wax prints in Year 3, painting or making collages of coastal and harbour pictures in Years 4 and 5, illustrations for book covers, such as 'The Hobbit', and pop art of 'The Simpsons' in Year 5.

105. The teaching of art skills is promoted inconsistently when illustrating work in other subjects. The art focus is not always clear enough for pupils to make good gains in their work in planning such as 'painting' to make a collective picture, or illustrate a story. This is improved in response to drama and music in Year 6. Pupils are managed well and time allowed is satisfactorily used, which results in good behaviour from pupils and perseverance with work. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well so that they achieve at the same level as the rest of the class. Pupils' work is well displayed around the school.
106. National guidelines are currently being incorporated into the existing scheme of work. The scheme provides good guidance on the progression of skills throughout the school which is having a good impact on pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards in design and technology are satisfactory at the end of both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress in designing and making skills, but have inconsistency of depth in evaluations. No lessons were observed in design and technology, due to the constraints of the timetable which link it with science. Evidence was collected from teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils and models and photographs provided.
108. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired a wide range of experiences of designing for a specific task, where they consider the purpose of the article or look at designs that exist and comment on their suitability for purpose. When planning a project, such as making a robot with eyes that light up electronically, they find equipment and draw up a plan of work. They confidently apply their knowledge and understanding of the design process and use appropriate skills to make buggies, go-carts and lorries. Working in pairs and groups contributes to pupils' opportunities to discuss changes and adaptations to their designs, but evaluations of the tasks are too often rather superficial. While participating in healthy eating week, pupils have become aware of safety with tools and the hygiene needed for food preparation as they make a fruit salad. They do not yet have opportunity to link activities in design and technology with computer-controlled topics, an area of which the school is aware. Pupils measure accurately when constructing artefacts and gain an increasing awareness of the relationship between accuracy of their measurement and the quality of the finished product.
109. On the basis of evidence available, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of skills to be developed, which is promoted through a commercial scheme. The pupils steadily achieve new skills. Teachers have high expectations of the standards of work produced and pupils respond with enthusiasm to the challenges of tasks. Teaching of the skills required for designing and making is well planned for, less emphasis is placed on developing evaluation skills. There were some good examples of the evaluation of completed models of vehicles made by Year 3 pupils. Detailed planning by teachers contributed effectively to pupils' learning. For example, in the series of steps taken by pupils to make a bookmark in the infant department and to develop a print on polystyrene in the juniors.

110. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have learned to join materials, such as paper, card and textiles, in a range of ways. These include glue, paper fasteners and couplings on construction such as Lego. When sticking articles together pupils understand that different kinds of glues need to be used for thin paper and corrugated card or when joining textile materials or wood. Pupils show an understanding of an article being fit for a specific purpose when adding wheels and axles to a framework to make a moving vehicle. Pupils understand how triangles strengthen corners. Pupils make reasonable simple drawings and labels of their plans and discuss knowledgeably what they will use and ways to improve their work. All use tools such as scissors safely with increasing skill.
111. A variety of interesting projects have taken place. For example, pupils have made zigzag books with lift-up flaps, 'bug boxes' and Tudor houses. Teachers worked together well to enhance the entrance foyer with models of 'inventions', such as a submarine with flaps to show the engine room, a windmill, a privy and a zip. This allowed pupils to be successfully involved in using a range of materials and skills learned in lessons, as well as to look at designs in two and three dimensions. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily because they often need little help in practical situations. Occasional visits to places such as Dunham Massey are used satisfactorily to look at a range of materials, furnishings, and patterns and extend pupils' knowledge beyond their environment.

GEOGRAPHY

112. No lessons were observed in geography because the organisation of the units of work alternate with history units which are on the timetable for this first half of the term. This is the same situation that arose in the previous inspection. Judgements about standards of attainment are based on a scrutiny of pupils' books, displays in classrooms and throughout the school. Standards are broadly average at the end of both key stages. Progress in learning is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, the rate of learning is spasmodic due to the gaps on the timetable because of geography teaching alternating with history. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory.
113. At Key Stage 2 pupils follow the national scheme to cover the National Curriculum requirements. They have a good knowledge of the major physical features of the United Kingdom and the world. Older pupils extend their geographical enquiry and skills through a detailed field study of a contrasting area in Llandudno in North Wales. Pupils' work showed satisfactory progression in knowledge. There is good evidence of data analysis and use of the computer to construct graphs of data collected in the comparative study of Llandudno and the immediate area. Standards achieved are consistent with national expectations by the end of the key stage.
114. Pupils' work at Key Stage 1 shows a satisfactory development of geographical understanding through the study of topics beginning with the school and local area. Standards of attainment are generally in line with national expectations. Pupils observe the features of the immediate area around the school and draw simple plans and sketches to show buildings and routes in relation to each other. They learn satisfactorily about places different from their area by studying life on an island home and at the seaside. Pupils' rate of learning is satisfactory, although the alternating of geography with history is unsatisfactory as a means of achieving progression through the Programme of Study.

115. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. Good use is made of resources, particularly maps and fieldwork to develop geographical skills at Key Stage 2. Pupils are well managed and concentrate well in lessons. Consequently, work in pupils' books is well-presented and demonstrates satisfactory learning through lessons.
116. Time allocations to the subject have been reduced in the past which is reflected in the quantity of work completed last year. The recently produced action plan for the subject indicates an appropriate amount of coverage to the new National Curriculum requirements.

HISTORY

117. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Progress in learning is sound for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
118. At Key Stage 2 pupils learn about the history of the development of British society and aspects of other societies from different periods of history such as the Aztec civilisation and ancient Egypt. Pupils make comparisons between the past and the present time well. Time lines are used effectively to reinforce the concept of chronological order. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to talk confidently about the periods of history studied and compare them with life at the present time with a satisfactory level of knowledge.
119. At Key Stage 1 pupils start to gain their knowledge, skills and understanding of history from familiar experiences. They bring familiar items such as toys from home to school to find out how their toys were different from those in the past. Time lines are used to place familiar events and objects in a chronological context. Their understanding of the past is satisfactorily developed. Pupils are taught about important events and people from the past such as Florence Nightingale and the Fire of London. By the end of the key stage pupils understand chronological order and that life was different in the past.
120. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is satisfactory. All lessons had a clear objective and the pupils worked conscientiously taking great care with the presentation of their work. The main task of the lessons is the completion of worksheets directly related to the lesson objectives. Opportunities are provided for pupils to visit the local park which has good resources for finding out about life in the past.
121. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a detailed scheme of work which ensures that satisfactory coverage and progression takes place. A new co-ordinator has been appointed who satisfactorily monitors teachers' planning and children's work. Resources remain only adequate and pupils' learning would be improved if they had the opportunity to study primary sources of history and handle appropriate artefacts. However, in some classes children extend their knowledge of historical enquiry through visits to local sites of interest such as Wythenshawe Hall. Evaluation of the work that the children cover is now an established feature of the planning process.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. By the end of both key stages standards broadly meet national expectations. Progress is generally satisfactory from Year 1 to Year 4 and becomes good in Years 5 and 6 as opportunities for pupils to use the new computer suite are more fully developed. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in computer resources. It has used funding from the National Grid for Learning well to equip a

computer suite and provide equipment for Internet access. This and the replacement of older computers by the school and the purchase of digital cameras have greatly improved opportunities for pupils to develop their learning and skills during the past year.

123. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a wide range of computer programs. They show good skills in locating and communicating information in a range of contexts for different audiences and have good word processing skills. For example, some Year 5 pupils wrote a book review directly on to the computer, whilst others wrote up information they had discovered about living conditions for Victorian families. Pupils confidently combine text and graphics and make appropriate choices to design the most effective page layout, trying out different font styles to suit the purpose, such as for a poster or greetings card. They collect and analyse data, such as Year 4's favourite pets, and use different types of graphs, including pie charts and block graphs, to display their results. Although pupils in Year 5 control the route of a floor robot, reviewing, modifying and evaluating the success of their programming well, control work is not yet taught and their earlier skills were not sufficiently developed. They also have insufficient knowledge of spreadsheets.
124. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently use the mouse and keyboard. They know how to load, type in text, save and print their work. They work independently to find information. For example, pupils in a Year 1 English lesson used the mouse to click on the first letter, and find the right page on a computer picture dictionary, then looked for the picture and matching word and wrote it down back at their places. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to learn how to create pictures and control a programmable toy, so they do not make as much progress as expected in these areas.
125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching at Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has set up an effective training programme to develop the computer skills of teachers and learning support assistants, for example, to develop their knowledge of using the Internet. This improved knowledge is raising pupils' standards. The most effective teaching is when teachers show confident knowledge, set challenging, yet enjoyable tasks, so that pupils grow increasingly confident and independent in developing their skills. Teachers increasingly plan to use computers in the curriculum, such as setting pupils a history research topic to find out information from the Internet about the Ancient Egyptians. Less effective is that the new computer suite is under used for much of the morning, so opportunities are missed for pupils to make progress. For example, the use of electronic mail is at an early stage of development.
126. Information and communication technology is a subject that is improving fast under the strong, enthusiastic, effective leadership of the co-ordinator. The school has accurately evaluated the areas for development, although its targets could be more specific. Planning has an appropriate progression of skills to meet pupils' current needs and the school is on track to adopt national guidance for planning and achieve standards expected in all areas.

MUSIC

127. Standards of music are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. These relatively good standards have been maintained since the last report. Singing and performing are particularly strong at the end of Key Stage 2.

128. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress accelerates, and in Years 5 and 6 it is good. This is because pupils have additional opportunities to perform, sometimes with professional musicians and the musical talents of the Year 6 teacher inspire and stimulate pupils. The school choir has a very positive impact on standards, as do the school's musical productions. They raise pupils' interest and enjoyment effectively as well as their musical skills. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 gave a lively, confident performance to parents of a musical rendition of 'Ebenezer' with good quality singing and movement. Pupils make good progress in developing skills of rhythm and understanding notation throughout the school. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils read rhythms from music notation, listened and identified them in contrasting pieces of classical music and under the guidance of the teacher used them to build up and play a class composition. This was very effective. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn to play the descant recorder and to read music notation well enough to perform to the rest of the school.
129. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently sing a range of songs from memory with accurate rhythm and pitch, putting in dynamics such as loud and soft. They add appropriate actions and percussion instruments with enthusiasm, and as a Year 2 pupil commented when another was chosen to play the cymbals, 'Ooh he's going to enjoy that!'. Singing is well used across the curriculum as an enjoyable way of learning, such as an alphabet song in English. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in performing, composing, listening and appraising.
130. The quality of teaching is good. A change since the last inspection is that the school has adopted a new scheme of work from the local education authority. This gives non-specialist class teachers improved support and confidence, and makes their teaching more effective. Teachers plan well with opportunities for all pupils to be fully involved practically and to play instruments in lessons. This promotes their learning well. Features of very good teaching seen in a lesson at Key Stage 2, were when the teacher used her good knowledge of music to teach pupils rhythms effectively by using the music terms 'ta' and 'ta-té' first. Expectations were clearly communicated to pupils and inspired them to do their best. The high level of challenge motivated them to concentrate fully as they listened to the rhythms very attentively.
131. Music contributes strongly to pupils' social and cultural development. The curriculum and pupils' learning is enhanced by the wonderful opportunities older pupils have to take part in performances with other schools, under the guidance of professional musicians, in events such as a promenade concert, and a concert with the Hallé Orchestra. Irish and jazz dancing clubs effectively develop pupils' appreciation of different forms of music. There are still insufficient tuned percussion instruments for pupils to play, and to fully develop skills of music creativity to a high standard. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to combine music and technology, for example, to use the electronic keyboard and electronic effects to control and model sounds. Instrumental tuition from peripatetic teachers is no longer available to develop pupils' musical talents.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 most pupils, including those with special educational needs make sound progress and achieve standards in line with national expectations. During the inspection lessons were observed in gymnastics, games and swimming. During the academic year, however, pupils experience the full physical education curriculum. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key

Stage 2.

133. At Key Stage 1 pupils learn how to choose and apply skills and actions in sequence and in combination in gymnastics lessons well. They can jump, roll and move in different directions in sequence well. They evaluate their performance and use what they have learnt to improve the quality and control of their work. This is satisfactory. In games lessons, pupils are taught minor games skills and play simple, competitive games to reinforce the skills taught adequately. They are generally very active during these sessions and understand that activity brings about changes in their body.
134. Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 4 go swimming to a local pool. They are taught by a qualified instructor who implements an effective programme. Good standards of learning are aided by good communication between the school and instructor. In games and gymnastics lessons pupils have a good level of control on the apparatus. They know how to improve their performance and to keep fit. In dance lessons pupils move with imagination and respond well to music. For example, during an assembly a group of pupils performed a dance using simple movement patterns effectively. In games the pupils know how to attack and defend when playing football. They apply these skills well in the out of school activities which include taking part in competitive sports at different times of the year.
135. Resources for gymnastics are good overall and pupils have access to appropriate apparatus for the curriculum. This provision allows the pupils to reach a satisfactory level of skill in gymnastics. The coordinator recognises the need for a full physical education programme to ensure that the pupils are fit and healthy and has enhanced physical activity through a range of out of school activities.