

INSPECTION REPORT

NETHERTON MOSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Netherton, Bootle

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104856

Headteacher: Mrs Susan J Scott

Reporting inspector: Mr D Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th July 2000

Inspection number: 193921

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Swifts Lane
Netherton
Bootle
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Postcode: L30 3RU

Telephone number: 0151 525 5026

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Mark Winstanley

Date of previous inspection: 10/06/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
D Roberts	Registered inspector	English	What sort of a school is it?
		Information technology	What should the school do to improve further?
			School's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed.
F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
B Frost	Team inspector	Under fives	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Mathematics	
		Physical education	
S Williams	Team inspector	Design and technology	
		Geography	
		History	
A Watson	Team inspector	Music	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	
S Power	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
		English as an additional language	
		Science	
		Art	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average size primary school for boys and girls from three to eleven years of age. The number on roll has fallen significantly since the last inspection, and the school now provides full-time education for 252 pupils, and part-time education for a further 48 pupils in the nursery. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is well above the national average and more than at the time of the last inspection. The pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is generally well below that found nationally. Currently, over 30 per cent of the pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is well above the national average. There are 27 pupils at stages 3 to 5, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties, and some have emotional and behavioural problems, speech and communication difficulties, hearing impairment and physical disabilities. At present there are no pupils from ethnic minority groups and none for whom English is a second language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It provides a good level of care and support for its pupils and makes very good provision for their personal development. The teaching is generally of good quality, enabling pupils reaching the end of their time in the school to achieve standards which are above the average for pupils in similar schools in English, and well above similar schools in mathematics. The large majority of pupils achieve at least appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment in most subjects. However, a significant number of higher ability pupils are capable of achieving better standards in science, and there is scope for improvement in the quality of pupils' written work. The headteacher, governors and staff work together successfully to create a positive ethos for learning. The school is managed efficiently and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school, pupils make particularly good progress in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is generally of good quality, and the highly effective contribution of support staff greatly enhances provision for the pupils.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school is well led and managed.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully.
- Pupils like school, and relationships are very good, contributing towards a positive ethos for learning.

What could be improved

- The quality of written work, particularly in extended writing.
- The standards achieved in science by higher attaining pupils .

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

During the three years up to 1999, the rate of improvement in standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2 was in line with that found nationally. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last report. The most significant progress has been made in raising the achievement of higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics. The previous report indicated that very few pupils exceeded the national standard in these subjects. The 1999 national tests results for pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2, showed that 15 per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 in English and 26 per cent achieved the same level in mathematics.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly. The proportion of lessons judged to be at least satisfactory has increased from 82 per cent to over 98 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from 3 per cent to 37 per cent. The teaching now makes considerably better provision for higher ability pupils in English and mathematics. Improvements in procedures for planning and assessment and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been important factors in bringing about these improvements. In addition, the school has been successful in improving pupils' levels of punctuality, and governors have taken appropriate steps to ensure that statutory requirements relating to the checking of electrical appliances are met. Raising the performance of higher attaining pupils in science remains a priority for the school. The school is well placed to continue improving by building on existing strengths and addressing the weaknesses identified in this report.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E	E	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	D	E	C	A	
science	D	E*	E	C	

The table shows that in 1999 the school's test results for English were well below the average for all schools, but above average compared to schools with similar characteristics. In mathematics, results were in line with the average for all schools but well above average for similar schools. Results in science were well below the average for all schools, but in line with those for similar schools.

Inspection findings indicate that children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and achieve what is normally expected for their age in all areas of learning, except for language and literacy. By the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards in English remain below average, but pupils make generally good progress in speaking and listening and reading. Standards in mathematics and science are broadly in line with those found nationally.

By the age of eleven, standards in mathematics are broadly in line with those found nationally, and the majority of pupils achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment. In science, a large majority of pupils reach Level 4, the national standard. However, a significant proportion of higher attaining pupils are capable of achieving above this level. Standards in English are generally below those found nationally, particularly in writing, but most pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and reading. In information technology, standards are broadly in line with the national expectation. Standards in religious education meet those set by the Sefton Agreed Syllabus. In all other subjects, pupils work at levels which are at least appropriate for their age, and a significant minority perform particularly well for their age in games and swimming lessons. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Throughout the school, pupils show good attitudes towards their work. They show interest and enthusiasm, and are keen to take part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of a good standard throughout the school. This is evident in classrooms, assemblies, the dining room, playground and swimming baths.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are generally confident and mature. They demonstrate good levels of responsibility when working independently and in groups, and show respect for each other's values and beliefs.
Attendance	Satisfactory; although below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, 99 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, 81 per cent were good or better and 37 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. One per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching of children under five is consistently good and often of very good quality. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teaching of English and mathematics is generally good and sometimes of high quality. Science teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and generally satisfactory at Key Stage 2, but insufficient emphasis is placed on challenging higher attaining pupils, which contributes towards underachievement by some of those in this category. Teaching of information technology is good at both key stages although some elements of the subject are under-emphasised in lesson planning. In religious education, the teaching is of satisfactory quality. In all other subjects, the teaching is never less than satisfactory, often good and sometimes of very good quality. The valuable and effective work of support staff has a very positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly in the early years and Key Stage 1.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum for children under five which caters appropriately for all areas of learning. At both key stages, the curriculum is broad and relevant, and the development of literacy and numeracy skills is appropriately emphasised. Provision for information technology is generally satisfactory, although the control and monitoring elements are under-emphasised at Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision throughout the school. Work is pitched at an appropriate level, and there is a very effective reading recovery programme. Individual education plans contain specific and measurable targets, which help pupils to make significant progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	All dimensions are promoted very successfully through assemblies and across the curriculum. Good adult role models and opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities contribute significantly towards their development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Good educational guidance and support, and good procedures for promoting good behaviour. Good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' welfare and safety and for child protection. Arrangements for promoting attendance are good.

An effective partnership has been developed with parents, most of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership, and is well supported by co-ordinators for subjects and aspects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body works effectively with the headteacher to provide clear direction for the work of the school and ensure that statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of national and local comparative information to evaluate performance and set targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very effective school development planning enables money to be spent wisely on educational priorities. All resources are managed efficiently.

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The school is adequately staffed and well resourced. Governors successfully apply best value principles.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The children make good progress. • The teaching is good. • They would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is successful in helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant minority of parents feel that their children do not receive the right amount of homework.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find the arrangements for setting homework to be satisfactory. However, the headteacher and governing body are anxious to continue strengthening procedures and will take the views expressed by parents into account when reviewing current arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment levels of children on entry to the nursery are generally well below those found nationally. The great majority make good progress in all areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes. By the age of five, the majority of children meet the standards set out in the nationally agreed desirable outcomes in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, in the physical and creative areas of learning and in their personal and social development. In language and literacy, although an increasing proportion of pupils reach appropriate levels for their age, overall standards remain below those found nationally.
2. Comparative information, based on the 1999 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 in reading was well below the national average and below average in comparison with pupils in schools with similar characteristics. In writing, the pupils' performance was well below that of pupils in all and similar schools. In mathematics pupils' performance was below that found nationally, but above average in comparison with pupils in similar schools.
3. The same test results show that the proportion of pupils reaching national standards in mathematics was in line with that found nationally, but was below average in English where the proportion achieving the national standard in writing was very low in comparison with the national picture.
4. Comparative information for pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests, indicates that the school's overall performance was well below the national average, but above average in comparison with pupils in schools with similar characteristics. In English, the pupils' performance was well below the average for all schools, but above average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. In mathematics, the pupils' performance was in line with the average for all schools, and well above average compared with those in similar schools. The pupils' performance in science was well below average compared to all schools, but in line with the average for those in similar schools. The same test results show that a significant proportion of pupils exceeded the national standard in English and mathematics.
5. Key Stage 2 national test results for the three years up to 1999 indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which is broadly in line with that found nationally. During the same period there was no significant variation in the performance of pupils in terms of gender.
6. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with those found nationally in speaking and listening. In reading, although the proportion achieving national standards is less than the national average, a large majority of pupils achieve levels expected for their age. In writing, a majority of pupils reach levels expected for their age, but this proportion is significantly less than in reading and is well below the national average. In mathematics and science, standards are broadly in line with the national average and a substantial proportion of pupils reach levels expected for their age. This indicates an improving picture in science compared with the 1999 national test results.
7. Pupils' achievements at Key Stage 1, in relation to prior attainment, are good in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics, and satisfactory in writing. In

science, although the achievement of lower and average ability pupils is satisfactory, a significant number of higher ability pupils underachieve in relation to prior attainment.

8. Inspection findings for the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that standards are broadly in line with the national average in mathematics and science. This indicates an improving picture in science, and is confirmed by the most recent national tests results (Year 2000) although comparative information is not yet available. Overall, standards in English are below those found nationally. In mathematics, pupils' achieve standards which are good in relation to their prior attainment. In English, they achieve standards in speaking and listening and reading which are generally good. Although they achieve generally satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment in writing, this is not always apparent in the quality of writing in other subjects across the curriculum. In science, although lower and average attaining pupils achieve appropriate standards, higher attaining pupils are capable of better progress and higher standards.
9. In English, the great majority of pupils, at both key stages, make particularly good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a good ability to recall accurately aspects of the work arising from their reading of shared texts during literacy lessons. Lower attainers, although less confident, are helped to make significant progress through interaction with support staff and voluntary helpers. At Key Stage 2, older pupils show a good understanding of the main points arising from their studies and most are able to adapt their use of spoken English appropriately for various purposes.
10. In reading, the average and higher attaining pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 read accurately with understanding and make appropriate use of an increasing range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and establish meaning. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils read independently from fiction and non-fiction books and materials. Most average attaining pupils read fluently and accurately with good expression, and explain confidently their reasons for preferring certain authors. Higher attainers talk enthusiastically about the characters and events in their reading, selecting relevant information to support their views.
11. In writing, most pupils at all levels of attainment make generally satisfactory progress. At both key stages, they demonstrate increasing skills when engaged in work during literacy lessons. This is apparent when they complete relatively brief written exercises during the independent activities which form part of the literacy hour. However, the standard and quality of their extended writing is less consistent. In written work completed in other subjects, standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting fall below those apparent during more controlled activities in literacy lessons. The school has identified the need to improve standards of writing as a priority for development.

12. In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment make generally good progress in developing their numeracy skills. The majority of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 have a good understanding of basic number work. Most can read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond, and have a good grasp of basic addition and subtraction facts to 10. By the end of the key stage pupils build successfully on earlier work. By Year 6, most are competent in computational work and generally use the four rules of number accurately. They demonstrate increasing skills in solving a variety of problems, including those involving negative numbers and relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages.
13. In science, the great majority of pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1, and a relatively large proportion of them achieve the national expectation. They extend their scientific knowledge and understanding at a steady rate through practical investigation of areas such as light and dark, materials and the living world. At Key Stage 2, most pupils, at all levels of attainment make satisfactory progress. The majority gain an appropriate amount of scientific knowledge through their studies of areas including micro-organisms, changes in the state of matter, food chains, habitats and the effect of light and sound. However, the lack of planning and provision for higher attaining pupils results in their significant underachievement.
14. Standards in information technology are broadly in line with the levels set by the National Curriculum at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to enter and amend simple text, and to print out their completed work. They sort and classify information, following class surveys, and produce simple pictograms to display their findings. They extend their skills in control technology, and are able, for example, to programme a robotic toy to travel various distances and change directions. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils become confident and quick in word-processing work. They are able to incorporate graphic images to complement text and to move parts of the text about, using the "cut and paste" technique. In handling information, pupils make good use of CD-ROMs to search for information, recognising the need for accuracy in framing their questions. They are able to add to and change information in a data-base. They increase their awareness of the uses of information technology by taking turns to act as library monitors, scanning bar-codes to monitor the loaning and return of books.
15. In religious education, standards at the end of both key stages meet the expectations of the Sefton Agreed Syllabus. The great majority of pupils make steady progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of religious practices and beliefs, as well as their awareness of the application of religious principles and moral values to everyday life.
16. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils benefiting from the reading recovery programme make particularly good progress. The introduction of "booster classes" to help borderline pupils at Key Stage 2 reach the National Standard is having a positive effect on their progress and attainment. There are no formal arrangements to provide additional support for gifted pupils, but class teachers work hard to produce appropriately challenging work for pupils in this category.

17. Pupils at both key stages work at appropriate levels in all other subjects. In physical education, a significant number of pupils achieve particularly good standards in games and swimming, and the large majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres or more before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
18. Pupils generally make good progress in extending their literacy and numeracy skills during work in most subjects, and by the end of their time in the school achieve standards which are above those of pupils in similar schools. However, their reading skills are significantly better than those in writing, which need close attention. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, at both key stages, is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
19. The governors have set appropriate targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years, which take account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils and are regularly reviewed in the light of national test results. The school has been successful in achieving the targets set for the end of the current academic year.
20. Comparative indicators show that the general trend in school improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science since the last inspection is in line with that found nationally. Although there has been relatively little change in the proportion of pupils achieving national standards in core subjects since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving standards above the national level in English and mathematics. The last inspection found that higher attaining pupils were not extended and few pupils exceeded national expectations. In the 1999 national tests, 15 per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 in English, and 26 per cent achieved the same level in mathematics. This indicates a good rate of improvement in relation to this issue in these two subjects. In science, however, improving the performance of higher attainers remains a priority for the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Behaviour throughout the school is good. The pupils like school and are enthusiastic about all school activities. In their movement around the school they are quiet and orderly. They respond immediately when the bell signals the end of play time and this promotes a prompt and effective start to lessons. Their record of attendance is satisfactory, although below the national average. Illness and holidays account for the majority of absence, but the level of unauthorised absence is above the national average for primary schools. Punctuality has improved steadily since the last inspection. The great majority of the pupils now arrive on time and the school day starts promptly.
22. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are contributing positively to their learning and to the educational standards which they achieve. Most pupils behave well in lessons in all subjects. They settle down quickly at the beginning of the lesson, sustain good concentration and contribute confidently and enthusiastically to class discussion. At both key stages the pupils draw well on their experiences to generate ideas, for example in design and technology lessons. They work co-operatively with a partner or as part of a group, for example in science lessons, and are willing to share resources and to learn from one another. Some pupils take a pride in the presentation of their written work but this is not generally a strong feature in the school. During a visit to the swimming baths in the inspection week, the Year 5 and 6 pupils' behaviour, both in the lesson and when travelling on the bus, was of a very high standard.

23. The pupils are courteous to one another and to all the adults who work with them. They enjoy talking to visitors and are pleased and proud to explain the work they are doing and what they have achieved in past lessons. During a whole school assembly in the week of the inspection behaviour was exemplary. The pupils gave their undivided attention to the playing of the school orchestra and were generous in their applause for the football team who had played well the previous day. All the pupils were enthralled when a new baby was welcomed into the school family. A very moving sense of awe and wonder was created when the school sang a lullaby as the baby was shown to the assembly by the headteacher and the baby's sister and brother. This typifies the strong sense of community which prevails throughout the school.
24. Relationships at all levels are very good. The pupils enjoy morning play and lunch times and they socialise well, organising their own games or taking advantage of the new picnic tables to chat or to eat their sandwiches. There are relatively few instances of bullying or other serious misconduct. The pupils know the school and classroom rules and they have a good understanding of the system of rewards and sanctions. However, there were two fixed period exclusions last year, imposed for behaviour which the school considered to be totally unacceptable.
25. The pupils take care of their school. All areas of the building are clean and tidy and the extensive grounds are entirely free from litter. When presented with opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, the pupils respond positively. For example, they file all their own work and they are keen to help their teachers by returning registers to the school office after registration. The school council provides good opportunities for democratically elected pupils from both key stages to contribute to the school community. Class representatives are currently engaged in organising the summer fair and have displayed colourful notices around the school, advertising the event and asking for donations. All the pupils will have the chance to propose and vote for the pupil they consider most deserving of the 'Citizen of the Year' trophy which has recently been donated to the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. During the inspection, 81 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be at least good and 37 per cent were very good or excellent. Just over one per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.
27. The quality of teaching for children under five is consistently good and often of high quality. Over 94 per cent of lessons observed were good and over a third were very good. Good quality teaching in the nursery enables children to make a successful start to their education. All of the areas of learning are taught effectively and children make significant progress. Teaching in reception is of also of good quality, and is successful in helping the great majority of children to make good progress towards desirable outcomes for their learning in all areas of the curriculum by the time they are five.
28. Teaching in the early years enables most children to make significant progress in extending their early language skills. It is particularly successful in developing confidence, by promoting the pupils' personal and social development, and extending children's speaking and listening skills. The teaching is also effective in developing early reading and writing skills, and this enables an increasing proportion of children to reach appropriate standards in language and literacy by the time they enter Key Stage 1. The development of numeracy skills is successfully promoted, enabling most children to reach appropriate standards in the mathematical area of learning by the time they are five. This is also the case in the physical and creative areas of learning, where teachers

provide a range of worthwhile activities to support children's progress. Good teaching also helps children to make significant progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many show growing independence when working at computer work-stations, engaging in role-play and selecting appropriate resources for learning.

The strong emphasis which teachers place on promoting the children's personal and social development prepares them well for the next stage of learning. Very effective team-work between teaching and support staff is a strong feature in the teaching of nursery and reception children. Planning and assessment of work are completed efficiently in all classes, and the teaching of children with special educational needs is of good quality throughout the early years.

29. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is nearly always good and regularly of high quality. Over 90 per cent of lessons observed were good or better and 53 per cent were very good. Teaching is particularly good in mathematics and generally good in English. Teaching of science is generally good, although current planning arrangements do not make sufficient provision for higher attaining pupils.
30. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is generally good. Nearly 70 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be good or better and 22 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. Just under three per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is generally good, although insufficient emphasis is placed on promoting writing skills across the curriculum. In science, the teaching is generally satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the teaching of higher attaining pupils.
31. At both key stages, the teaching of English is generally good and sometimes of high quality. Over 84 per cent of lessons observed were good and 27 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and make good use of guidance provided by the National Literacy Strategy. This enables pupils to make consistent progress in developing their language skills during literacy lessons. Lessons follow closely the structure of the National Literacy Strategy, and teachers' planning sets appropriate expectations of the pupils. The basic skills of reading are taught effectively at Key Stage 1, and this helps pupils to develop an appropriate range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Reading is also taught effectively at Key Stage 2, promoting good progress by the great majority of pupils at all levels of attainment. Although there is some good teaching of writing rules and techniques during literacy lessons at both key stages, the effect of this work is not yet consistently apparent in pupils' written work across the curriculum. This aspect of the pupils' literacy development requires close attention to see that new skills acquired during literacy lessons are applied in writing for various purposes in other subjects. Throughout the school, good questioning skills are a strong feature in the teaching, promoting interest and a good response by pupils, and doing much to develop speaking and listening skills. Very good class management is a consistent feature in literacy lessons at both key stages. Pupils enjoy the variation in approach provided as they move from whole-class to small groups and individual work, and this has a positive effect on their behaviour.
32. Teaching of mathematics is generally good and often very good. Over 80 per cent of lessons were good and 30 per cent very good. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented successfully, although there is some inconsistency in the attention given to mental work at the beginning of lessons. Overall, the teaching demonstrates secure subject knowledge and expertise. This is particularly reflected in good

questioning skills. Throughout both key stages, classes are well managed and organised, promoting very good standards of behaviour.

33. The teaching of science is good at Key Stage 1 and generally satisfactory at Key Stage 2, but there are some shortcomings that need attention. Most lessons promote steady and often good progress by the majority of pupils. In the best lessons, work is pitched at an appropriate level to stimulate and challenge pupils. However, in too many lessons teachers fail to challenge and extend more able pupils.
34. The quality of teaching observed in information technology was good. Examination of work produced and discussion with pupils confirm that teaching makes appropriate provision for pupils at both key stages, although the control and monitoring elements are underemphasised at Key Stage 2. Work is pitched at an appropriate level to extend pupils, and information technology is generally used effectively to complement work in other subjects. In addition, the awareness of pupils about the use of information technology is further raised by their involvement in scanning bar codes and recording the loan and return of books to the library. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in information technology are not sufficiently precise and need further attention.
35. In religious education, the teaching is satisfactory with good features. It is successful in promoting satisfactory progress by pupils at both key stages. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Highly effective co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strong feature which helps to promote good progress by pupils in this category. Their work is guided by good quality individual education plans, and is very well co-ordinated to achieve highly efficient whole-school provision. Individual teaching provided by the reading recovery scheme is of high quality, promoting very good progress by pupils receiving this support.
36. In other subjects, careful preparation enables teachers to be secure in their subject knowledge, and the good support provided by non-teaching staff in the early years and in some other classes, has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils. Throughout the school, lesson planning is generally good, and tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils. A good balance is usually achieved between direct whole-class teaching and worthwhile learning activities. Class management is consistently strong, promoting good behaviour by pupils and creating appropriate conditions for learning. Homework is generally used effectively to consolidate and extend learning in English and mathematics. The great majority of pupils sustain concentration very effectively, show a mature sense of responsibility and good knowledge of their own learning.
37. Since the last inspection, the proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better has increased from 89 per cent to over 98 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better has increased from 3 per cent to 37 per cent. Significant improvements in lesson planning and assessment procedures in English and mathematics, and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have contributed greatly towards this improvement. This has had a positive effect on the performance of high attaining pupils in English and mathematics. In science, however, the need to challenge higher attaining pupils appropriately remains a priority for the school.

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

38. The school offers its pupils a broad and interesting curriculum which, in most respects,

reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Sefton Agreed Syllabus for religious education. However, within information technology, the control and monitoring elements of the subject are under-emphasised at Key Stage 2. The curriculum for the under fives is rich and stimulating and based appropriately on the nationally agreed desirable outcomes for the children's learning prior to Key Stage 1. Despite the time and effort which the school has expended recently implementing the national literacy and numeracy strategies, the basic curriculum continues to provide the pupils with a range of relevant and interesting experiences which are well matched to the pupils' needs.

39. The school has established effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, in science, the potentially higher attaining pupils are often insufficiently extended and curriculum planning makes too few demands of them.
40. The statutory curriculum is enhanced by a varied programme of interesting extra-curricular activities for boys and girls. Many of the teaching staff give willingly much of their own time to teach a variety of aesthetic, creative, cultural, intellectual and sporting activities which are well attended.
41. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is thoughtfully and successfully promoted through many aspects of the life and work of the school.
42. The school provides a secure basis for the pupils' spiritual development through religious education lessons and the well planned acts of collective worship. These are reverent occasions when pupils are helped to relate ideas to their own experiences. For example, in an assembly covering the story of Noah and the ark, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 related the incident to present day issues of conservation. In an assembly celebrating the pupils' achievements, the presence and introduction to the pupils of a new born baby was an occasion of awe and reflection as they considered God's gifts in creation. The pupils' spiritual development is also encouraged by experiences which help the pupils to appreciate the beauty, structure and order of the natural world, for example, during their lessons in religious education, literature and music and through participation in field trips.
43. The pupils' moral development is supported by the positive ethos of the school and promoted successfully. The pupils negotiate their own class rules and these and whole school rules are displayed in each classroom. All pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to consider how their actions and behaviour affect other pupils and adults in the school community. The school council effectively upholds good standards of behaviour throughout the school. In these ways the pupils are helped to develop their own personal values and be aware that what they do and say can contribute to the well being of other pupils and adults with whom they come into contact. The pupils demonstrate concern for their environment through such projects as restoration work on the River Alt. They are also sensitive to the needs of other people and have generously supported charities in Bangladesh and Kosovo.
44. The pupils' social development is promoted very successfully. The good quality of relationships within the school is a major factor contributing to this aspect of development. Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of working together, of pupils being supportive of one another and of being kind and considerate in their dealings with other people. Adults working in the school community are kind and caring and set good examples for the pupils to follow. Parents' courses, for example, 'parents as educators' and 'additional literacy support' make an important contribution to the pupils' academic and social development. There are also many extra-curricular

opportunities which contribute significantly towards the development of the pupils' social skills.

45. A wide and varied range of opportunities is provided to support the development of the pupils' cultural awareness, both in learning to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. Aspects of the curriculum such as religious education, history, art, music and literature contribute positively to their understanding of their own culture and other traditions. For example, there are stimulating wall displays on Egyptian culture and the creation story from the standpoint of different religions. There have been a number of visitors to the school including a Caribbean poet and children's authors. The pupils have visited a number of centres of local cultural interest including Liverpool museum, the Albert Dock and the boat museum at Ellesmere Port. Arrangements are in hand for the pupils to visit the Millennium Dome in London.
46. The governing body's policy for equal opportunities is fully implemented throughout the school. Boys and girls are treated fairly in all aspects of school life and given equal responsibility. The school takes steps to ensure equality by using positive discrimination where this is relevant, for example by choosing literature which appeals to both boys and girls. The school curriculum is socially inclusive and is successful in offering equality of opportunity to all pupils. On the occasions when pupils are withdrawn from lessons, for example for music tuition, positive steps are taken to minimise the disruption to other learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for the pupils to develop positive attitudes towards the achievements and roles of both men and women. A literacy lesson in Key Stage 2 made very positive use of a text about changes in the roles and achievements of women, and pupils were required to consider gender stereotyping in the way children's toys are advertised. Care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to participate and benefit from the full range of school activities.
47. At both key stages, the school makes very good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. Good identification procedures are in place and individual educational plans are completed for the pupils who are at Stage 1 or above of the Code of Practice. These are well written and contain precise and measurable targets. A range of effective support is provided through small group work, withdrawal from lessons and in-class support to address the pupils' special educational needs. The reading recovery programme is particularly effective in improving the pupils' reading skills. At present, there are no pupils from ethnic minority groups, and none for whom

English is an additional language. However, the school has appropriate procedures in place to provide for such pupils and would be able to draw on external expertise from the local education authority if required.

48. The school provides a relevant and coherent curriculum which emphasises appropriately the development of the pupils' personal and social education to good effect. A well organised health education programme is taught in all classes and includes appropriate attention to drug misuse and sex education. The pupils are given essential facts and the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to make informed decisions now and in the future.
49. Links with the local community are well established. The pupils benefit from regular visits in the area and further afield. In addition, visitors to the school provide the pupils with many exciting experiences. For example, the pupils worked under the guidance of a local sculptor to craft a range of wood carvings for the school garden area. On another occasion, a local theatre group performed a Shakespearean play. Visits by authors of children's books have also helped to bring an added and valuable dimension to the pupils' learning.
50. Frequent opportunities are provided for the pupils to participate in sporting events against other schools. For example, during the inspection week, one of the football teams achieved a notable victory against a nearby primary school. Such experiences develop further the pupils' skills in appropriate and challenging situations.
51. Constructive relationships are well established with the local high school and a smooth system exists for the transfer of relevant records and attainment data. Effective induction opportunities enable the oldest pupils to transfer confidently to the high school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The school takes good care of its pupils. They are carefully supervised throughout the school day and caring attention is paid to their welfare, health and safety at all times. The school carries out risk assessments at regular and appropriate intervals and all electrical appliances are now checked annually.
53. There are two designated teachers responsible for child protection issues and procedures are good, adhering to guidelines provided by the local education authority. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. A specialist teacher provides reading recovery support for individual pupils at Key Stage 1 and, throughout the school, pupils are withdrawn for small group teaching in basic literacy skills. Where necessary the pupils have detailed individual education plans and appropriate records are kept of their attainment and progress.
54. The school has made good progress in developing its assessment procedures since the time of the last inspection. The formal systems now established for assessing and monitoring the attainment of pupils are rigorous and effective in providing useful information which is analysed comprehensively and used effectively to improve curriculum provision and identify areas for development. The record keeping systems for the core subjects provide a clear and comprehensive picture of progress and attainment, but the school has yet to develop its approach to recording the progress of individual pupils in the foundation subjects.
55. The teachers monitor the progress of individual pupils during lessons and at the end of each unit of study, through regular testing and observation. The information obtained is

used effectively to inform future provision for literacy and numeracy although it is less consistently applied to other curriculum areas. Teachers at Key Stage 1 make good use of the assessment information they collect during lessons to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. Teachers at both key stages are careful to reinforce previous learning at the beginning of lessons and most use questioning effectively to establish levels of understanding during lessons. However, at Key Stage 2, there is some variation in the effective use of assessment information to inform future planning and to provide for the range of ability within the mixed age classes, and this is particularly apparent in science.

56. The recently established system of target setting for individual pupils is a particularly strong feature of the school and is having a very positive impact on their progress in literacy and numeracy. The individual targets are agreed with pupils on a termly basis and are regularly reviewed so that the pupils are aware of the progress they are making. This system is supported effectively by the marking policy and most teachers use marking well to ensure that pupils know what they have achieved and what they must do to improve further.
57. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are good. Registration periods are well organised and teachers take time to greet each pupil individually, often using these sessions to reinforce important teaching points from the previous days' lessons. The computerised class registers are marked accurately and returned promptly to the school office. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a system of rewards for good attendance and this has had a positive effect, although levels of attendance remain below the national average. There has been good improvement in punctuality since the last inspection. The vast majority of the pupils now arrive on time in the mornings and lessons start promptly. The school makes effective use of the good support provided by the educational welfare service.
58. Procedures for monitoring and promoting positive attitudes and behaviour are good. The pupils themselves draw up the ground rules for classroom behaviour at the beginning of the school year. Every class negotiates a system of sanctions and these are displayed prominently on the classroom walls, alongside the ground rules and the rewards. The whole school ground rules, rewards and sanctions are also displayed clearly in open areas around the school, providing the pupils with useful reminders of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Good manners, kindness and friendliness are encouraged at all times and the pupils respond positively. The school is a happy, orderly place in which to learn and relationships at all levels are very good. Record keeping arrangements are thorough and parents are consulted at an early stage whenever an individual's behaviour is giving cause for concern.
59. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting the pupils' personal, social and health education are very good. Particular attention is given to developing the pupils' confidence and self esteem, through the strong sense of community which exists in the school, through praise for good work and behaviour and through recognition of their achievements inside and outside of school. Themes for school assemblies are chosen carefully and cover, in depth, such issues as conservation, caring for others and bullying. The school is currently formulating a whole school policy on bullying which will summarise formally the good procedures which are already in place. The programme of study for personal, social and health education is well structured and comprehensive, from the early years to Year 6. Topics such as keeping safe, healthy eating, making decisions and drugs education are included in the teachers' very detailed planning. The school is generously resourced in this area of the curriculum and staff benefit from relevant in-service training from the local education authority. Visitors to the school, for example Sefton's road safety team and the school nurse, contribute

effectively to the pupils' all-round education. During an assembly in the inspection week, the school orchestra, led by a visiting music specialist, performed confidently and competently in front of parents and the whole school. Many pupils from both key stages volunteered to come out to the front to lead the singing.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The school has established good links with parents. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that the parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. Almost all parents are in agreement that their children like school. The great majority of parents consider that teaching is good and are of the opinion that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve of their best. The inspection findings support all these positive views.
61. A small minority of the parents expressed dissatisfaction with standards of behaviour achieved by the school. The inspection findings are that behaviour in the school is good and that the pupils' attitudes towards their work are contributing positively to their learning and to the educational standards which they achieve. A small but significant minority of parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. Some would like more homework and others feel that pupils are given too much homework. The inspection found that teachers generally make effective use of homework and good parental support for the home-school reading scheme is having a positive impact on reading standards throughout the school. Parents of pupils on the reading recovery programme are closely involved in their children's learning and this is helping them to make very good progress.
62. The quality of the information provided for parents and carers by the school is very good. Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report, regular correspondence and half-termly newsletters, "Moss News", the parents are kept fully informed as to the aims of the school and school procedures and events. Pupils' annual written reports are of good quality and give parents a great deal of helpful information about their children's attainment, progress and personal development. Parents and carers have the opportunity to respond to the pupils' annual reports at the formal parents' evening in the summer term. The pupils are encouraged to attend the termly parents' meetings, with their parents, and to be fully involved with the setting and reviewing of targets which takes place at these meetings. These arrangements were highly praised by those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting.
63. Communication with parents and carers of the under-fives is very good. Most parents have daily personal contact with the nursery and reception staff and there are useful leaflets on display, together with information about the topics being studied by the children during the half-term. Before their children join the school the parents are given a very comprehensive information pack which includes booklets with helpful advice on attendance, school policies and how to prepare their children for starting school.
64. Parents are invited to join the whole school 'Family' assembly each week; to participate in the adult education courses which are held in the parents' room and to be actively involved in the various fund raising events organised by the Home-School Association. Parental contributions to the pupils' Record of Achievement files are encouraged and valued. The home-school agreements, which came into effect three years ago, explain clearly what parents may expect of the school and what the school expects of parents and pupils. The agreements are different for the nursery, the reception classes, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They are well thought out and relevant to the age range of the pupils, in terms of language and expectations, which is typical of the very good quality

information which the school provides.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and governing body co-operate effectively to provide clear direction for the work of the school. National initiatives, such as the strategies for literacy and numeracy, are addressed conscientiously. Curriculum co-ordinators provide effective leadership in promoting and developing their areas, particularly in the core subjects. These factors have contributed strongly towards the generally good quality of teaching which now exists. The school is well placed to improve by building on existing strengths and addressing the weaknesses identified in this report.
66. The school's main aims and mission statement are communicated effectively to parents through the prospectus. The school is committed to: " providing a happy, stimulating and positive environment which will nurture a sense of tolerance and co-operation, respect for self and others and independence in learning." These aims are reflected consistently in all of its work.
67. The increasingly purposeful involvement of the governing body is an important factor in the good progress made by the school since the last inspection. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and work hard in co-operation with the headteacher to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They successfully ensure that the school meets the need of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and provides equality of access and opportunity for all of its pupils. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met.
68. Effective procedures have been introduced to monitor teaching and the curriculum. The headteacher and senior managers visit classrooms regularly to evaluate teaching and the quality of provision. The implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been supported by regular monitoring of lessons, with feedback provided to help teachers improve performance. The standard and quality of work produced by pupils are monitored at regular intervals by senior staff and co-ordinators. The introduction of individual target-setting for all pupils is having a positive effect on their progress throughout the school.
69. Strong emphasis is placed on helping teachers to improve their performance by attending in-service training. All of the requirements for staff appraisal are met, and appropriate procedures are in place for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and those who are new to the school.
70. The school development planning process is very well conceived and ensures that the views of all staff and governors are considered when identifying priorities. Targets for improvements are listed clearly in the plan, and detailed information is provided about action to be taken to support their implementation. Appropriate information is provided about deadlines for meeting targets, persons responsible and criteria for evaluating the success of initiatives. The school is still in a period of falling rolls, which is resulting in significant changes to the school's budget. This changing situation means that the main emphasis in development planning is understandably placed on the year ahead, with an update of priorities conducted annually.
71. The effective use of the school plan to inform spending ensures that money is spent appropriately on relevant educational priorities. The school makes good use of its

income, and grants for specific purposes, including the element for making provision for pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately. At present, the school receives an income which is well above the national average. This is due to local education authority procedures, which protect schools experiencing a period of falling rolls from the potentially damaging effects on provision of a dramatic reduction in income. The relatively high proportion of money carried forward from the last financial year was mainly to compensate for the reduction in the income received during the current year.

72. The governors' finance committee co-operates effectively with the headteacher and school administration to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. The school is fortunate in having financial expertise in its governing body, and is also able to call on advice from the local education authority's financial officer when necessary. Administrative staff are appropriately trained and the school makes good use of information technology to support financial management. The recent audit of finance conducted by the local education authority listed some minor areas for improvements. Almost all of these have already been addressed, and the governing body is committed to completing the implementation of remaining recommendations as a matter of priority.
73. The strategic management of all resources is good. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at each stage of their education. All staff are deployed effectively. The school is well resourced for most aspects of the curriculum. Areas of resourcing which need improvement are accurately identified as priorities in the school plan.
74. Good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation. The accommodation for under fives and for pupils at both key stages is spacious and appropriate for the delivery of the programme of learning for the early years, the National Curriculum and religious education. The central library area is a valuable and well used resource, which is currently being developed to accommodate the computer suite. In addition, an attractive community room is used effectively to run courses for parents and help foster links between the school and the surrounding community. The internal environment is well maintained by the caretaking and cleaning staff. However, parts of the external fabric of the school are deteriorating and causing concern for the governors.
75. The initiative to improve the school grounds in order to create a stimulating external environment for the pupils has been an outstanding success, and is contributing positively towards improving behaviour and better relationships between pupils, particularly during the lunch break. The school grounds are well maintained.
76. The governing body takes appropriate steps to secure best value and quality when purchasing services, resources and equipment and arranging for work to be completed. Appropriate attention is also given to evaluating the effect of new resources and equipment on the quality of education provided and the standard achieved by pupils. An example of this was the arrangement made by the school to provide a reading recovery programme for pupils with greatest need. The arrangement was significantly different from that which had existed previously, and inspection evidence indicates that it is proving to be highly effective.
77. The governing body maintains an appropriate overview of school performance. The headteacher provides regular information about how well the school is achieving in comparison with similar schools to help governors assess its progress. This

information is considerably enhanced by additional analyses provided by the local education authority.

78. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in establishing effective procedures for monitoring teaching and the curriculum. This has contributed towards the better standards achieved by high attaining pupils in English and mathematics. In addition, school development planning is now much more effective, and includes procedures to measure the impact of planned initiatives on the pupils' progress and attainment. The governing body has taken appropriate steps to meet statutory requirements relating to the checking of electrical appliances.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. In order to raise standards and quality of work further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- 1) improve the quality of pupils' written work by:
 - a) monitoring carefully to see that new skills acquired during literacy lessons are applied appropriately in all of the pupils' written work, placing particular emphasis on spelling and punctuation;
 - b) take steps to achieve greater consistency in standards of handwriting and presentation in the written work produced in all subjects;
(Paragraph reference: 6, 8, 31, 97, 116, 133)

- 2) improve the standards achieved by potentially high attaining pupils in science at both key stages by:
 - a) including clear and specific learning objectives for high attaining pupils in the planning for science; and
 - b) providing tasks which present an appropriate level of challenge for pupils in this category; and
 - c) use information from the assessment of pupils' work effectively to inform the next stage of planning.
(Paragraph reference: 13, 33, 55, 118, 119)

In addition to the key issues shown above, the following recommendation relating to a relatively minor weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

Further improve the provision made for information technology by placing more emphasis on the control and monitoring elements of the subject at Key Stage 2.
(Paragraph reference: 34, 38, 137, 140)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	36%	44%	17%	1%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	252
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	88

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	6	14
	Girls	11	12	14
	Total	22	18	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69	56	88
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	14	11
	Girls	8	14	11
	Total	15	28	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	47	88	69
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	11	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	16
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	19	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56	65	68
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	15	11
	Girls	5	6	5
	Total	15	21	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44	62	47
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	252
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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)	9.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	25.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	715,934
Total expenditure	685,683
Expenditure per pupil	2,503
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,137
Balance carried forward to next year	79,388

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	276
Number of questionnaires returned	141

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	45	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	45	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	52	11	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	51	13	4	10
The teaching is good.	51	43	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	41	8	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	30	6	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	1	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	43	44	7	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	48	38	6	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	48	4	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	38	13	3	20

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

80. Children under five are taught in the nursery before transferring to the reception classes. Attainment levels on entry to the nursery are generally well below those found nationally. However, they make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, particularly in their personal and social development. Consequently, their levels of attainment in most areas of their learning are close to the national picture by the time they reach the age of five. The exception is in language and literacy. In this area of learning, a substantial proportion of children reach levels expected for their age, but standards generally remain below those found nationally by the time the pupils are five.
81. From a low baseline, the nursery children make good progress in their personal and social education. They settle quickly into daily routines and demonstrate increasing confidence choosing activities which interest them. They engage in tasks with a good measure of independence and sustain appropriate levels of concentration and perseverance in their activities. The nursery children establish good relationships with each other and with all of the adults who help them. By the reception class stage, they work well together as part of a group and co-operate sensibly when taking turns or sharing equipment.
82. In the language and literacy area of their learning, the nursery children listen attentively and talk about their experiences with increasing confidence, although their range of vocabulary is often limited. However, they make good progress in their learning through the use of a range of varied, appropriate and interesting activities. They make good progress in their use of a growing vocabulary to express their thoughts and to convey meaning to each other and to the adults who work with them. For example, in the "travel agents" they talked about destinations they had heard about, stamped tickets, confirmed bookings on the telephone and tested the weight of cases for carrying on the aircraft. They used a developing vocabulary to good effect and made confirmation notes in their record book to secure the holidays. Although many of the children in the nursery do not always turn readily to books, they listen eagerly to stories read to them and are beginning to understand how a book is organised and how print and pictures carry meaning. By the end of their time in the reception classes, the children make substantial progress in most aspects of their learning in language and literacy apart from written English. Many can read a growing number of words which they meet frequently. The vast majority can read and write their own names and can use an increasing range of symbols, familiar words and letters to communicate meaning. However, the quality of their written work is below that expected for their age, and overall standards in language and literacy fall short of those expected by the time children reach the age of five.
83. In the mathematical area of their learning, through well planned and organised nursery activities, the children make good progress in using a developing mathematical vocabulary related to shape, position, size and quantity, They can recall a growing repertoire of number rhymes, songs and counting games. The children in the reception classes build successfully on these experiences and the vast majority can count reliably and read, write and order numbers to 10 and beyond. The higher attaining children can understand doubling and halving numbers to 10 and can recognise number patterns on a 1 to 20 grid. In addition, many can complete basic addition problems with accuracy. By the time children reach the age of five, standards in mathematics are broadly in line with those set out in the desirable outcomes for their

learning.

84. The children in the nursery make good progress in the area of their learning related to their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the reception stage, they talk with increasing confidence about their experiences, their environment, their families and about past and present events in their own lives. From an early stage, the under fives are introduced to computers. The nursery children are confident in using the mouse to control screen images. By the reception stage, many show increasing computer skills and can generate their own designs and print these out. By the time children reach the age of five, standards are in line with those expected for their age.
85. In the physical area of their learning, the nursery children make generally good progress, although a significant minority demonstrate poor control and co-ordination when holding paint brushes and other mark making materials. However, by the age of five almost all of the children show much improvement in their overall co-ordination. In the hall, they make good use of space and handle equipment with increasing skill. They move about respecting the space of others and demonstrate increasing control of their bodily movements.
86. By the time the children reach the age of five their progress in the creative area of their learning is good. The nursery children use a range of painting, print making and modelling skills with increasing control and imagination. By the reception stage many demonstrate good colour mixing skills and show increasing detail in drawing what they see or imagine. During imaginative play they show much creativity, which was evident in the conversations which took place as they used the "travel agents". As the children develop, they use a growing range of appropriate materials, tools and other resources to express their ideas and to communicate their feelings.
87. The under fives enjoy school and respond very well to the interesting activities organised for them. They listen carefully to the adults who help them and work co-operatively with each other.
88. The quality of the teaching of the under fives is predominantly good and often very good. The work is well planned and based appropriately on the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes prior to the stage of compulsory education. However, the planning for outdoor activities in the nursery is less effective. In the nursery, the quality of classroom support is of a high calibre and makes an important contribution to the children's learning. In both the nursery and in the two reception classes the use of day-to-day assessment to inform the planning of future learning activities is a strong feature of the teaching. The adults who work with the under fives have a secure knowledge of the curriculum and are sensitive to the children's needs. This is reflected in the secure and stimulating learning environment provided for the under fives.
89. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained standards in classes of the under fives and continues to offer the children broad, relevant and stimulating learning experiences.

ENGLISH

90. Overall standards in English are below those found nationally at the end of both key stages. This is slightly better than the comparative information provided by national test results, which show standards to be well below the national average. However, the same test results indicate that by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, their general performance in English is above average compared with that of pupils in schools with similar characteristics.
91. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in speaking and listening and reading. Although their progress in writing is generally satisfactory, their attainment in this aspect of English is significantly weaker and this is apparent in work across the curriculum. The school has recognised this, and included proposals to improve standards of writing as priorities in the school development plan. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in individual education plans. The programme of work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.
92. In speaking and listening, the great majority of pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good progress at both key stages. Younger pupils build progressively on the good foundation provided in the reception classes. They listen attentively during the whole-class elements of literacy lessons, and demonstrate growing confidence in responding to their teachers' questions. Pupils participate very effectively during the introductory activities for literacy lessons, offering clear answers to questions arising from the "big books" used to display the text. In a Year 2 class, for example, following the reading of texts from traditional stories including "Jack and the Beanstalk", many pupils contributed fluently to class discussion. They were able to recall aspects of the stories accurately, and to talk about characters and events in a manner which indicated careful listening and a good understanding of the areas studied. Lower attainers make good progress in extending their vocabulary, often benefiting from interaction with support staff and voluntary helpers.
93. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils communicate with growing confidence, and continue to build effectively on their early skills. They show a good understanding of main points arising from their studies in other subjects, and of issues arising from the text work during literacy lessons. For example, in Years 3 and 4, following part of a reading from "Taking the Cat's Way Home", pupils demonstrated a capacity to reflect on issues such as the way that characters in the story treated each other. They made good use of opportunities to explore, develop and explain ideas, and most expressed themselves confidently in group as well as class discussion. Older Key Stage 2 pupils take turns to chair group discussion, and some of the higher attainers show particularly good skills in listening to the views of other members of the group and summarising the main points from the discussion, before feeding back to the whole class. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils demonstrate an ability to adapt their talk for various purposes and to make good use of an increasing vocabulary to convey opinions clearly.

94. In reading, the majority of pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good progress at both key stages. Many benefit greatly from the support and interest provided by their parents for the school's home reading initiative. By the end of Key Stage 1, most of the average and higher attainers read accurately and with understanding. They make appropriate use of an increasing range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and establish meaning, and some of the higher attainers read particularly well. This was apparent, for example, when a group of pupils in Year 2 made good use of phonic and graphic skills and were appropriately guided by punctuation when reading aloud with good expression. Lower attainers, who have yet to reach appropriate standards for their age, benefit greatly from the support provided by teachers and support staff, and make significant progress in relation to prior attainment.
95. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils continue to make good progress, and begin to read independently from fiction and non-fiction books and materials. Increasing opportunities to use information technology is encouraging many pupils to extend their reading skills through activities such as searching for and finding information to support their studies in other subjects. The majority of older pupils read fluently and accurately from books selected from the school library. Higher and average attainers express preferences for certain types of books and explain confidently why they like particular characters in the stories they have read. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make very good progress. They benefit particularly from the close attention and support provided by the reading recovery programme.
96. In writing, the majority of pupils, at all levels of attainment, make generally satisfactory progress in extending their skills in writing at both key stages. However, standards are not as good as those achieved in speaking and listening and reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to express their ideas in a sequence of sentences, making appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. The small proportion of high attainers show good skills in spelling; average attainers are generally accurate in their spelling of familiar words and less familiar words are often phonetically correct. At Key Stage 2, pupils begin to show an increasing awareness of the reader when writing for different purposes. Their knowledge and understanding of writing techniques are considerably enhanced through work covered during literacy lessons. For example, in Years 5 and 6, most of the average and higher attaining pupils are able to incorporate effectively into their repertoire the new skills acquired during work on persuasive writing. Higher attainers in particular benefit from such challenging work. An example of this was provided when pupils engaged in a task to write an article aimed at convincing prospective parents of the merits of Netherton Moss School, with a view to persuading them to send their children to the school. The quality of work produced by a minority of higher attaining pupils was of high calibre.
97. At both key stages, many pupils demonstrate increasing skills when engaged in closely controlled and relatively brief written tasks during formal English lessons. However, the quality of their extended writing is less consistent. In addition, the standard of written work produced by many pupils in other subjects, such as science and history, is often below that expected for their age. Careless spelling, punctuation and handwriting often spoils the quality of the pupils' responses to various tasks.

98. Throughout the school the pupils show good attitudes towards their work in English. They enjoy literacy lessons and contribute enthusiastically during whole-class elements. The youngest pupils settle quickly and listen attentively during the introductions to lessons, and sustain concentration well during the group and independent work. This is also the case at Key Stage 2, although a small minority of pupils in some classes find difficulty in working without close attention. The ability of most of the older pupils to work co-operatively when required is a very good feature.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. All of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, over 80 per cent were good or better and 27 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. This is particularly apparent in literacy lessons, during which the great majority of pupils make good progress in extending their literacy skills. Teachers' planning is usually clear and lessons are well structured, following the guidance given in the National Literacy Strategy. In most classes, the purpose of the lesson is explained to the pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. Work is appropriately planned to challenge pupils of differing abilities. Teachers provide an effective stimulus through well selected, shared reading texts which capture pupils' interest. This generally results in them working productively and extends them intellectually. Pupils respond well to challenging new work and enjoy learning new skills. This was apparent, for example, when pupils in Year 5 and 6 studied the art of persuasive writing; the pupils were quick to incorporate new techniques into their writing. Clear explanations and good use of questioning promotes pupils' awareness and helps to develop their interest in the characters in stories. In a Year 3 and 4 class, for example, pupils considered how the characters treated each other and related this to the way in which pupils in the class relate to one another. During literacy lessons, teachers work hard to consolidate and reinforce learning, emphasising spelling and punctuation, for example. However, this is not such a consistent feature in written work in other subjects, which is reflected in the lower standard of work produced. In most aspects of the work in English, assessment of pupils' work is well established and generally effective, and the practice of setting individual targets for improvement is a particularly good feature.
100. The work in English is well co-ordinated and this is an important factor in the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to make very good progress, particularly in reading, speaking and listening. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the provision made for higher attaining pupils, and this is reflected in the increasing proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2. The literacy strategy is having a positive effect on the quality and standard of work produced in formal English lessons, but its effect has yet to extend to written work across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

101. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with those found nationally. This is consistent with the 1999 National Curriculum test results, which showed the proportion of the pupils reaching national standards to be close to the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are consistent with those expected nationally and a significant proportion reach standards above this level; again reflecting the 1999 test scores. At Key Stage 1, the pupils' performance in these tests was above that of pupils in similar schools. The pupils' performance in the tests at Key Stage 2 was also well above that of pupils in similar schools. The great majority of pupils make generally good

progress in relation to their prior attainment, and pupils with special education needs make very good progress towards targets set in their individual education plans.

102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of basic number work. Most can read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond. They can count, fairly accurately, steps of different sizes from various starting numbers. Higher and average attaining pupils know how to recognise sequences including odd and even numbers, although some of the lower attainers still need practical equipment when trying to recognise these numbers. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a good grasp of basic addition and subtraction facts to 10. The higher attainers are confident to 20 and their mental recall is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have a developing understanding of place value and know that the position of a digit signifies its value.
103. Older pupils build successfully upon their Key Stage 1 work. By Year 6, they make increasing progress in understanding place value. Most are competent in their computation work and use accurately the four rules of number. They demonstrate increasing skills in solving a variety of problems involving the extension of the number system, including negative numbers and the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages.
104. In their work on shapes, space and measures the youngest pupils can estimate accurately using a range of non-standard units. By the end of Key Stage 1, they can use standard units of length, mass, capacity and time with reasonable accuracy. They know how to sort and classify three and two-dimensional shapes using mathematical criteria and demonstrate a growing mathematical vocabulary when describing their reasons. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils know how to recognise the congruence of simple shapes. The higher and average attaining pupils are able to transform two-dimensional shapes by translation, reflection and rotation. They know how to use co-ordinates to specify location. In their measurement work they are beginning to use basic formulae to solve problems related to perimeter and area and their results show a good level of accuracy in their calculations.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' skills in handling data are well developed. They understand how to gather, record and interpret information using an appropriate range of charts, diagrams, tables and graphs. A substantial proportion of the pupils can interpret more complex graphs, including pie charts, and draw accurate conclusions. Many of the pupils have a good understanding of the use of measures of average, and use terms such as mode, median, mean and range appropriately in problem solving contexts. In probability work, the Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the concept and are able to use accurately the probability scale from 0 to 1.
106. Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress in using and applying their mathematical skills. Higher and average attaining pupils in Year 5 and 6 classes show increasing skills developing strategies for solving problems within mathematics and in applying mathematics to practical contexts. They present their work in a clear and organised manner and can explain confidently the reasoning behind the strategies they use.
107. Pupils are helped to consolidate their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 1 geography lesson they used their knowledge of co-ordinates to place features on a map of an island. In a Year 4 lesson in science, they measured the height a ball bounced on different surfaces, calculating differences accurately.
108. The pupils demonstrate good and often very good attitudes towards their work in

mathematics. They are very well behaved, listen attentively and are keen to answer questions and explain their thinking. They enjoy the numeracy lessons and co-operate sensibly in group activities.

109. The quality of teaching is usually good, particularly at Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, over 88 per cent of lessons were good and more than 30 per cent were very good. Lessons are generally planned effectively in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy format. However, the mental work element in some of the classes at Key Stage 2 is not as challenging as it might be. Overall, the teaching demonstrates secure subject knowledge and expertise. This is often reflected in the good quality of teachers' questioning which is well used to establish the pupils' level of understanding and to extend their thinking. Classes are well managed and organised, promoting very good standards of behaviour. Careful attention is given to matching the work to meet the needs of the pupils. This is particularly helpful in supporting the pupils' learning and rate of progress, since all classes contain mixed age pupils of widely differing ability. The very good provision made for pupils with special education needs is a strong feature in the teaching.
110. The school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy very well in most lessons and the expected format is followed appropriately. In almost all classes, the objectives are shared with the pupils and the final plenary is used effectively to evaluate progress. The school has built up a bank of effective resources to support the pupils' learning but the use of information technology is under-emphasised in some classes.
111. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard and successfully to secure improvements in the subject. This is reflected in the good results at the end of Key Stage 2, where the attainment of the potentially higher attainers has improved considerably. The latest comparative figures indicate that the proportion of the pupils reaching standards above the national expectation is well above that of similar schools. In addition, the quality of teaching is much improved to the extent that all lessons taught are at least satisfactory and often have very good features.
112. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and the content of the work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

113. At the end of Key Stage 1, a large majority of pupils achieve levels broadly in line with those expected for their age, most, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, but a small minority of higher attainers are not fully extended by the work planned for them.
114. At the end of Key Stage 2, the standards achieved by the majority of pupils are in line with national expectations. This is a better picture than that provided by the 1999 national test results which showed pupils' performance to be well below the national average. The most recent national tests confirm the improving picture, with a high proportion of pupils reaching Level 4, the national standard. Average and lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress and those with special educational needs make good progress during their time at Key Stage 2, but higher attaining pupils make insufficient progress in relation to their prior attainment.
115. At Key Stage 1, the pupils extend their scientific knowledge and skills satisfactorily through their involvement in practical investigation of areas such as light and dark, materials and the living world. They are able to classify materials according to simple

visible properties and make comparisons between objects. For example, in an investigation into the use of different forces to change the shape of materials, pupils in Year 2 were able to record their results appropriately in words and pictures. They drew well on previous learning and were able to make simple oral predictions about what would twist or stretch, based on the hardness of the material.

116. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have gained an appropriate range of scientific knowledge through their studies of such areas as micro-organisms, changes in the state of matter, food chains, habitats and the effects of light and sound. For example, in Year 4 they constructed simple circuits accurately and were able to suggest reasons why a bulb may not light. In their investigation of a circuit with two bulbs, they made reasonable attempts to explain the electrical phenomena they encountered. In Year 6, most pupils explain accurately the principles of fair testing, although some are less able to apply these consistently. In all Key Stage 2 classes, the pupils understand and use scientific vocabulary with reasonable accuracy but they are significantly better at explaining their scientific understanding when answering questions orally than when they are required to write it down. The written work of too many pupils is of poor quality and fails to reflect their growing scientific knowledge and understanding.
117. Throughout the school most pupils take part in science lessons with enthusiasm. They are eager to show what they know by answering the teachers' questions, and they enjoy practical activities. They show positive attitudes towards their work and most behave well, although there were instances when the behaviour of a small minority of pupils deteriorated and they were unable to work productively. At Key Stage 2, the pupils make the best progress when the teaching is direct and work is highly structured. A significant minority find difficulty in working independently, especially when this requires written effort.
118. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1. It is generally satisfactory at Key Stage 2, but there are significant shortcomings in a minority of lessons. More than 50 percent of the lessons observed were good, but one of the five Key Stage 2 lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers provide appropriate levels of challenge which engage the pupils' interest within the context of practical investigative work. The pupils are given opportunities to develop the scientific skills and knowledge appropriate for their ages and abilities, learning objectives are shared with them and expectations are sufficiently high to challenge even the most able. The good teaching uses well-timed intervention and effective questioning to ensure that the pupils are productively engaged in the tasks set and to move the learning on. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils and learning objectives for lessons are not made clear.

119. Teachers' planning for science lessons frequently fails to make appropriate provision for higher attaining pupils. The direct teaching approach adopted for science is having some impact on standards and provision but the practice of giving the same level of challenge to all pupils in the two age groups is failing to provide for the most able pupils in both groups. Formal assessment of science is thorough but on-going assessment is not yet used effectively to match tasks to the pupils' previous levels of learning. The development of a subject portfolio of assessed work and the adoption of the national scheme of work have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils should do but have not yet influenced the provision for different levels of ability.
120. The programme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject is well resourced but the supporting policy was written some years ago and is in need of review. The school has identified science as an area of concern and has actively sought advice and support from the local education authority. The staff development, which has taken place subsequently, is beginning to have a positive effect on standards and teaching in the subject. The overall picture is similar to that apparent at the time of the last inspection, Raising the standards achieved by higher attainers remains a priority for the school.

ART & DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Due to the timetabling arrangements for art during the inspection it was not possible to observe a sufficient number of lessons to enable secure judgements to be made about the standards or teaching in the subject.
122. At present art is not generally taught as a discrete subject but is used to support topic work and displays. The school plans to provide more subject specific teaching and to extend the range of the art curriculum by adopting the national scheme of work from September 2000.
123. In design and technology the pupils at both key stages work at appropriate levels for their age. Almost all pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
124. At Key Stage 1, pupils design and make simple products. They show imagination in generating ideas and develop their skills in shaping, cutting and forming a range of materials. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils prepared their own design for the construction of a slide for a model adventure playground. They considered the strength, weight and flexibility of the materials available and the appropriate joining techniques. Working in pairs, they chose the design they intended to make and selected appropriate materials. They were able to adapt and develop their original designs in the light of experience, for example to increase the stability of the structure. Throughout the key stage the pupils acquire an appreciation of the importance of using tools and equipment safely, and the majority are able to make judgements about the outcomes of their work and suggest ways of making improvements.
125. At Key Stage 2, pupils build progressively on this good start. They use an increasing range of tools with growing accuracy and become increasingly aware of the need to consider the purpose for which they are designing and the preference of users.

126. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards their work in design and technology. They are interested in the work and keen to offer suggestions and opinions. They handle tools and equipment with care and display a high level of co-operation when required to work together. Pupils are well motivated; they display considerable perseverance in overcoming problems and show pride in their achievements.
127. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Lessons are well planned and a good balance is achieved between questioning, explanations, and time for the pupils to engage in practical tasks. There are examples of very effective intervention by teachers and support staff to sustain momentum. In a younger Key Stage 2 class, for example, pupils were set the problem of designing and making a bridge to meet a given specification. Interaction with staff helped to maintain the pace of learning and during an excellent plenary session the products were evaluated, promoting further thinking and setting targets for the next session.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

128. Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe lessons in history at Key Stage 1 or in geography at Key Stage 2. However, scrutiny of work produced previously by the pupils and the examination of teachers' long and medium-term planning, indicate that the school provides an appropriately balanced programme of work in both subjects at both key stages. Since the previous inspection, the development of mapping skills has been given particular attention and these skills are consistently extended as pupils move through the school.
129. In both geography and history, the large majority of pupils work at appropriate levels for their age. Most, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress during their time at the school.
130. In geography, early work focuses on the physical and human features of the pupils' immediate surroundings based on direct experience and field work undertaken in the locality of the school. Pupils are given an early introduction to map work, acquire the use of geographical terms to describe their surroundings, and become increasingly aware of similar and contrasting localities further afield. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 classes compared photographs they had taken in the vicinity of their school with photographs showing life in an Indian village. They were able to identify similarities and differences between Netherton and the village of Chembakolli, noticing physical and human features and expressing their views about where they would prefer to live and why. Pupils were also able to use two co-ordinates to locate places and features on an outline map of India.
131. At Key Stage 2, pupils build successfully on this early work. They are able to use and interpret maps of different scales in studying their own locality and use four figure co-ordinates to locate features on a map. Other pupils studying river and mountain environments are able to draw sketch maps using symbols and keys.
132. In history, pupils at Key Stage 1 acquire a sense of chronology by sequencing events and objects and the use of terms relating to the passing of time, for example, in comparing their homes now and in their parents' or grandparents' time. At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to place the events and periods studied within a chronological framework, for example, in their study of Ancient Egypt, Roman Britain, the Tudors and Britain since the 1930s. Older pupils are able to recognise different ways in which the past can be represented and interpreted and make use of a variety of sources of information.

133. Pupils respond with interest to their work in geography and history. They contribute to whole class and group discussions with confidence. However, their written response to the work studied does not always reflect their growing knowledge and understanding and is sometimes spoilt by poor handwriting and spelling.
134. In history at Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes very good; in geography at Key Stage 1, teaching is very good. Lessons are well prepared, carefully planned and have clear objectives. A class of older Key Stage 2 pupils were taught to operate successfully as independent learners. They took their own notes during the viewing of the section of a video on post war changes and life in the 1950s and used these to inform the subsequent discussion. The lesson was well planned and resourced to help pupils to investigate from a range of sources including books, artefacts, photographs and a visitor who remembered life in the 1950s. Pupils were able to use their visitor as a source of first hand information, discussing and questioning her politely and making their own notes. At both key stages in history and geography, low attaining pupils are given good support to enable them to produce appropriate standards of work and make satisfactory progress, while higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 begin to use atlases and are able to consider the effects of seasonal variations in weather on people and their surroundings.
135. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been steady improvement in the work in history and geography since the previous inspection. In both subjects, there are appropriate levels of expectation for pupils of all levels of attainment, including the high attaining pupils. In geography, pupils achieve appropriate levels for their age in developing their mapping skills and recording their findings. The good use of practical field work and oral discussion enables pupils whose facility in written English is limited to develop their geographical and historical understanding, and the use of plans, diagrams, tables, drawings and maps assists them in recording their findings with greater clarity.
136. The school has made good progress in building on the generally satisfactory situation described in the last inspection report and strengthening the areas identified as weaknesses.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

137. By the end of both key stages, overall standards in information technology are broadly in line with the national expectation, and the great majority of pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good progress during their time in the school. The programme of work generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, although insufficient emphasis is placed on the control and monitoring elements of the subject at Key Stage 2.
138. Younger pupils show growing confidence in using the mouse to control events on the screen. They are able to access relevant tools to create a simple design or build a picture. As they progress, they are able to enter simple text and amend and improve their work, showing increasing confidence in using the keyboard. Most are able to print out their work, although some require staff assistance to do so. At Key Stage 2, they build effectively on these early skills. They are able to produce short text with increasing speed and to use appropriate facilities to check spelling. Older pupils know how to highlight and shift text and are able to incorporate graphic images to complement the text. This was apparent, for example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed and produced invitation cards which included text and computer generated illustrations. On

another occasion, the pupils used the same skills to produce illustrated text, showing various events in history on a time line.

139. In handling information, younger pupils are able to use information technology to sort and classify simple information. This was apparent, for example, when pupils produced a pictogram to show the pets owned by the pupils in the class. At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to add to and amend information which has been stored. For example, information was saved in one class as part of a science investigation conducted over a period of weeks. The regular use of CD-ROM to search for information required for their studies in history and geography is a good feature. Most pupils recognise the importance of accuracy in matching the phrasing of questions to the information being sought, and many show speed and confidence in finding the required information.
140. In control technology, pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 are able to enter a series of instructions to programme a robotic toy to move various distances and change direction. Although there are some opportunities for older pupils to build on these skills, by programming a screen image to produce geometrical shapes for example, the development of pupils' skills in control technology is currently under-emphasised at Key Stage 2. This also applies to the monitoring element of the subject where opportunities are not provided sufficiently regularly in all classes.
141. Information technology is used in most classes to support work in other subjects. In a Year 2 geography lesson, pupils worked in pairs to search for information relating to their work in comparing their locality with a village in Asia. Pupils also become aware of how information technology can be used to improve the organisations of various school functions, and how this can be of benefit to them. During a library session, for example, pupils took turns to scan bar codes on books as part of the system to monitor the borrowing and return of books. They did this very competently and confidently. During the same session, pupils made effective use of CD-ROMs to search for information. In an English lesson, two pupils worked sensibly and efficiently to edit a prepared text, finding alternative words to replace the word "nice" in the text. In doing so, they extended their vocabulary as well as enhancing their skills in information technology. Although there are some examples of computer based data work in mathematics, this is not yet a consistent feature.
142. At both key stages, the pupils demonstrate a keen interest in the subject. They co-operate very effectively when working in pairs and their behaviour is consistently of a good standard. Their strong interest in the subject is reflected in their ability to recall accurately learning from previous lessons.
143. The quality of teaching is generally good, although some teachers continue to lack confidence and provide fewer opportunities for pupils. The co-ordinator works hard to provide support and guidance for all teachers and this has a positive effect on the pupils' progress. In most lessons, well selected tasks, pitched at an appropriate level, enables pupils to make good progress in extending their skills. Assessment procedures, however, are not well established, and emphasis is placed on monitoring coverage and not individual progress. On the whole, resources are well managed so that all pupils can have equal access.
144. The school is now close to opening a newly developed computer suite which will further extend opportunities for the pupils by allowing whole class teaching as well as opportunities to engage in the use of the Internet and electronic mail. Since the last inspection, the school has improved resources and extended the range of opportunities

provided for the pupils.

MUSIC

145. At both key stages, the pupils work at levels which are appropriate for their age, and most, at all levels of attainment, make at least satisfactory progress during their time in the school.
146. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress. They are able to name correctly a variety of instruments, and to use them appropriately for composition and performances. In doing so, they are able to represent different moods, such as happy, angry and sad, using a range of major and minor chord sequences. In assembly, the pupils sing simple melodies together effectively, supported by clapping and actions.
147. At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is generally satisfactory and there are some particularly good features. Pupils make good progress in extending their appreciation of music. For example, they were able to identify accurately a range of instruments and the animals they represented, when listening to a recording of 'Peter and the Wolf'. They build on their ideas from such music to produce their own creations using, for example, their own voices and percussion instruments to represent war sounds. A significant proportion of pupils show good skills in playing instruments such as recorders and guitars, and higher attaining pupils benefit from extra tuition. These skills are put to good use during whole-school assemblies, when instrumentalists and the choir enhance considerably the quality and spirituality of such occasions.
148. Pupils benefit from the emphasis placed on developing confidence in performing. They make good use of their musical talents during school productions such as 'The Magical Mystery Car', 'Joseph' and 'The Jungle Book'.
149. The pupils generally respond positively to work in music. Younger pupils are particularly well behaved and co-operate sensibly when composing and performing. Behaviour is generally satisfactory at Key Stage 2, although in some lessons a small minority find difficulty in sustaining concentration.
150. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and at least satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Lessons are carefully planned, enabling less confident teachers to compensate for their lack of expertise. Most lessons are pitched at an appropriate level and move at a brisk pace. Pupils' work is assessed effectively as lessons proceed and resources are used well to support pupils' learning.
151. The satisfactory standards apparent at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and the school has continued to extend the range and number of musical instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. At both key stages, pupils work at levels in physical education which are at least appropriate for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in games are particularly high, and most of the pupils, including those with special education needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. At other times of the year, the programme of work at Key Stage 1 includes gymnastic activities and dance.
153. By the end of Key Stage 2 the vast majority of the pupils reach appropriate levels in dance, and make satisfactory progress during their time in the school. In athletic activities, the pupils work at levels which are often above those expected for their age, and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. In swimming, the great majority of pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6, and some pupils achieve particularly good standards. Key Stage 2 pupils also take part in games and in gymnastic activities at other times of the year.
154. At Key Stage 1, the pupils' skills in throwing and striking are well developed. They throw with increasing accuracy. They try hard to find the best position for striking with maximum impact and endeavour to follow carefully the path of the ball. Pupils learn to recognise and describe some of the changes that occur to their bodies before and during exercise. For example, a Year 2 class noticed changes to their heart beats when making comparisons between entering the hall and taking part in vigorous warm-up activities. They were helped to understand what happened to their bodies and to recognise the importance of warming up properly.
155. In dance, most of the Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in devising well-sequenced dance movements, demonstrating appropriate starting and finishing positions. However, a significant minority find it difficult to sustain rhythmic movements or to make the best use of the space around them.
156. The pupils make good progress in acquiring a range of skills in athletics. For example, pupils in Year 4 were able to develop and refine basic techniques in running over short distances. By the end of the lesson their speed had increased and their overall competence reflected the improvement made over a short time.
157. In swimming, the pupils are confident in the water and are beginning to learn the principles and skills of water safety and survival. The great majority make good progress in relation to prior attainment and some reach standards which are above those which could reasonably be expected for their age.
158. The pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards their work in physical education. They are hard working and co-operative. They behave sensibly and show respect for each other and for the equipment they use.
159. The quality of teaching is usually good and often very good, particularly at Key Stage 1. Lessons are planned effectively and implemented safely. In the best lessons, the pupils are challenged physically and mentally, the work is rigorous and the teaching of relevant techniques enables the pupils to make good progress. Good quality interaction and evaluation do much to support improvements in the pupils' learning and the quality of their performance.
160. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 demonstrates some improvement and now all of the teaching in physical education is at least satisfactory.

Explanations are now more brief and clear and the pace and rigour of lessons shows improvement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. By the end of both key stages, the standards achieved in religious education meet the expectations of the Sefton Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils, at all levels of attainment, including those with special education needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages.
162. Throughout the school, pupils make appropriate progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the tradition of Christianity and teaching of other religions and are able to relate these to everyday life. At Key Stage 1, for example, most pupils understood the significance of Palm Sunday and had produced their own booklet about this celebration. They also have a sound knowledge of some of the festivals from other religions, such as Divali and Hanukkah. Pupils built effectively on this sound foundation at Key Stage 2 and extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions, placing increasing emphasis on how they influence individual values. In Year 6, good use was made of a video presentation illustrating Islamic beliefs and how they influence Muslim lifestyles. The pupils demonstrated a good understanding of this work. Many pupils recall accurately the work they have studied previously. For example, a number of pupils showed detailed knowledge of the story in the Bible concerning the healing of the paralytic.
163. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution toward the development of pupils' literacy skills by extending their vocabulary. Older pupils, for example, make appropriate use of words and phrases such as 'inner strength', 'values', 'beliefs', 'prayer' and 'fasting'. Their ability to take notes during lessons in order to use when writing up their work is also a good feature. However, some of their written work is not well presented and handwriting is sometimes untidy.
164. Pupils at both key stages are well motivated and enjoy religious education lessons. They are well behaved and the great majority work effectively as a whole class, in small groups and as individuals. Relationships are good, pupils show respect for each other's opinions and collaborate effectively in group activities. The majority of pupils handle resources and artefacts sensibly and with care.
165. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Lessons are well prepared and teachers have a sound subject knowledge. At both key stages, a good range of resources is used effectively to support the pupils' learning and on-going assessment of their progress helps teachers to adjust the degree of challenge appropriately. In some classes, there is some over-dependence on the use of worksheets and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to improve literacy skills through extended writing about the topics they have studied. Religious education makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
166. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained at a satisfactory level.