

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GABRIEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104452

Headteacher: Mr K Brayshaw

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th June 2002

Inspection number: 194468
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Infant and Junior with Nursery |
| School category: | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Ellis Ashton Street Huyton Quarry Knowsley Merseyside |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr J Blackman |
| Date of previous inspection: | May 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 3108 | E Jackson | Registered inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education. | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 9952 | L Brock | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 15015 | M Entwistle | Team inspector | Equality of opportunity; English, design and technology. | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 30651 | M Wehrmeyer | Team inspector | Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage, science, art and design, geography, history. | |
| 11642 | C Parkinson | Team inspector | Special educational needs. | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Gabriel's is a Church of England primary school of average size, serving mainly the parish of St Gabriel in Huyton Quarry, Knowsley. It occupies two buildings on either side of a busy main road, close to the parish church. The staff ensure that the school functions as a whole-school unit despite the difficulties created by its split site. There are 215 pupils on roll, 99 boys and 116 girls. The nursery occupies a separate building on the infant site, and has the capacity for 52 places part-time: currently there are six children attending full-time, and 32 part-time. The school also shares a 12 place unit for children with specific learning difficulties based in another local school, attended part-time by three pupils from this school. Staff from both schools share the teaching of these pupils. The school is situated in an area of high social disadvantage with above average level of unemployment. Although 41 per cent of pupils is eligible for free school meals, well above the national average, only 27 per cent actually choose to receive a free meal. The number of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of their need is broadly average. These needs range from moderate and specific learning difficulties to speech or communication difficulties, including a relatively large group of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. There is a small number of pupils of dual ethnic heritage, but no pupils learn English as an additional language. Attainment at entry to the nursery is well below that expected for this age group but improves to just below that expected when they transfer to Year 1.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Gabriel's is a good school, with some very good features. Although attainment at entry is below average, standards of attainment have improved well to be average by the end of Year 6. Leadership and management are very good, and the head teacher gives very clear direction to the school's work, very well supported by the deputy head, other key staff, and the governing body. The quality of teaching is good, and leads to good progress in pupils' learning from entry to leaving the school. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work are generally very good. Given the good quality of education provided, the pupils' good progress in their learning, and the average funding available, the school gives good value for money

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher, supported very well by the senior management team and other staff with management roles. The governing body is also effective, ensuring very good use of the school's resources.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and ensures a well-balanced curriculum, and good links with parents, the parish and the local community.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The pupils' attitudes to their work are very good, and they behave very well.
- The staff care for the pupils very well, including planning lessons that meet all pupils' needs.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards of attainment in writing by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The range of opportunities provided to help the pupils to become fully independent learners.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. The development of writing is included in the governors' current school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. Very good improvements have been made since then in many areas of its work. Development planning is now good, and the management and monitoring of curriculum provision is much better. Subject leadership now involves proper evaluation of standards and developments, and has led to good improvements in mathematics and music, for example. Standards attained in art and design and design and technology have improved. Standards in design and technology are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' investigative and research skills are stronger in mathematics and science, although their spelling accuracy still needs further work. The governors are more closely involved in the school's work, and have increased teaching time to meet national averages, also ensuring that

unnecessary time is not lost when pupils move between the two sites. The quality of teaching and learning has improved throughout the school.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | E | C | D | B |
| Mathematics | B | B | C | A |
| Science | D | C | D | B |

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

Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average in mathematics, and well above the average of schools in similar circumstances. In English and science, results were below the national average, but above those in similar schools. The school's performance is below average in tests in these subjects because too few pupils attain the higher levels. The current Year 6 pupils attain at least as expected for their age in all three of these subjects, with a higher proportion than last year working at higher levels, particularly in mathematics and science. Pupils attain the levels expected of 11-year-olds in information and communication technology. The gifted and talented pupils' initiative is helping to raise standards for higher attaining pupils. This is in line with the school's improved targets, and matches the improving trend in national results. In design and technology and music, the pupils attain above average levels. Their singing and instrumental performance are of high quality, and the improvement in design and technology since the last inspection is impressive. By the end of the Foundation Stage as they enter Year 1, children's attainment has improved to be just below average. Their language skills are still below average, but they have improved to average levels in mathematics, and in their social and personal development. Last year, results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were lower than usual in reading and mathematics, and below the national average. They were in line with those in similar schools in reading, but below them in mathematics. However, results in writing were well above average compared to the national average and to results in similar schools. The year group has a well above average number of pupils with special educational needs, and the school was rightly proud of their achievement. Currently, pupils in Year 2 attain the levels expected at the age of seven in reading and science, and above average this in mathematics, particularly in computation. Standards in writing are below expected levels, however. Pupils attain at expected levels in all other subjects except music, where attainment is above average. All pupils make good progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning in most lessons ensure that learning is fun, and reinforce the parents' views that their children like school. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Behaviour in and around the school is very good, improved since the last inspection. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are very good and have a positive effect on the good personal development of pupils. |
| Attendance | Very good. This is well above national averages. |

The staff use the very good relationships established with the pupils very well to manage their behaviour, and ensure that the pupils like coming to school, and have very positive attitudes to their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | 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 throughout the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. There are real strengths in the teaching of numeracy and music across the school, and for the children in the reception class across the Foundation Stage curriculum. In the nursery, the staff work well as a team and provide the children with good opportunities to explore and investigate inside and outside the classroom. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, and there are now examples of excellent and very good lessons in mathematics, history and music. Mathematics is very well taught, and pupils use their numeracy skills to investigate number patterns successfully, and to find their own ways to solve problems. English is also taught well, and the pupils learn to read and enjoy reading very effectively. The school is working hard to improve pupils' writing skills with some success. Spelling is not accurate enough, however, and pupils need more help with sentence structure and punctuation. The teachers use what they know about the pupils' achievements to plan good lessons and activities to push them on further. Pupils with special needs are well provided for and make good progress towards the targets set for them, both in this school and in the shared provision in another local school. However, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and plan their own work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The school provides a broad and balanced range of experiences for the pupils, a big improvement since the last inspection and a significant achievement for the school. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. The provision for pupils with special needs is good. The sharing of special learning skills and resources is a very effective use of time and specialism. Teachers work well with support staff who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. A very high level of respect for others is a natural part of the atmosphere of the school. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good. The provision for the welfare of pupils is very good, (improved since the last inspection.)The staff and governing body contribute well to the provision of a caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are well met. Information from the assessment of the pupils' progress is used effectively to plan further work for them |

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. Parents confirm that there is a real community spirit in the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher, working closely with the deputy head, gives clear direction to the school's work, expressed well in the improved development plan. Other key staff provide very good support, and lead their areas of responsibility well. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very good. The governing body is very effective, and not only ensures that statutory requirements are met, but that the relationship between the school and its community is strong. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. Good procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of education and the standards achieved. The information gained is used effectively to set new targets, and to compare the school's work with other schools in similar circumstances. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. Financial resources are spent wisely, and specific grants such as those for staff training and special needs are used very well. Staff, learning resources and accommodation are deployed effectively to meet the pupils' learning needs. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value to all its work. |

The number of teaching and support staff is good; learning resources are adequate, and good for mathematics, design and technology and music. The accommodation is well cared for, but the nature of the site makes it unsatisfactory as pupils regularly need to cross a busy main road to access all its facilities. This takes up valuable teaching and learning time, although staff work hard to minimise its impact.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <p>The overwhelming majority feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that their children like school, and make good progress in their learning; • that the school is very caring, and that they are welcomed by the staff; • that the teaching is good, and the general information they receive is very good. | <p>A small minority would like to see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework arrangements improved; • more activities outside lessons; • improved management, and closer links with parents. |

The inspection confirms the parents' positive views of the school. It also finds that homework arrangements are sound, and that there is a good range of activities outside lessons. The school works very closely with its parents and community.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery at the beginning of the Foundation Stage (in the nursery) is well below that expected for their age although it covers a wide range, with a few children of higher attainment. By the time they transfer to Year 1 at the end of the Foundation Stage children's attainment has improved to be just below the standards expected. Their language skills are still generally below expected levels, but they have improved to average levels in mathematics, and in their social and personal development. The reception class teacher works well to help the children concentrate, and listen carefully. Children grow in mathematical competence well in the nursery and reception class because the staff give them good opportunities to see and use numbers, and to see how shapes and patterns are made. In learning to understand the world around them, often from a low starting point, children learn a great deal from visits out of school, use the computer regularly, and learn specific vocabulary to describe places and their features, such as the beach. They show expected ability for their age in the reception class in using space, and playing and moving safely in enclosed spaces. Children's creative development is generally below average when they start in the nursery.
2. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have made good progress, and some have made very good progress in their learning. Last year's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average in mathematics, and well above the average in schools in similar circumstances. In English and science, results were below the national average, but above those in similar schools. Overall attainment was lower than the national average because too few pupils attained the higher levels. The school serves an area of acute deprivation. However, governors are determined that standards of attainment will continue to rise compared to the national average. The evidence from the inspection shows that they are succeeding in this aim, as standards are higher this year than last, and standards in Years 4 and 5 are also good for the pupils' ages. Standards have also improved on those seen at the last inspection. The current Year 6 pupils attain above the levels achieved last year in national tests, with a higher proportion than last year working at higher levels, particularly in mathematics and science. This is because the effects of the changes brought about in teaching and the curriculum are beginning to show in improved progress for the pupils throughout the school.
3. Attainment in English for Year 6 pupils is above the level expected for this age group, showing good improvement. Girls attain higher levels than boys currently, and the school is working hard to raise the standards of boys' attainment in the subject. Standards in reading are stronger than in writing, which is a current focus for development for the whole school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly average. Teachers encourage them to discuss their work, and they listen well to each other and adults, so that they make good progress throughout the school. Occasionally, teachers do not challenge the pupils sufficiently to extend and clarify their oral explanations. There is a good emphasis on teaching pupils to read throughout the school. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2, and the staff work hard to maintain the momentum of pupils' interest in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Year 6 pupils have very positive attitudes to reading, and the recently introduced reading workshops are helping them to understand how authors create text. This is also having an improving effect on their writing skills. A weakness throughout the school is in the pupils' relatively weaker ability to understand underlying meanings and nuances in a text. Standards in writing are very carefully assessed and monitored, which is helping to improve pupils' achievement as teachers use a wider range of methods, and set challenging targets for the pupils. Year 6 pupils understand well the key features of different writing styles. However, teachers do not insist sufficiently in lessons on correct sentence structure, punctuation, grammar and presentation in pupils' writing across the school.

4. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed their speaking and listening skills well, and made good progress in learning to read. This is because they use a good range of interesting texts, and receive good encouragement from teachers, support staff, visiting reading helpers, and parents. They use language that is well suited to the audience both expressively and imaginatively. However, pupils' written work shows that the higher attaining group of pupils have not been taught systematically how to improve their work by expanding their sentences or linking them using time connectives or by incorporating speech into stories. As a result, no pupils attained higher than expected levels in the recent national test.
5. Attainment for Year 6 pupils in mathematics is well above last year's school results, and above those expected by 11 years of age. The number of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels is much improved. The teaching of mathematics is very effective throughout the school, and has led to improvements in pupils' standards of attainment in numeracy for all year groups. For example, Year 6 pupils have explored complex number patterns generated randomly using dice or digit cards. They have also worked at above average levels in geometry, drawing a variety of plane shapes accurately using the appropriate instruments, compared equivalent fractions and decimal fractions competently, and created co-ordinate patterns in four quadrants accurately. Year 2 pupils are competent in the four number operations, and are beginning to remember their two, three, five and ten times tables. They cover the whole subject curriculum, including shape, space and measures, and handle data well in tables and graphs, including the effective use of computer programs for such activities as branching diagrams.
6. Standards in science by the end of the present Year 2 are in line with those expected, and at Year 6 often above average, with a greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels than last year. The dip in last year's results at Year 2 was in part because there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom joined the school later than the usual time of entry. The school recognised that the proportion of pupils achieving above average levels in Year 2 is good, but that this was not working through into Year 6, in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. Accordingly, the staff have set up a specific teaching programme for the gifted and talented pupils in science. This, together with the additional support for pupils who have special educational needs, means that the school is meeting its aim to bring out the best in pupils of all levels of ability in the subject.
7. The gifted and talented pupils' initiative is helping to raise standards for higher attaining pupils in a number of areas of their learning. This is in line with the school's improved targets, and matches the improving trend in national results. For example, a few Year 6 pupils attempted higher level national tests this year, with some success. These pupils have developed very good problem-solving skills to increase their independence in their work. This raised teacher expectation could with profit be extended to a wider group of pupils now.
8. In design and technology and music, the pupils attain above average levels. Their singing and instrumental performance are of high quality. For example, the choir sang in a regional concert held in the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, which was recorded, where their well-sung and precisely articulated version of 'The Hippopotamus Song' was received very well. The improvement in design and technology since the last inspection is impressive. A lively display of a Year 2 project shows that they have explored the mechanisms of moving parts, and assembled and disassembled vehicles made from a range of materials. Design sheets show that pupils plan which tools to use and decide upon and list the necessary materials. Powered models of fairground rides show that Year 6 are very competent in using tools to measure and cut, and they finish their models to a high standard. In all the other subjects of the curriculum, pupils attain at least average levels, including information and communication technology, and a number of pupils perform well in some aspects of physical education.
9. All pupils, from a variety of backgrounds and home circumstances, make good progress in their learning. This is because they work hard, are keen to learn, and have good opportunities provided for them by the staff. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when their progress was satisfactory. Children in the

Foundation Stage and older pupils who join the school later are identified quickly if they have special educational needs and arrangements are made to ensure that they receive suitably graded work to help them to improve their progress. The school, with three other local schools, funds part-time unit provision with a specialist teacher, who also teaches part-time in these schools. Pupils with specific learning difficulties make good progress as a result of part-time teaching at the unit. Other pupils with similar difficulties, not yet assessed by outside agencies as being suitable for unit provision, benefit from this support because the teacher works part-time in the school and shares expertise and resources with other staff. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is reflected in the quality of the school's results in national tests compared to results in schools in similar circumstances. Children enter Year 1 achieving standards just below the level expected for those of their age and a high percentage of pupils entering the school later on have special educational needs, but they make good progress towards the standards expected of all pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Relationships (between pupils and between adults and pupils) are very good and have a positive effect on their good personal development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
11. When children start in the nursery, they settle quickly into the daily routines and work and play happily together. They take part in a wide range of activities, develop appropriate levels of concentration and become increasingly confident. When they arrive at the start of the day, they choose their own name from a box full of all the children's names, and 'sign' in. When children move to the reception class, they soon adapt to the brisker pace of lessons. They move about the school and playground confidently and relate well to older pupils.
12. Attendance throughout the school is very good and well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low. The school works hard to encourage all pupils to attend regularly. Pupils like school and enjoy receiving rewards for good attendance.
13. Pupils co-operate well as they work in groups and this has a positive impact on their learning. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson for more able pupils, the teacher was carried along with the enthusiasm of the group as they applied scientific ideas to the phenomenon of acid rain. Their willingness to conduct their own research and plan the next stage of the project showed a good level of independence in learning. However, there are times when the staff do not expect enough independence from the pupils, particularly in deciding for themselves how to tackle problems. Pupils' good or very good attitudes to learning in most lessons ensured that learning was fun and reinforced the parents' views that their children like school. This was seen in a Year 4 physical education lesson when pupils worked well in pairs and groups to improve their skills in a good variety of athletics activities.
14. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school. They are keen to learn, concentrate well and trust their teachers. Sometimes pupils are noisy and boisterous in class and occasionally one or two are persistently disruptive. This is usually in response to energetic teaching, or where the teacher does not have the strategies to manage particularly difficult behaviour. Pupils who attend the unit for specific learning difficulties show greater independence and confidence in mainstream lessons than in specialised provision, where they do not always have opportunities to show initiative and independence when learning. However, the confidence they gain from a high level of tuition and success in a small group is transferred successfully into the mainstream class and helps them to take a full part in lessons. Other pupils are generally helpful to each other.
15. Behaviour in and around the school is very good and is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils move around the school quietly and with the minimum of fuss, holding doors open for adults and other pupils, for example. They are similarly courteous to teachers and support staff inside the classrooms.

During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils are also well behaved with little inappropriate behaviour observed during the inspection. This very good behaviour is a reflection of the social and moral teaching in school and is exemplified in the way that pupils respond to personal and social education. For example, Year 2 pupils were willing to contribute ideas during a lesson on 'keeping safe' and caring for each other, and they made good progress in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. There is a small number of pupils who try to disrupt lessons but they are quickly brought back on track by the consistent application of the behaviour policy. There have been two permanent exclusions during the last year, reflecting the school's determination to maintain an orderly school environment. The school takes a keen and successful anti-bullying stance and pupils confirm that any instances are dealt with quickly and effectively.

16. Pupils' personal development is good. From the nursery on, teachers set children targets for academic and personal development and most pupils are keen to achieve these. This continues throughout school with the targets becoming more focused and academic as the pupils develop. When given the opportunity, pupils carry out responsibilities well. There is a school council, house captains and 'buddies' for new children. Pupils compete well in sporting and musical competitions and from Year 4 on, and enjoy residential experiences. The good range of extra-curricular activities is well supported and pupils enjoy participating in them. A good example of personal development for both younger and older pupils is when Year 6 pupils teach line dancing to infant pupils. Pupils grow in self-esteem as they progress through school due mainly to the very good relationships they have with teachers and other adults and to the way the staff show respect to each other and to the pupils. Pupils contribute to a range of charities and send harvest gifts to the homeless. They have shown by their very good attitudes that they are capable of accepting more responsibility for their own learning in the classroom.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Most teaching and learning is good or very good. There are examples of very good teaching for every age group, indicating that staff development is having a powerful effect throughout the school. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to their work, on their behaviour, and on their application to the set tasks in lessons. They learn to co-operate well in pairs and groups, and to use skills learned in one subject, such as English or mathematics, in their work in other areas. For example, Year 5 pupils used research skills from their literacy work with great enthusiasm to find out about the daily life of the Ancient Greeks in history. Further work is required to develop pupils' writing skills, and to provide them with more opportunities for independent learning. However, teachers' lesson planning is based very effectively in their knowledge of what the pupils have already achieved so that new tasks and activities help them to make further progress towards their learning targets. This also leads to appropriate work being set for pupils with special needs, and for gifted and talented pupils in withdrawal groups. The effectiveness of the teachers' lesson planning was demonstrated when one skilled member of staff was unavoidably absent for much of the inspection. The supply teacher who replaced her was able to work from her planning and teach sound lessons with her class which built steadily on their previous work. This reflects well on the replacement teacher's skills, and on the way that the teachers build their work with the class week on week.
18. In the nursery, the staff work well as a team and provide the children with good opportunities to explore and investigate inside and outside the classroom. This helps the pupils to make good progress from often low entry-level attainment. The staff assess the pupils' progress well, but could use the information gained more effectively to chart this progress against the recommended steps in their development. In the reception class, the teacher uses her very good experience to build on the sound progress made in the nursery. She plans her teaching very well to cover the required areas of experience so that the children have a wide range of interesting and challenging activities that engage them in learning successfully. This ensures that they make good progress to improve from well below to below the levels expected when they enter Year 1.

19. There are real strengths in the teaching of numeracy and music throughout the school, and for the children in the reception class in all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is high throughout the school, and results in the pupils becoming very competent in number skills, and in shape, space and measures. Pupils in Year 1 learned to order a set of objects in sequence, using the words “first, second, . . . , next to last, last”. The teacher had organised a very good range of activities to support this learning that challenged the high attainers to sequence and label the life-cycle of a frog from pictures, whilst the lower attainers worked with the teacher to order the sequence of dressing to go out on a winter day, using a variety of items of clothing. She reinforced the correct use of the mathematical vocabulary using a good wall display to help the children read and write it accurately as they recorded their work.
20. In an outstanding music lesson for Year 2 pupils, the teacher used her excellent subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm to inspire her class to compose and notate short pieces of music to represent aspects of the weather using their own choice of percussion instruments. The pupils achieved very good results in groups because they built on previous practice, and the teacher had very high expectations of their competence and their behaviour, and gave them sufficient support and time to improve their compositions before they played them for the class. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher used Morse code to help the pupils to develop their understanding of repeating sequences, having previously listened to orchestral symphonic music. The teacher skilfully focused the pupils’ listening skills as they recognised spoken and electronic patterns, before setting them good tasks in pairs to at first copy then compose their own sequences to test their partner’s listening and understanding.
21. Literacy skills are also taught well throughout the school, and the pupils learn to read, and enjoy reading, very effectively. The school is working hard to improve pupils’ writing skills with some success. Spelling is not accurate enough, however, and pupils need more help with sentence structure and punctuation. Numeracy is very well taught, and pupils learn to investigate number patterns successfully, and to find their own ways to solve problems. Teachers make good links between other subjects such as science and geography through the choice of texts in English or research into history topics. There is room for further improvement in ensuring that pupils know how to transfer the skills learned in literacy sessions to other subjects so that standards of writing in all subjects are as high as they could be. This includes raising teachers’ and pupils’ expectations of the standards of written presentation.
22. Staff manage pupils well in the main and are generally consistent in their expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour. When expected to work independently the pupils do so well, but do not have sufficient opportunities to decide for themselves how to tackle their work, or to choose the resources they will need to complete it. For example, the pupils are often required to perform tests and experiments in science lessons. They learn how to conduct these fairly, but even the oldest pupils are not presented with a problem or question to pursue without direct guidance from the teacher, nor are they required to work out how to tackle it, and what they might need in order to achieve this. This is because the staff usually decide beforehand how they want the pupils to proceed, and also because the school has very little room to store the required equipment and material close to the classrooms in a way that makes it accessible directly to the pupils.
23. The teachers use what they know about the pupils’ achievements to plan good lessons and activities to push them on further. High attaining pupils are identified, and they have targets for their learning, which stretch their thinking. The deputy headteacher leads the teaching for gifted and talented pupils, who make good progress in these sessions where they are taught very good problem-solving skills that equip them to tackle their work across the whole curriculum. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, and this aspect of the school’s work is managed well by the special needs co-ordinator. Teachers’ lesson planning is good because they identify pupils with special needs early, and use the school’s other assessment procedures to build a strong planning framework. This helps individual teachers to respond effectively as they observe their pupils’ individual needs.

24. Teaching for pupils who attend the shared part-time unit at another local school for those with special educational needs is good. Planning is very thorough and detailed, and work is matched exactly to the nature of the pupils' difficulties. Pupils learn problem-solving skills and transfer their skills to work in their mainstream class with confidence. Some opportunities are missed in the use of information and communication technology and there is no specific planning to develop pupils' independent learning skills. Part-time teaching support for pupils with specific learning difficulties in mainstream school is very effective. the teaching is not special needsIt supports teachers in mainstream classes to teach pupils with specific learning difficulties well. The sharing of special learning skills and resources is a very effective use of time and specialist knowledge. Teachers work well with teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

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

25. The quality and range of the curriculum are good and the school provides a good variety of broad and balanced experiences to meet the pupils' interests and aptitudes. This is a big improvement since the last inspection and a significant achievement for the school. A particular strength is the very good provision and support for the pupils' personal development. As well as being taught as a separate subject, personal, social and health education forms part of the curriculum in religious education, science, and design and technology. This ensures that pupils are informed about sex education, drugs abuse and aspects of citizenship, successfully reinforced in elections to the school council. Personal development is also very much enhanced by the rich programme of additional activities and visits. The quality of the curriculum is playing a strong part in helping the staff and pupils to raise standards of attainment.
26. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection report. Teaching time is up to the national recommendation now and no time is wasted during a school day as lessons, assemblies and play times start well on time. Nationally approved schemes of work have been adopted for all subjects, and to provide guidance for the effective planning of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. This has ensured that teachers' planning builds successfully on what has been taught before so that learning is continuous and pupils learn new skills and knowledge at a suitable rate as they move up the school. Teachers have dealt well with the weakness in investigative work noted in mathematics and science in the last report and there are no other significant gaps, although limited access to the computer suite is inhibiting the application of information and communication technology to other subjects for all but the Year 5 class, where the suite is housed.
27. The daily life of the school and the overall curriculum reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Any significant differences between the results of boys and girls and pupils with different interests and aptitudes are noted and acted upon. For instance, care was taken to include books of particular interest to boys when the junior library was re-stocked and the recently introduced 'reading workshops' in Year 6 were in part a strategy to keep boys involved in reading fiction. Boys and girls are equally involved in the sports clubs and other additional activities, and younger pupils have access to sports clubs and to an after-school arts club. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are not excluded from the curriculum and the teachers do much to raise the aspirations of pupils. This is particularly evident in the good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. Withdrawal support teaching led by teaching assistants is carefully timed so that pupils with special needs take part in the introductory stage of most lessons and teaching assistants plan their work so that it helps the pupils with what they are learning in class as well as meeting their very specific needs. For example, a group of pupils from Years 4 and 5 learned spelling patterns well matched to their needs but also learned new vocabulary such as 'captivity' and 'conservation' that they would meet the following day in the class literacy lesson. Additional teaching of higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 as part of a gifted and talented initiative also raises the aspirations and achievements of this group of pupils.

28. In recognition of the need to raise standards the school gives a suitable amount of time to teaching literacy and numeracy. It follows the guidance of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and also uses the Early Literacy Support, Additional Literacy Support and Springboard mathematics programmes to support pupils who need extra help to achieve expected levels. The use of information and communication technology to support other subjects is not consistent across classes, however, and opportunities for reading for information and independent research from screen or print text are sometimes missed.
29. The school does a good deal to enrich the curriculum by additional activities and visits. There are successful football, athletics, netball and cross-country clubs. The site manager also organises a well-attended before-school badminton club. These are run for all ages, and teams compete with a good spirit, plenty of support and success in local matches and tournaments. As part of the preparation for an 'Activemark' Award, the school is hosting a series of sports events for other schools. Drama, judo and recorder clubs add to the richness of provision and the choir meets twice weekly after school. Through these clubs and activities, pupils learn to value and benefit from the local community. From displays of infant artwork in the local library to representing the local authority in a Vivace Trust Concert at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, pupils learn to give and receive from the wider community. There are strong links to charities such as Barnardos. Visits and visitors also further enhance the curriculum. For instance, the managing director of a local firm helped Year 6 with an engineering project, and two Liverpool writers worked with different classes and their teachers. The school arranges visits as often as it can to extend the curriculum in several subjects. Pupils visit places of historical interest such as Tatton Hall, Freshfield Wildlife Reserve and the Maritime Museum. Annual residential visits for Years 4 and 6 – this year to Eskdale and Patterdale – make a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development.
30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and an improvement since the last inspection. The school's mission statement and the aims contained in its policies for teaching and learning and expectations of behaviour and personal development are fully reflected in its daily life. A very high level of respect for others is a natural part of the atmosphere of the school, and there is good concentration on helping the pupils to develop a good sense of themselves in relation to all that they learn about the world around them. This links spiritual development very well to moral, social and cultural development.
31. Provision for spiritual development is good. The school successfully provides opportunities for personal prayer and reflection, for example in the school worship. Collective worship is thoughtfully and effectively planned. Weekly assemblies are carefully linked to a series of topics such as belonging, sharing and 'Our World'. A good example was provided in church when the vicar explored ideas of 'differences' amongst people and how the unique talents of individuals can be appreciated. His choice of the differences between the football players in the England World Cup team not only made the main message meaningful for children but also made it fun! He skilfully made the link that everyone is part of 'God's Team'. Displays around the school show that teachers are determined to raise the self-worth and self-esteem of pupils. For example, there is a 'Star of the Week' board and a 'Friend of the Week' board. The quiet area in the playground offers a haven of peace and tranquillity for those pupils who wish to sit quietly and reflect on their day.
32. Provision for social and moral education is very good. This confirms the views of parents who believe that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. There is a well-understood, whole-school approach to behaviour management and a unity of purpose in everything the school stands for. Class rules are negotiated at the beginning of the school year and are displayed in each classroom. Effective incentive rewards are in place and success is recognised and celebrated in assemblies. Pupils are provided with opportunities to help others, for example, in helping younger children in the playground or befriending anyone who is feeling lonely or left out. Pupils are encouraged to have a social conscience and regularly support charities as well as a hostel for the homeless. The skills and

knowledge gained in personal and social education lessons are raising their awareness of what it is to be a good citizen.

33. The overall provision for cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. As the school is in a locality where there are few opportunities for pupils to meet with people from minority ethnic groups, the teachers are aware of the need to foster cross-cultural understanding through the taught curriculum. They have begun to tackle this through recent high focus events, such a 'multi-cultural week' in which examples of, for example, music, art and food in science and design and technology lessons are taken from diverse cultures and lands. The curriculum in religious education includes the study of the beliefs and festivals of other faiths, and positive, tolerant attitudes towards these are promoted. The school recognises that there is more work to be done in this area of the curriculum, especially in using examples from other cultures and faiths in subjects such as history, geography, design and technology, art and music.
34. Music is an important part of the good provision for cultural development and pupils enjoy singing. This was seen in a Year 1 music lesson when pupils sang in tune and explored the different sounds that the instruments made. Pupils have visits to museums and other places of interest, which make them aware of their own culture and their role in it. There are some displays of sensitively written poetry by pupils, as well as good examples of artwork. However, there is still room for improvement in opportunities for pupils to experience the rich cultural heritage of other groups in British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The provision for child protection and for the welfare of pupils is very good and an improvement since the last inspection. The staff and governing body contribute well to the provision of a caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are well met. There is a positive atmosphere and the teachers know their pupils well. Parents and pupils say that all staff are kind and supportive. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is carefully monitored. Pupils with a special educational need are well supported, as are those pupils identified as being gifted or talented.
36. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The designated teacher is well trained and shares his expertise with all staff at staff meetings. He liaises with a range of external support agencies on behalf of pupils. First aid procedures are secure with two fully qualified members of staff plus a number of staff with emergency first aid training. Adults working in school are alert to the medical needs of pupils in their care. Risk assessments of the premises take place monthly and are well documented. The site manager is vigilant on a daily basis and ensures that the site is clean and free from glass and debris. The interior of the school is kept very clean. There have been good improvements in the school's health and safety procedures since the last inspection.
37. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and their success can be seen in the very good behaviour of most pupils. The school has been concerned to involve pupils in developing their own rules of conduct and this has successfully fostered a good atmosphere. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately; good behaviour is rewarded and staff concentrate on reinforcing its success. There are special assemblies when pupils celebrate each other's achievements. The anti-bullying policy provides a framework for staff and pupils to follow and there are only a few occasions when it is necessary to implement it.
38. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs early and this makes sure that they receive suitably graded work and effective help as soon as possible. This is helped by good assessment procedures and the work of the special educational needs co-ordinator. She works closely with all staff and outside agencies, such as speech therapists and psychologists, and uses their expertise well to help pupils make good progress. Communication within the school about pupils with special educational needs is good and liaison amongst staff helps to make sure that pupils receive the help they need.

39. The school monitors attendance very well and follows up any unexplained absences immediately. The success of the procedures can be seen in the very good attendance of pupils and the low amount of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is also well monitored and records kept of persistent latecomers. Parents are informed of the school's procedures in the prospectus and most parents are supportive of the school's efforts. The school uses a computerised registration system and this enables it to keep daily track of attendance. Teachers ensure that registration periods are calm and orderly and that lessons start promptly. Pupils' attendance at the unit for those with special educational needs, which is based in another local school, is good and the school arranges a taxi to take and return them to make best use of pupils' time.
40. The school has increased the range and number of tests given to pupils and now staff have a much clearer picture of pupils' attainment, and the progress that they make over time. Teachers individually assess successfully what pupils find difficult or succeed with in a lesson but are less systematic about recording this formally. These test results are then used to set a target level of attainment matched to the appropriate point in the National Curriculum for each pupil in each class. An easy-to-use recording system ensures that class teachers are aware of the level at which pupils are working at the beginning of the year and shows the progress that is made while they are with individual teachers. The school has adopted a useful system of recording teacher assessments at the end of each year in history, geography, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and information and communication technology. These list those pupils who have exceeded expectations or who have found the work difficult and provide an adequate starting point for the next class teacher. The assessment co-ordinator analyses the test results to identify trends, weaknesses and possible explanatory factors. For instance, it was discovered that weaknesses in specific aspects of reading lowered reading scores in the 2001 national tests. This led to a different approach to the teaching of reading in the school. This analysis is not always formally recorded but is shared with the management team and, via co-ordinators, with the rest of the staff. Changes to teaching and learning are made as a result. However, the analysis is not yet used to set out curriculum targets in English and mathematics for each year group.
41. The focus of the formal testing and target setting to date is to determine projected curriculum levels or numerical targets – based on what has already been achieved – and then to use the tests again to check progress towards them. The teachers are less effective in collecting data about what pupils can and cannot do, and in recording this formally to help with future lesson planning. The marking of work is a case in point. Most teachers mark work carefully and make positive comments on the pupils' books but only in the best instances do they tell the pupil exactly what they should do next to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents rightly view the school as a good school, which their children enjoy attending. They feel that the school promotes the attitudes and values that parents would expect and develops an understanding of moral issues. Most parents consider that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. These views are confirmed by inspection findings. Some parents are not happy with the amount of information they receive from the school but inspection findings are that the quantity and quality of the information sent out to parents are very good. The school offers a good range of tasks for homework although a few parents are not satisfied with the amount of work their children do at home.
43. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The quality of information provided is very good, and written to be accessible to parents. The prospectus is easy to read and includes useful information such as how to make contact with the school. Annual reports on pupils' progress are informative and give good and useful information on what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers send a newsletter each term, which informs parents of what children are learning. In addition, the headteacher sends out a monthly newsletter giving information about events in the school and the community, and details of pupils' successes in and out of school. There is a consultation evening each term when parents can gain information about the progress of their children. Teachers are available to see parents

on a daily basis as seen during the inspection when parents consulted them informally. The school holds meetings about important events such as residential visits.

44. Work with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress, and liaison between home and school is regular and useful. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are invited to annual reviews and are able to discuss their children's work with staff.
45. Parental involvement in the life of the school begins with a home visit before children start in the nursery. Once children start, parents can stay with them until they become secure and confident in their new environment. There is a meeting with teachers before the start of the first term which is the foundation of a home-school partnership; this association continues throughout the child's school life. Those parents who spoke with the inspectors felt comfortable in approaching the school if they had a concern. All feel valued as partners in their children's learning. Twelve parents help regularly in school with a variety of tasks and activities. There is a large number of parents who help in other ways, for example transporting pupils to sporting events, and this support is valued by staff. This makes the contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home good. Parents are invited to the review meetings of their children with special educational needs.
46. Parents make up a large proportion of the governing body and they are very active on behalf of all pupils. Those parents seen helping in school confirmed that they enjoy their work and a number of them have taken qualifications on the strength of it. The Friends' Association is active in raising funds for the school and pupils benefit in a number of ways by their efforts. Parents spoken to during the inspection confirm that there is a real community spirit in the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management are very good. The head teacher, working closely with the deputy head, gives clear direction to the school's work, expressed well in the improved development plan. Other key staff provide very good support, and lead their areas of responsibility well. The teamwork of the whole staff, governors and involved parents is the major driving force for school improvement. It also ensures that the school's aims and values are reflected in the quality of education provided, and the pupils' positive responses. There is a commitment throughout the school to ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to a good education, whatever their needs or backgrounds. The head teacher is very well respected in the community, and knows the strengths and weaknesses of his school well. He delegates responsibility to other staff effectively, and keeps a close eye on overall performance through visiting classrooms, observing lessons, monitoring teachers' lesson planning, and looking at pupils' work. He shares his high expectations effectively with the staff and the pupils, and is very well supported in this by the deputy head.
48. The deputy head has brought a number of initiatives and innovations to the school's work, and leads by example through his own teaching in Year 3 and with groups of gifted and talented pupils. His confident and cheerful presence is infectious for staff and pupils alike, and is backed up by his rigorous approach to the improvement of pupils' standards of attainment, their behaviour, and the overall quality of education offered. Subject leadership is good overall because the co-ordinators have time to monitor their subject, are well informed and review their subject annually in order to discuss priorities with the management team.
49. The reception class teacher is responsible for the overview of teachers' and pupils' work and development in the nursery and Years 1 and 2. She handles this very effectively, both linking the work of the nursery staff with her own in reception, and linking her class work well to that in Years 1 and 2. She has high expectations of herself and the other staff in ensuring that the pupils enjoy their learning, and respond well to the staff's high expectations.

50. The management of special educational needs is good. The management of paperwork and communication within the school is very good, and provides the basis for the good progress of pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' progress effectively from discussions with staff and looking at pupils' work. Arrangements are made to enable her attendance at annual reviews, but she has little time beyond this free of her class duties. Suitable emphasis is placed on support for pupils with specific learning difficulties and very good use has been made of the specialist teacher's time and expertise within the school. However, there has been insufficient support for her to develop these skills further, for example, through observations of the literacy hour and in information and communication technology. The management of teaching assistants is good and this helps the pupils to make good progress.
51. The governing body is efficient, and not only ensures that statutory requirements are met, but that the relationship between the school and its community is strong. Many of the governors are also parents, and bring direct experience of the school's work to their role as governors. The chair of governors knows the school well, and liaises well with the headteacher and other governors. The recently appointed minister of the Foundation church of St Gabriel is also very actively engaged in the life and work of the school. He has brought a fresh and inventive set of ideas to his link work with the staff and pupils, and has developed the parish and community links strongly. This has involved the pupils in a wide variety of activities both in and out of school, and his influence on the pupils' moral and spiritual development both in school visits and through church services is profound.
52. Good procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of education and the standards achieved. The information gained is used effectively to set overall targets, and to compare the school's work with other schools in similar circumstances. The school's system of performance management for the head teacher and staff is translated into staff development and targets for pupils' progress. There is clear evidence that these are helpful in raising standards, and improving the overall quality of education offered. School development planning is firmly based in full evaluations of the school's work, matched to its aims and targets for improvement. The focus is always to improve on past standards where possible, whilst retaining the identified strengths. The whole staff team, working closely with the governors, co-operates effectively to achieve these goals, and the school is very well placed to continue to improve and grow in strength.
53. Financial resources are spent wisely, and specific grants such as those for staff training and special educational needs are used very well. Teaching and support staff, learning resources and accommodation are used effectively to meet the pupils' learning needs. There is good accommodation for physical education, which is used well. The school is kept clean, and is well maintained by the site staff. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value to all its work. For example, governors compare the school's results with others locally, and with other similar schools nationally. They set challenging targets for improvement, and try to ensure that funding is available to help the staff and pupils to achieve them. There is a difficulty with the school, in that it operates on two sites on either side of a busy main road. The staff work assiduously to minimise the problems caused. They ensure pupils' safety rigorously in moving between the sites, and maintain a whole-school ethos without unnecessary loss of teaching time.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards of attainment further, and improve the quality of education offered, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Improve standards in written work by:
 - Raising teachers' expectations of the quality of the pupils' written presentation in all subjects.
 - Concentrating more effectively on developing pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction. (Paragraphs 3, 4, 21, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78)

2. Improve pupils' independence by:
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to become genuinely independent in their learning, so that they decide for themselves more often how to research an idea, what resources they will need, and how they will tackle their work.
 - Involving the pupils more in evaluating their own progress and attainment, and in setting targets for the next steps in their learning. (Paragraphs 7, 13, 16, 17, 22, 41, 42, 43, 81, 91, 99)

Governors may also wish to consider the following minor issue:

Develop a means to use the good information gathered in the nursery about children's learning to chart their progress through the stages described in national guidance for the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. (Paragraphs 20, 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 50 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 25 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 13 | 17 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 4 | 26 | 34 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

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) | 22 | 193 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 52 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 3 | 39 |

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 | 12 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 3 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| 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 (Year 2)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 11 | 13 | 24 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | 10 | 12 | 10 |
| | Total | 19 | 20 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 79 (91) | 83 (97) | 79 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| | Total | 18 | 21 | 20 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 75 (91) | 88 (100) | 83 (100) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 11 | 22 | 33 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | * | * | 11 |
| | Girls | 19 | 17 | 20 |
| | Total | 25 | 23 | 31 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 76 (74) | 70 (79) | 94 (85) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | 20 | 15 | 17 |
| | Total | 26 | 21 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 79 (64) | 64 (65) | 70 (62) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

* Because fewer than ten boys took the tests in 2001, the numbers at each level are omitted from the tables in line with the governors reporting arrangements to parents.

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 | 193 |
| 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 | 5 | 2 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 5 | 2 |

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: Y R– Y6

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 4.3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 122.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22 |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 34 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 11 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2000/01 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 461329 |
| Total expenditure | 460931 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1991 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 32646 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 33044 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 3 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 215 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 64 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 55 | 36 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 39 | 53 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 33 | 62 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 25 | 58 | 14 | 2 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 44 | 55 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 31 | 58 | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 50 | 41 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 56 | 39 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 28 | 50 | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 33 | 47 | 11 | 2 | 8 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 39 | 50 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 38 | 41 | 16 | 2 | 5 |

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

54. Children enter the nursery class in the September following their third birthday. They join either the morning or afternoon sessions. Six children attend full-time currently. All children have a period of visits to become acquainted with the routines before joining the class. The children start on the Foundation Stage curriculum from the start of the nursery and make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals¹ by the end of the reception year. In some areas, for example social development, they make very good progress. On balance they are still slightly below the levels expected for their age when they transfer to Year 1. Their starting point is measured by a simple baseline chart or test, including information gained during the home visits made by nursery staff. This shows that the children's attainment overall on entry to the nursery is well below average.
55. The teachers plan the curriculum together effectively. They take good care to make it appropriate for the stage of learning. The nursery staff work closely to the spirit of learning recommended for young children. It provides the children with good opportunities to explore and investigate inside and outside the classroom. The staff support the children well as they embark on the early steps to learning. The teacher of the reception children makes the curriculum gradually more formal. This enables the children to transfer smoothly into the first level of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Provision for the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. The staff have developed very good teamwork. Very good co-ordination has helped to create an effective first stage of learning. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teaching in the nursery is mostly satisfactory, and occasionally good. In reception it is mostly very good.
56. The teachers keep a good record of the children's interests, abilities and progress. They observe the children closely and make quick and efficient notes. The teachers are very ably assisted by the classroom assistants and nursery nurses, who give valuable planned support to the groups identified. The nursery teacher has started to make this system more structured by including longer observation periods. The use of information of children's attainment is not as effective as it might be, however. The teachers tend to concentrate on the details of the activities they plan, rather than on how the good quality data they have tells them what particular children need to gain from the activities.
57. The classrooms are at separate ends of the infant building. The staff have enhanced the classrooms with bright posters and careful displays of children's work. Some of the nursery resources are bright and imaginative, other equipment is not. The nursery play area lacks climbing equipment to develop the children's adventurous play further. The playground markings are attractive and enable children to follow routes as they play on scooters and tricycles.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. The children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. The teaching is good because the staff expect the children to behave well, set a good example of calm behaviour and gently encourage them to show their best sides. The nursery children settle to the expected routines, which the staff have explained clearly to them. After a term the nursery children are confident in their environment and begin to interact with each other. Most children learn to share well but several boys find it difficult to join in the group activities. They do not concentrate well and flit from one activity to

¹ The Early Learning Goals, and their included Stepping Stones, are nationally recommended targets in each of the six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, covering the nursery and reception classes. The six areas of learning are: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development.

another without giving them sufficient attention. This limits their learning, and the staff work hard to improve their concentration.

59. Progress accelerates well in the reception class. By the end of the reception year all the children socialise well, mix appropriately with older pupils and understand the class rules and the behaviour expected of them. The teacher uses well-established routines to train the children in polite behaviour, and requires them to tidy up after activities. Relationships are excellent. The reception children get on well with the Year 1 pupils. They line up to go to the hall sensibly, and in assemblies they sit quietly and pay attention. From a fairly low starting point most of the children achieve the expected levels in self-confidence, behaviour and self-control.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Children start school with below and sometimes well below average language skills. They make good progress. By the time they leave the nursery some of the children recognise letters and write their names and other words. They do not, however, listen well, to each other or to the teachers. Children speak readily in informal free activities, and in role-play. They do not respond as well to question and answer sessions. There is scope for more modelling of sentences and for a kind of running commentary to give children the vocabulary to work with.
61. By the end of the reception year the children have not all reached the expected levels in writing or speaking. The teacher works hard to build up the children's concentration and ability to listen. She uses a simpler form of the literacy hour well to introduce the children to new letters and sounds needed to build their reading and writing skills. She also introduces them to lively new stories. For example, the children listened for half an hour to find out what happened to 'The Rainbow Fish.' The particular strength is the support given to groups of different abilities, to push them as far as they can manage. The children love reading the big books with expression.

Mathematical development

62. Children start in the nursery nearer to average in mathematical awareness. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most are likely to achieve the expected levels at the end of the reception year. The teachers plan and resource good practical activities to give the children the hands-on experience which leads them to understand shape, size, weight and capacity. The nursery teacher stresses the importance of correct vocabulary, and ensures that the children know 'full' and 'empty', 'short' and 'long'. All the Foundation Stage staff seize many opportunities to point to numbers, for example, setting problems around the classroom fruit and vegetable shops, or singing number jingles. The regular play with construction kits enables the children to see different shapes, how they fit together, how heavy they are and how to make patterns with them.
63. During the simplified numeracy sessions in the reception class the children are separated by ability so that the faster learners can move ahead, while the slower are given more time and help to gain a confident understanding. They learn how to solve simple problems, and how to record features as a chart. For example, the reception children became confident in adding on numbers by rolling the giant dice which told them what numbers to use. Very good teaching through the reception year promotes equally good learning, with children enjoying numbers and eager to learn more. They attain the expected level for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. The children enter the school with below average knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress and by the end of the reception year most children are meeting the required learning goals. The teaching in the nursery is sound, and creates a learning environment filled with

objects to stimulate the children's curiosity. Teachers plan topics to capture the children's interest. The children marvel, for instance, at the minibeasts they have searched for, and at the flowers they have planted. The teachers go to a lot of trouble to bring resources that extend the children's ideas about new life. Children learn to classify ideas, for instance the difference between creatures with many and few legs.

65. Children in the reception class continue to learn about the world in and around the school, making good use of the school's site and further afield, on numerous visits to widen their horizons. They receive good direct teaching in the use of computers. They also develop an awareness of past times from events they recall in their family lives, and from looking at the life cycles of insects and frogs. The children talk about the seasons, the changes in the weather and the passage of time. The teacher helps them record their views about attractive and unattractive features in the local area. She displays these using the digital photographs the children themselves have taken. The children become very involved in the learning, for example, showing their concern for the plight of the whales. This teaching is at times excellent, and promotes very good progress, so that most children reach the expected levels by the end of the year. The strength lies in the comprehensive links created between all aspects of a topic. For instance, in a lesson about the beach the children gained vocabulary to describe spirals and driftwood while learning about shells and habitats and the function of protection against predators.

Physical development

66. The children start school at an average stage of general physical development, but below average in control of more precise movement such as hand movements with pencils or other tools. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage, and most are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they finish the reception year. Teaching is good in the nursery, where design and technology is an activity closely supervised by an adult. The children concentrate well on the resources and follow their own ideas to make models to their satisfaction, gaining more precise control of simple tools in the process. The outdoor play area enables nursery children to grow in confidence and practise running, jumping and playing imaginatively. The nursery children riding tricycles role-play safe driving, observing the road signs and filling up with petrol. The lack of climbing equipment restricts the children's ability to grow in confidence and control in a different and more adventurous environment.
67. The reception children have hall sessions where they learn to co-ordinate and control their bodies well as they move around. They learn to respond to music on tape. With the aid of the teacher's detailed instructions the children become involved in careful movement, and even in corresponding facial expression. They take more care than the nursery children to use the space well and show concern for the safety of others. The children are agile, alert and enthusiastic. The wide range of equipment and media planned and provided in the nursery and reception, allows children to learn to use tools and materials safely and with increasingly fine control.

Creative development

68. The children's creative development is below average on starting school. Children use equipment under instruction but do not supply much from their own imaginations. The teachers persevere and encourage them, and they begin to make good progress. By the time of leaving the reception year most children have reached the expected levels in music, making patterns and dance, but not in painting. The progress is due to the wide experiences provided, and to good teaching of basic skills in the reception class.
69. Many activities lend themselves to song and the adults lead the children in singing a range of popular rhymes and jingles. With the encouragement of the staff the children develop enthusiasm and confidence in handling instruments. They develop skill in singing, but are more limited in exploring their own ideas with the instruments around the classroom. Children develop their imagination well in role-

play. They explore a wide variety of imaginary situations, play well with the construction material, run cars along the routes provided and order their holiday requirements from the beach shop.

ENGLISH

70. Standards are higher than they were at the last inspection. The school has matched national improvements so that standards have been average or close to average for both seven and eleven year olds in recent national tests. Standards are even higher at the end of Year 6 this year. This is a good achievement given the poorly developed literacy skills of many pupils when they first enter school. The school supports well those pupils who find reading and writing difficult and teachers analyse the test results in order to show where particular curriculum weaknesses lie. Changes in teaching and learning have improved the rate of progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4, and challenging teaching in Years 5 and 6 is lifting the pupils' expectations of themselves as readers and writers, most particularly the boys.
71. All pupils currently make good progress in reading so that by the end of Year 2 they reach the expected level for their age and a significant proportion exceed this. The higher attaining pupils do not make such good progress in writing. This means that although most pupils reach a standard that is satisfactory for their age, the well above average test results for Year 2 pupils in 2001 have not been maintained. However, pupils in Year 1 are writing well and are on track to achieve more highly.
72. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly as expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. Although pupils come into school with limited speaking and listening skills, they soon gain confidence in speaking to adults and each other. Their vocabulary continues to limit their explanations but they take an interest in new words such as 'extinct' and 'conservation' and enjoy using them correctly. Teachers build on opportunities for pupils to talk together during group work such as in music or design and technology lessons, and give encouragement when they ask good questions, such as during a visit to the maritime museum. In Year 6, pupils make formal presentations to each other but there are fewer of these sessions in other classes. In the final phase of lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils often enough to extend and clarify their explanations. Pupils have learned to listen well by the end of Year 2, and by Years 5 and 6 show a pleasing ability to listen to each other as well as attentively to the teacher. For example, in an effective lesson with Year 5 pupils, they carefully considered each other's suggestions for building up correctly scanned rhyming couplets and justified their ideas for improvement.
73. Given their low start on entry, pupils make good progress in reading. This is because there is a lot of teaching input into reading throughout the school. Sound, systematic teaching ensures that infant pupils learn key words and letter sounds and how to work out unfamiliar words from their sounds. The use of the Early Literacy Support programme is giving those pupils who have been slower to take off in reading a firm grounding in letters and sounds and some pupils in Years 1 and 2 who have special literacy needs benefit from practical activities in the reception classroom during literacy lessons. Classroom assistants and parents help class teachers to hear each child read on an individual basis as well as within the Literacy Hour so that they get to practise regularly. As a result of this intensive teaching, almost all pupils are well and truly launched into reading by Year 2. They like stories and books, read at home often and are confident in applying their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out unknown words. They are less ready to 'read between the lines' of a story and grapple with the meaning of what they read. The proposed review of guided reading sessions is intended help to improve this higher level of reading skill and raise standards further.
74. The school places a high priority on keeping older pupils enthusiastic eager readers and looks out for new ways of keeping up the reading momentum into Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 especially appreciate being able to select from a good, controlled range of colour-coded books beyond the set reading scheme and have much encouragement and support in reading these independently. 'Reading interviews' with teaching assistants, welfare assistants, teachers and parents are logged in a personal reading diary kept up through to Year 6. This results in very positive attitudes to reading by the

end of Year 6. Pupils exchange reading suggestions informally, although their knowledge of children's authors is not extensive, perhaps because the class libraries are less well stocked with single copies of well-known good quality children's books. At present, few pupils are skilled at grasping underlying meanings and the nuances of what they read. The newly introduced weekly 'reading workshops' in Year 6 are a model of good practice in this respect. By helping to show how authors create effects, they are beginning to influence the pupils' writing style as well as deepening their reading skills. Year 6 pupils have carried out research into mountain regions in geography but opportunities for them to use the Internet for information are limited and they do not often enough read directly from the screen to retrieve and select information for themselves.

75. Standards in writing are lower than in reading and the school correctly identified this as an area for improvement in 2001. As a result, teachers have improved the range and variety of writing in literacy lessons and show the pupils how to write in different forms, for instance a letter of persuasion or a clear explanation. However, there has not yet been a strong enough push to raise the basic standards of sentence structure, punctuation, handwriting and spelling across the subjects of the curriculum, nor to expect the highest standards in all pieces of writing.
76. Pupils in Year 1 get off to a good start in writing. By the end of the year, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, know how to structure a simple sentence and punctuate with a capital letter and full stop. Higher attaining pupils progressed during the inspection to writing a well-sequenced story about Three Billy Goats Gruff that contained lively and well-punctuated speech such as, "Who is that tip-tapping over my bridge?" Pupils continue to make sound progress so that almost all pupils reach a satisfactory level of writing skill. Work on display shows that Year 2 pupils can use language expressively and imaginatively, that is well suited to the audience. They wrote to the Mayor of London following the Great Fire: "You wouldn't believe what is happening to your city; we will need lots and lots of water." However, scrutiny of work in English books since September shows that the higher ability group of pupils have not been taught systematically how to improve their work by expanding their sentences or linking them using time connectives or by incorporating speech into stories. As a result, no pupils have attained a secure Level 3 in the recent national test.
77. Progress in writing is sound across the junior classes. In Year 6 pupils learn to develop characterisation and plot through the use of dialogue. Most of the writing had a worthwhile purpose and a good feature of the teaching is the variety of writing and avoidance of repetitive practice tasks. The structure of Year 6 writing reflects their learning about the key features of different writing forms and they make lively lists of the ingredients for a 'good story', such as 'open with dialogue' 'grab attention' and 'use a mixture of simple and complex sentences'. However, there is not enough direct teaching of sentence structure, sentence manipulation and grammar at the point of writing so that pupils can see exactly how to achieve the desired effect. For instance, very good teaching about explanatory writing helped Year 6 pupils to add meaningful explanations to a set of fire alarm instructions, yet they failed to punctuate their new sentences correctly because the grammar and punctuation of subordinate clauses had been forgotten. Untidy handwriting and careless punctuation are general weaknesses. Few teachers remind pupils about presentation standards or insist on neatness and accuracy as the pupils write. This contrasts markedly with the high expectations for content and language use.
78. The format of the Literacy Hour is well embedded and teachers are achieving a good balance of reading and writing within each week. A strength is that most teachers use an enlarged chosen text to teach reading and then show its application to writing. For instance, during a very good lesson for Year 6 pupils, pupils examined how a passage on the care of house-plants was a blend of instructional and explanatory writing and then moved on to adding their own written explanatory sentences to sets of instructions about fire precautions. Year 6 pupils see the benefits of this approach and were able to explain how they applied strategies used by authors studied in the 'reading workshops' to their own writing. All teachers plan their time across the week carefully so that enough teacher time is allocated to guiding the reading of different groups of pupils. They also plan different tasks and activities for pupils who attain highly, at average levels and also for those who find reading and writing more difficult.

They make good use of time by trying hard to make the learning accelerate during the week so that the circuit of group tasks is altered as the week progresses.

79. Teachers make good use of resources such as transparent overlays, whiteboards and flip charts in order to build up explanations in strong, direct lesson introductions that extend the pupils' understanding through questioning, and build up a high level of involvement. For instance, Year 5 pupils used their teacher's scribing of verse structure on an overlay to show how it applied to each verse of Ogden Nash's poem 'Isobel'. Although teachers show pupils how to plan their writing, there is too little use of the computer to rewrite and revise work or to help with research skills. Support staff are deployed well to support pupils who find learning more difficult. In the best lessons, the teaching assistant will prompt and encourage throughout the lesson in order to keep pupils with special educational needs in touch with the lesson. Planning of further work for these pupils is very much helped by the introduction of a weekly assessment sheet completed by each teaching assistant for the benefit of class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator.
80. The teachers' use of regular assessments in reading and writing is helping to indicate the rate of progress of the class and individuals. Most teachers note informally what pupils may have found difficult or too easy and adjust their planning as a result, but these records are not in place in a standard format that all teachers can use and interpret. The record sheets used by the teaching assistants are a good example of how a consistent approach to recording pupils' difficulties can improve teaching by showing what the pupils need to learn next. Targets are set for individual pupils but as yet they are making little difference to learning. This is because they are not fully shared with pupils or with parents and carers. Pupils do not always understand them and they remain unchanged for too long a period of time. Teachers rarely refer to them in marking and because they are too general they are not being used as guide and reference point for teaching and learning.
81. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is well informed about national and local initiatives. She monitors teaching by observing in classrooms she has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is constantly looking for ways to raise standards. The co-ordinator liaises well with other key staff such as key stage co-ordinators and the deputy headteacher, which helps to increase her influence with all the teachers.

MATHEMATICS

82. Standards have improved to be above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The teaching of mathematics is very effective throughout the school, and has led to improvements in pupils' standards of attainment for all year groups since the last inspection. The staff have adopted and adapted the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy very well, and use its three-part structure very effectively. This is having a strong influence in driving up standards of attainment, and the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils with special needs generally achieve at lower levels than their peers, but make good progress towards the targets set for them. They often receive particular help from classroom assistants or the teacher, and work with practical materials to support their learning. Groups of older pupils with special talent in mathematics are withdrawn for extra work by the deputy headteacher. This initiative is proving successful, and these pupils rise to the problem-solving challenges set for them very well.
83. Year 2 pupils achieve above average levels currently. This is a good improvement since last year, when results fell as the class contained many pupils with special needs and whose attainment was lower than expected for their age. A high proportion of the current Year 2 attain above average levels. They are competent in the four number operations, and are beginning to remember their two, three, five and ten times tables. They cover the whole subject curriculum, including shape, space and measures, and handle data well in tables and graphs, including the effective use of computer programs for such activities as branching diagrams, for example. They use their numeracy skills well in other subjects such as science, for example to read scales. Year 6 pupils also attain above average levels, improved since last year, and

back to the more usual level achieved by the school in the national tests. Talented pupils work at high levels for their age, solving complex computation problems using a variety of methods. During the inspection, the pupils explored complex number patterns generated randomly using dice or digit cards. They have also worked at above average levels in geometry, drawing a variety of plane shapes accurately using the appropriate instruments, compared equivalent fractions and decimal fractions competently, and created co-ordinate patterns in four quadrants accurately.

84. Data-handling is a central part of the work in information and communication technology, and links very well with the pupils' work in mathematics. Pupils throughout the school learn to represent and analyse data in a variety of ways, some by written means, and others using computer programs. This is most effective in Year 5, where the pupils have access to the computer suite most of the time, and become very competent in their use to complete their work in the subject.
85. The pupils enjoy their work, and tackle the problems and investigations set with zeal and confidence. This is because the quality of teaching is high, the teachers have very good relationships with the pupils, and the work is well planned to meet all the pupils' needs. For example, the Year 3 class had a mathematics lesson immediately following the opportunity to watch an early morning World Cup football match, then an exciting service in church, across the main road. As there are a number of pupils in the class with behavioural difficulties, there was potential for this being a difficult occasion. However, the pupils responded very well to the teacher's opening activity. He skilfully gave clues to a 'mystery' number that the pupils had to isolate from the possibilities given, for example a number less than 20 in the three times table. The pupils settled to this immediately, eagerly writing the possible numbers on their whiteboards, and crossing them off as more clues were given. The rest of the lesson flowed very well, a testament to the good relationship between teacher and class, the quality of the planning, and the willingness of the pupils to engage in the subject work.
86. Very good lessons in all classes were taught by their regular teachers. A supply teacher was able to use the absent teacher's planning to lead a sound lesson for Year 4 pupils. This illustrates how well the teachers use the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, and plan their lessons very effectively to meet all the pupils' needs. Support staff work well with pupils requiring extra help, including those with special educational needs. This very good teaching is founded in good subject knowledge, very careful planning of lessons, good knowledge and understanding of the pupils' stage of learning, and high expectations of their behaviour, concentration, and progress towards the shared learning goals. The pupils respond by working hard, co-operating well in pairs and groups, and applying their prior knowledge to help them in new problem-solving situations.
87. The subject is very well led by the deputy head teacher. He has good overview of progress across the school, and works closely with the rest of the staff to ensure that issues requiring action are quickly dealt with. For example, it was found from evaluation that the end-of-lesson summary sessions were not effective. A plan was instituted to remedy this, the headteacher observed lessons to monitor the effect of the changes, and a second evaluation found that these sessions were much improved, and reinforcing pupils' learning well.

SCIENCE

88. The school set about systematically and successfully to eradicate the weaknesses found during the previous inspection. The staff have adopted a new, stronger curriculum based on national guidelines. Planning shows clear objectives. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly. The headteacher and co-ordinator analyse the pupils' test answers to show areas of difficulty, and to identify groups of pupils who need extra support. As a result the school has enjoyed a rising trend of achievement in the standard tests. Standards by the end of the present Year 2 are in line with the average expected and in Year 6 they are likely to be at least above average. The drop in last year's results at Year 2 is linked to a class with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom joined the school later than the normal entry points. The school recognised that the infant pupils were particularly good at

reaching the higher level but Year 6 were not achieving as well. In response to this the staff have set up a specific teaching programme for the gifted and talented pupils in science. This, together with the additional support for pupils who have special educational needs, means that the school is meeting its aim to bring out the best in pupils of all levels of ability. The matching of work to pupils' ability is also an improvement since the previous inspection.

89. Teaching is good throughout the school. It contributes to at least good progress, and in some years to very good progress. The Year 5 class, for instance, is at a high enough standard for the teacher to move on from simple ideas of fair testing to look for patterns in the data, which pupils collect. All teachers explain well how their lessons link with earlier work to enable pupils to see how their learning is building up. The pupils, however, do not know the nature of the levels they are achieving, and do not evaluate their own work.
90. The teachers encourage the pupils to look at science as questions. For instance, Year 2 ask "What is electricity?", Year 4 ask "How would you measure the force of friction?", and Year 5 ask "What size of paper towel will dry quickest?" This maintains the pupils' sense of curiosity and promotes their ability to think clearly and solve problems. The teachers prepare and use resources well so that pupils can use them to test out these problems. Year 4 pupils were fascinated by the force-meters that helped them test friction of various materials. They learned to use scales accurately. Year 5 had to think logically to devise a test for drying paper towels. They learned that their results would need to be recorded in a particular way to prove their predictions about the size of the towels. The strategy of the teacher appearing to learn alongside the pupils worked well because the pupils had to rely upon their own reasoning.
91. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to give clear explanations that guide pupils to reach accurate conclusions. When necessary the subject knowledge is very detailed. For instance, to support the gifted group, the teacher needed to know about atoms and molecules, and be able to discuss with pupils the chemical composition of acid rain. Since pupils are learning well by thinking about the practical situations, they do not need long introductions to lessons. The good relationships that teachers develop mean that pupils are interested and able to learn in calm classroom conditions.
92. Teachers use question and answer very effectively to draw out and extend pupils' ideas. By repeating the questions "why", and "how do you know", they encourage pupils to look more closely at the evidence. Teachers make effective links with literacy to enable pupils to develop a sound technical style of recording results. They also link with pupils' mathematics skills in measuring, collecting measurements and displaying them in graphical form. The pupils' quality of presenting their writing is not as good as it might be. Some teachers use computers effectively for making scientific measurements and for presenting them, but this is not consistent in every year.
93. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, and has promoted an enthusiasm for science among the staff, so that the teaching is much more consistent than it was during the previous inspection. She encourages the staff to enrich the curriculum by visits, for instance to 'Eureka' and to technology museums, to add a wider dimension to the curriculum. The staff are well placed to make more effective use of their assessment information to set increasingly demanding targets for moving pupils in a more precise way through the levels of progress.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Standards in art and design are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages at the end of Year 2 and 6. The work of many infant pupils, in particular topics in the art club, is above average. Pupils make good progress in basic skills and in imagination. Pupils who have special educational needs experience success in this subject.

95. The co-ordinator has introduced a new planning scheme since the previous inspection. It is based on national guidelines and enables teachers to develop skills step by step. Because of this the planning is consistent through the school. Only two full lessons were observed during the inspection, one in each of infants and juniors. The teaching was satisfactory. They were led with enthusiasm, which encouraged hesitant pupils to want to try. The teachers had clear ideas of what the pupils were to achieve during the lesson. The teachers gave clear explanations, but did not share the objectives with the pupils. Consequently the pupils did not see the wider context, nor did they understand the stages of their own progress.
96. From discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work on display and observation of the art club, it is clear that teaching is generally good. The teachers plan well to build up basic skills in a wide variety of themes and techniques. Pupils are free to explore their own ideas and media within the teachers' detailed guidelines. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, in which pupils were found to be more restricted. Teachers develop pupils' ability to think of their materials as information, which will help them realise a design. For instance, infants were helped to see how an artist like David Hockney uses different materials to achieve water effects. The teachers establish useful links between different subjects, to the mutual benefit of each. Year 4 pupils, for instance, learn how to draw more careful maps in geography because they have studied them as an aspect of design. Year 5 pupils use their above average skills in hatching and shading to illustrate their history work on artefacts.
97. The computer is used appropriately for some aspects of art and design. Pupils in several years are beginning to explore three-dimensional art and design, including clay. The Year 5 Greek vases are of good quality. Year 6 pupils used their sketching skill to capture impressions of their visit to the Lake District. They bring these back to the classroom to complete, as very atmospheric paintings of rural scenes. These are imaginative learning conditions that promote good progress. The teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of famous artists. This helps pupils to expand their horizons, but at present they lack the vocabulary to discuss clearly the artists' and their own work. Pupils' work is displayed thoughtfully around the school. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of how to develop art further, and leads it effectively. She has ordered the better quality materials that will avoid the need for pupils to work with inappropriate pencils and paper.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Standards are at the level expected for pupils by the end of Year 2 and above this by the end of Year 6. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. Improvement has come about because the school now has a scheme of work that sets out how the work of each class will build upon what has gone before. The content of the units of work in each year is heavily influenced by the nationally recommended scheme that has been adopted, as in most schools. However, the subject leader's policy statement, rationale and skills checklist for each year group help to ensure that the teachers develop the pupils' understanding of all the key skills. This was not satisfactory the last time that the school was inspected.
99. As a result of good subject guidance in planning, teachers are now much more confident in their knowledge of the subject. They are enthusiastic and prepared to use tools and materials that might have concerned them some time ago. The school is proud of its new-found interest and is acting as host to an interested cluster of local school subject leaders. This is giving an increased boost to teachers' confidence. Resources have been much improved and teachers plan the timetable for slots to suit the needs of a particular unit. For instance, they have set up 'introductory focus days' on moving vehicles or half day slots at key points within a unit to allow the necessary time for working with tools. The subject leader promotes the subject well through her interested involvement in the work in different classes and through regular consultation about the effectiveness of units.

100. The lessons seen during the inspection were in Years 3 to 6 but an examination of work completed in Year 1 and 2 as well as in junior classes shows that teaching is good across the classes. By the final term of Year 2, pupils are engaged in an ambitious project to design and make moving vehicles. A lively display of this project shows that they have been through all of the processes of exploring the mechanisms of moving parts and assembling and disassembling vehicles made from a range of constructional materials. Design sheets completed during the project demonstrate that pupils can plan which tools to use and decide upon and list the necessary materials. They have measured and cut out wood and stiff card and with help, made wheels and axles so that their lorries and cars move. Strengths evident throughout the school are that pupils evaluated their designs and also tested them out in the playground and the hall. It is clear that they have enjoyed their work.
101. The evaluative strand is continued well throughout Years 3 to 6. Year 5 pupils identify weaknesses in their designs for toy mechanisms: “the bottom was too loose” and “the handle would not stay still” and they write, and note solutions. By the age of 11 they understand the design process to a good level of sophistication. For instance, they examined a slipper in order to unpick five key design specifications that the manufacturers had been working to. The ability to produce plans and diagrams is developed to a satisfactory level throughout Years 3 to 6; for instance, Year 3 pupils made sideways as well as front view diagrams of photograph frames prior to designing their own. The subject co-ordinator has correctly identified this aspect as one for further development, especially for older pupils.
102. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic and supportive co-ordinator. Her encouragement and support has made a significant difference to standards of teaching and she has a very clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and will make sure that it continues to move forward.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Standards are broadly in line with the expected level for the pupils’ ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Provision for geography has improved since the previous inspection. The new structured planning scheme enables teachers to plan more consistently throughout the school. The strong focus on literacy and numeracy in recent years means that there is only limited time available for geography. The school is careful to monitor that all the required elements are covered.
104. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching in this lesson was good. The teacher encouraged the Year 2 pupils to follow ‘Barnaby Bear’s travels with enthusiasm. In the process they learn about north and south, ports and ferries, and places near at hand and far away. The pupils’ work is well displayed in all years. This and the pupils’ work in books suggests that teaching is satisfactory (overall.) Some areas, such as mapping skills, are not developed, or used, in sufficient depth. The mathematical topics of scale and co-ordinates, however, are taught in good time to enable, for instance, Year 5 pupils to apply them in geography work.
105. Teachers prepare suitable resources to develop pupils’ knowledge about places, but find a limitation in material for local geography. The Year 6 pupils present their findings as reports on particular themes, such as mountains. They enjoy the research involved and use information and communication technology well as a source of information. At present teachers guide the investigations, and pupils do not independently select their own geographical questions to study, or plan their research. The quality of writing is not as good as the geographical content. Pupils are letting themselves down in spelling and handwriting. Teachers and classroom assistants give good support to those who have special educational needs, and they these pupils share appropriately in the class progress. The work with gifted and talented pupils in Year 6, for science, overlaps? with geography. In these sessions the pupils are eager to use their initiative and independence. The school then achieves its aim to fully develop the abilities of all pupils.

106. The subject manager leads it effectively and has undertaken a valuable review of the subject. This has highlighted the need to use information and communication technology more. She is developing a new planned unit for local studies, and sees the value in extending the annual assessments of pupils' attainment into a programme where pupils can undertake part of their own evaluation of their work.

HISTORY

107. Standards are in line with those expected for the pupils' age by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has improved the planning scheme since the previous inspection, so that skills are now taught in a consistent form through the school. Teachers now assess pupils' progress at the end of the year so that they have a picture of how pupils are progressing. The teachers and classroom assistants give good support to pupils who have special educational needs. They make good progress because they are developing their writing skills also.
108. The quality of teaching is good. The good quality displays indicate that teaching is consistently good throughout the year and the school. The teachers' good medium-term plans lay out the skills and knowledge they intend to cover. Therefore pupils acquire a good understanding of an organised approach to the study of history. The teachers' lesson plans detail the purpose of the lesson clearly, and identify the materials and methods which create good learning conditions. The pupils handle the exhibits and learn to use their reasoning powers to predict the likely purpose of the objects. For instance, Year 1 pupils had a very valuable opportunity to directly compare old and new forms of floor cleaners. They were preparing to record these as a sequence of drawings making a timeline. Teachers provide a wide range of sources for the older pupils to research. Year 5 pupils, for instance, were excited to use the library books and the Internet to find out more about the daily life of the Ancient Greeks, recording their work as drama or writing or art. Year 6 pupils are developing a very good awareness that history can be represented in many ways, such as maps and tables. They gained much of their information about the history of the jubilee from old newsreels and from taped questions of the recollections of an 'old' teacher.
109. Teachers now present history as a series of investigations, which means that pupils develop a questioning approach. This means that teachers work to clearer lesson objectives, and concentrate more closely on historical skills. This enables pupils to make good progress in lessons and throughout their years in school. Some of the best work of the older pupils is when they write about the motives of the people involved in the events. The writing itself often lets the history down, as pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar are not as strong as they should be.
110. The teachers' use of questioning in lessons is good. It draws out pupils' ideas, supports the hesitant pupils and encourages the confident ones to think more deeply. Pupils discuss well in groups or as a whole class, but they do not yet independently set out their own agenda for investigation. Year 1 pupils develop confidence in speaking more formally in front of their class, explaining what they have found out. Pupils find the idea of the passage of time difficult to hold on to. They do not have a system for remembering the various periods of history and the number of years elapsed. Resources, such as timelines, are not sufficiently in evidence around the school. Other resources are good. The teachers are beginning to match the level of the work to the pupils' ability, and the slower pupils get help with writing their ideas. The co-ordinator has monitored the position of history in the school and has a clear picture of how to develop resources and the curriculum to improve standards further. She leads the subject effectively, and is particularly concerned to increase the focus given to local history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Good strides have been made since the last inspection, and pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 5 have the current computer suite in their own classroom, and

make good progress because they have regular access to it. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve levels close to those expected for their age.

112. Standards of attainment by Year 2 and Year 6 are approaching average levels. The school has sufficient equipment for the pupils to make sound progress in using the computer, in learning to handle information from a variety of sources, and to use a variety of electronic and control equipment such as digital cameras and microscopes, tape players, listening centres, floor robots, and signalling and sensing instruments. For example, two Year 5 girls demonstrated their skills in writing control instructions into a program on the computer screen to sequence a set of lights to simulate traffic lights. They achieved partial success, and knew what to do to rectify a break in the sequence based on an error message. This was applied knowledge and understanding expected of pupils a year older.
113. There is an active plan to build an extension to the school, which will house a new computer suite. This will be a welcome addition, but will still be part of the ongoing difficulties created by a school site that is split by a busy main road. This has implications for access to the suite for pupils in Years 1 and 2. There are facilities available in each class area for pupils to use computers and other electronic equipment, however.
114. The pupils are generally enthusiastic about the subject, and complete work to develop their skills in using and presenting information in a variety of ways and from different sources competently. For example, whilst a group of Year 3 pupils worked with the teacher on a simulation program using the computer, the rest of the class worked from text books to develop their information retrieval skills. However, when a whole class uses the computer suite while the Year 5 class is using the hall, for example, there are three pupils to one screen in some cases, which occasionally leads to loss of interest for those on the fringes.
115. The staff have developed their skills well since the last inspection, and provide the pupils with sufficient opportunities to gain word-processing skills, work with simulations, learn to send and receive e-mails, and use a variety of electronic equipment. There are good examples of the use of skills learned in the subject in word-processed passages in English and religious education, charts and data-handling in mathematics and science, and research using the Internet in history and geography. Nationally funded training for the teachers is under way, and the subject leader has led sessions to introduce members of staff to areas of the subject with which they are less familiar. The subject leader has a very good overview of developments across the school, and her action plan for improvements is good.

MUSIC

116. The subject has been transformed in the last two years under the enthusiastic and skilled leadership of the specialist co-ordinator. She teaches her own class, leads the choir and whole-school singing practices, and has a strong influence on the profile of the subject in the school.
117. Standards of attainment are above those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, particularly in singing, where standards are high throughout the school. Pupils also develop good skills in listening to recorded and live music, and in composing and performing their own pieces using tuned and untuned instruments. Those pupils who learn to play the violin, flute and clarinet with visiting teachers make good progress in reading standard notation and progress effectively through the staged levels to improve their skills. All pupils have full access to the musical opportunities offered by the school, and those with special needs make good progress, particularly in listening to and appreciating music, and in singing.
118. Pupils are enthusiastic when the subject leader takes lessons, assemblies or singing practices. Her specialist subject knowledge is allied to active enthusiasm, and she creates very good working relationships with groups of pupils in different settings. They respond to her engaging style with real

pleasure in performing songs and hymns with actions to enliven and emphasise their meanings. Older girls in Year 6 clearly see her as a role model, and imitate her style effectively. Both boys and girls in the younger classes learn to sing well through this approach, although a few of the older boys are less involved, and need different challenges to engage them further. A recording of the choir performing this school year in a Merseyside Festival at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall exemplifies the high quality of the singing developed by the volunteer choir. During the inspection, this group practised a variety of rhythmic and tuneful songs, some in parts, and as this was on Friday evening after school, indicates the level of dedication from the pupils and the two staff involved.

119. The rest of the staff also contribute effectively to the profile of the subject in the school. A Year 6 lessons taken by a replacement teachers included the use of a very good range of new percussion instruments representing the variety of cultural influences in British music today. These were to be used to accompany choral speaking of verses from 'Macbeth'. The pupils were very interested in the look, feel and sound of these instruments, and were clearly impressed by this addition to the resources available. Year 5 pupils used Morse code in a very creative way to practise repeated phrases, as in symphonic music. The teacher handled the whole lesson well, and the pupils made good progress in listening, and in composing specific sound patterns and phrases for themselves. They also worked in pairs and as a class effectively.
120. Year 1 pupils responded very well to the teacher's skilled suggestions to choose an instrument to illustrate particular sounds and rhythms. She extended their reading skills effectively here by insisting that they read out for themselves words such as 'slow', 'quickly' and 'scrape'. When the pupils demonstrated their action sound, she ensured that all the class commented on its effectiveness, practised it themselves, and tried the opposite. For example, if 'fast' was the word on the card, they also tried 'slow', 'high' they tried 'low'. In an outstanding lesson led by the subject leader for Year 2 pupils, the pupils experienced the full range of the subject programme, leading into composition of a piece to illustrate the weather using their own choice of instruments. The teacher's skill and excellent working relationship with the pupils help the pupils to notate and read back their compositions, and to play from them. The whole class was stilled with wonder as one boy gradually increased the pace of his playing of a percussion instrument from African roots.
121. The subject leader provides very effective leadership, and her enthusiasm and skill have affected both pupils and staff positively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain as expected for their age in those areas of the subject seen, as found at the last inspection. They have opportunities to experience the full range of subject activity, including swimming, athletics, and outdoor and adventurous activities. Year 6 pupils had to practise tennis strokes in the hall as the weather was inclement, which restricted how well they could perform. The teacher used a number of techniques in coaching them, and some pupils showed good control of forehand and backhand strokes. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls, although in Year 4 the girls were far better at skipping than the boys. The subject has been revived well under the good direction of the current subject leader, and the staff have taken part enthusiastically in a good variety of training sessions to improve their understanding and skills in teaching gymnastics, games, netball, and swimming. The next step is to increase the focus on dance, particularly to increase the influence of different cultures from British society on the work in the school. There is high attainment for some pupils in swimming, running, and gymnastics.
123. Pupils enjoy these lessons, and work hard to achieve the targets set. They generally behave well, and have positive attitudes to their learning. In a Year 4 games lesson the pupils' response was outstanding. Here, the pupils built on previous work in developing athletics skills. They co-operated successfully in pairs and groups, and showed very good independence in discussing and judging the quality of their own

and other pupils' performance, and what was required to improve it. This was because the teacher had very high expectations of their attitudes to the work, had planned the lesson very well, and had effective, calm control in a very active and productive playground session.

124. The teaching observed in Year 2 was sound, and the pupils showed a positive attitude to the work, and behaved well in the main. They practised the target activity effectively, and made sound progress in throwing and receiving a variety of beanbags and small balls. They need further practice and awareness, however, of how to use space safely so that they do not encroach on others as they work. The teaching varied from being satisfactory to being very good for junior pupils. The staff understand the key requirements of a physical education lesson, and generally ensure that the pupils understand what is expected of them. Occasionally, teachers do not make their expectations clear to the pupils, and they are unsure how to proceed, and some become disruptive. In general, girls respond to the teachers' expectations of behaviour and personal responsibility more quickly and effectively. Year 5 pupils responded very well to the teacher's high expectations of their behaviour and their achievement in developing a sequence of jumps and rolls in gymnastics. They carried the apparatus safely, and try hard to use subject language when evaluating their own and other pupils' performance. This is limited by their vocabulary, and though their teacher has very good subject knowledge, she did not model the specific language required effectively.
125. The school is well equipped for the subject, and has good accommodation, with two halls and playgrounds, and a large grassed field. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a good range of sporting activities before and after school, including badminton, netball, football, and athletics. The older pupils take part in a residential experience, where they take part in a variety of outdoor pursuits. The subject leader is knowledgeable, and has good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning, and the standards attained.