

INSPECTION REPORT

CATHCART STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105048

Headteacher: Mr M D Randall

Reporting inspector: Mr A H Markham
1390

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 194934

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dover Close Birkenhead Wirral Merseyside
Postcode:	L41 3JY
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Bartlett
Date of previous inspection:	19th – 23rd May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1390	Mr A H Markham	Registered inspector	Science History Geography Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and pupils' achievements</i> How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13706	Mrs G Marsland	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
17767	Mrs S Power	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology	
29263	Mrs F Clarke	Team inspector	Foundation stage Music Religious education	

20846	Mr A Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cathcart Street Primary School is an average sized school with 226 pupils on roll aged 3-11, of whom 26 attend part-time in the nursery. The school is situated in the centre of Birkenhead and serves an area having a high degree of social disadvantage with high unemployment. There are nine classes in the main school, organised by age, and the average class size in the present term is 22. Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (69 per cent) is well above the national average. There are 94 pupils on the special educational needs register (44 per cent) which is well above the national average and six pupils have a statement of educational need; their main difficulties are clinical/medical problems, specific learning problems and emotional and behavioural problems. There are only four pupils from other ethnic groups having English as an additional language. The school achieved the Basic Skills Award for literacy and numeracy in 1999 and this has just been re-awarded.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which provides a very good level of care for its pupils. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average, they have been improving over the last four years and, in relation to similar schools are average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. Considering the low skills of pupils on entry to the school, pupils' achievement is good. The quality of teaching is good and the majority of pupils make good gains in learning in relation to their previous attainment. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and provides clear educational direction to the school. The governors are very supportive and fulfil their duties very well. The school is very aware of the needs of all groups of pupils and works hard to ensure equality of opportunity. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher with the support of the senior management provides very good leadership and educational direction.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Relationships in the school are very good and develop very positive attitudes and behaviour in pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics are very good and information is used effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Procedures and practices to ensure equal opportunity and the well being of pupils are very good and inclusion is given high priority.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and there is good provision for pupils' social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- The quality of provision and standards in science.
- Standards in music in Key Stage 2.
- Standards in writing and speaking and listening.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997 and since then has made good progress. Standards in mathematics have been improved and there continues to be a strong commitment to raising standards in all subjects. Standards in design and technology are now good. However, pupils' attainment in music by the end of Year 6 continues to be below average. The school complies with the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now a higher percentage of good or better teaching. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Assessment procedures are very good and national test results and teachers' assessments are analysed and the information used to help teachers to adapt the curriculum to pupils' needs. Provision for pupils' moral development has improved and is now very good.

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	D	D	E	C
Mathematics	D	D	E	C
Science	E	E	E*	E

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

Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected and children make very good progress but despite this children's attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is well below average when they start in Year 1. However, children achieve well in all other areas of learning. National curriculum test results in 2001 were well below the national average in English and mathematics but compared more favourably with those in similar schools, being average. Performance in these subjects has risen in line with the national trend over the last four years, reflecting the school's successful strategies to improve standards. Results in science were very low and in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The standard of work seen in English, mathematics and science continues to be below the national average but indicates that pupils achieve well compared to their attainment on entry. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading throughout the school and by the end of Year 6 most are reasonably numerate and read competently but standards of writing and speaking and listening are less well developed. The school has recognised the need to improve standards in science and these aspects of English. Standards in design and technology are good. The standards achieved in music by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory but standards in Years 3 to 6 are below average. Throughout the school standards are satisfactory in art, history, geography, information technology, physical education and religious education. Good quality teaching has a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning in these subjects and pupils achieve well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and, as a result, they make very good progress but some higher achieving pupils underachieve. Targets set are appropriately challenging. Pupils' performance in 2001 tests was higher than the targets set and the school is on course to achieve future targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school. The majority are interested, eager to learn and keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils work and play sociably together, supporting each other well. Pupils show good levels of initiative and carry out a wide range of duties effectively.

Attendance	The school works very hard to improve attendance but pupil mobility and unexplained absences result in attendance being well below average.
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Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are strengths of the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond well to the school's high expectations. They are enthusiastic, interested and involved in most activities.

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.

Pupils have good learning opportunities because the quality of teaching overall is good. Teaching has improved significantly over the last four years and there is now much more good and very good teaching. English, mathematics and science teaching is good overall. Teaching is also good in information technology and design and technology. Teachers manage their pupils very well and teach the basic skills in literacy and numeracy effectively. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers make effective use of assessment when deciding what to teach next and lessons are well planned with activities which cater for pupils at different stages of learning. However, although teachers work hard to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, the work presented to higher attaining pupils sometimes lacks sufficient challenge. Effective use is made of extra support in classes in order that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Teaching successfully generates positive attitudes in pupils and as a result they are well motivated and make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced although elements of science receive insufficient attention and music provision for junior classes is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are given a high level of support and make good progress in learning. Individual education plans accurately cover their needs and are used effectively to inform curriculum planning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional Language	Good. The few pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are very aware of their own culture and other cultures. They have many opportunities to take responsibility and to work together and know right from wrong. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Teachers know pupils well and the school provides a very good level of care and support. Assessment procedures are very good and used effectively to track individual pupil achievement and set appropriate targets to raise pupils' attainment.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are positive about the school and its headteacher. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established and effectively implemented. There are very good arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' academic progress, with information used

well to plan what they will learn next. The monitoring and recording of progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school is participating in a national social inclusion project to develop practices in order that all pupils' needs are met. As a result, support staff are deployed effectively and work hard to ensure that pupils' are given good access to the curriculum. The school provides for pupils with a wide range of learning, social and emotional needs effectively and cares for them well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives a clear sense of direction and purpose to the school. Other staff carry out their duties well and there is a strong sense of shared commitment. This develops a very caring ethos in which pupils feel safe and secure and can learn and develop.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive and well informed of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfils its responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has well developed procedures to monitor and evaluate its performance. Good use is made of information about pupil performance to guide the way it develops and to identify what needs to be done.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very effective use of its resources to maximise the benefits for pupils. Spending is closely allied to the school's stated priorities.

The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good and has successfully developed a team approach amongst staff with a high commitment to raising standards. The school is applying the principles of best value well. Staffing is very good and well deployed. The accommodation is generally satisfactory. Recent improvements to classrooms have created larger teaching areas but there is limited space for a computer suite and school library. Teachers work hard to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment by creating high quality displays around the school. Learning resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school • Behaviour in school is good • Pupils work hard in lessons • The way the school helps children to develop personally • Children make good progress • Teaching is good • Parents are well informed. • The school is well led and managed • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework • The amount and range of extra-curricular activities

Parents are justified in having the confidence they do in the school. The inspection team agrees with their positive views. The inspection team found that homework was set at an appropriate level for pupils of this age. The team also found that the range of extra curricular activities is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests indicate that seven-year-olds attain standards that are below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics but in comparison with similar schools are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The standards attained by eleven year olds were much lower, being well below the average attained nationally in English and mathematics and very low in science. Compared to similar schools results were better, standards in English and mathematics were average but standards in science were well below average. This is a very different picture from the standards attained in the previous year and there are clear reasons for this lower performance. The cohort of pupils included a high percentage with special educational needs and a higher than normal rate of mobility.
2. Over the past four years standards have fluctuated but the trends show improving performance and evidence from the inspection confirms this. The work of pupils in the current Year 6 indicates that performance in the national tests this year is likely to be higher. In the past boys have performed slightly better than girls in the national tests, which is different from the situation found nationally. However the school has very effective procedures for analysing performance and has taken action to remedy this and there is now little difference. The school's targets for 2001 were exceeded in English and mathematics and the school looks set to achieve the more challenging targets set for this present year.
3. The children in the Nursery and Reception class generally make good progress and achieve well compared to their low level skills on entry to the school. They make very good progress and achieve well in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development but their attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is well below average when they start in Year 1.
4. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 varies. Inspection findings show that in comparison with national averages, by the age of seven and 11, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils make good gains in their learning when compared to their very low starting points and are achieving well. Standards are slowly improving because of the good quality of teaching. Standards are higher in mathematics and reading than in writing and speaking and listening, which are not high enough, and this impacts upon the standards attained in other subjects such as science. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are limited and they often have difficulty with the vocabulary in certain subjects. Their answers to questions are often brief. In reading, pupils make good gains in their learning because the basic skills of reading are well taught and they achieve standards which are broadly satisfactory. The structured teaching of guided and shared reading is having a positive effect on the standards that pupils attain. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are independent readers and have a satisfactory level of literal understanding of books although their inferential skills are less well developed. They understand what they read and talk enthusiastically about what they like and give sensible straightforward reasons about their preferences. Standards in writing are below the nationally expected standard. Written work is not as good as it should be. Most pupils write straightforward accounts accurately but their ability to write for

different purposes is limited. Seven year olds have difficulty in structuring their writing and by the age of 11, although pupils have made good progress, the overall structure of writing for different purposes is often insecure. Many pupils make careless mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

5. In mathematics, whilst standards are below average, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the improved teaching and the effective implementation of the numeracy hour. Most pupils are reasonably numerate; have a satisfactory grasp of how numbers work, know their tables and use what they know to solve problems. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs is a contributory factor to standards being low.
6. In science, pupils' understanding of ideas and concepts is below average because their investigative and experimental skills are under-developed. This limits their ability to explain cause and effect and make informed predictions of likely outcomes.
7. Pupils achieve levels of expertise in information communication technology that are average compared to what is expected for seven and eleven year olds. Standards in other subjects are varied. In design technology standards are above average. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and teach the different stages of the design and make process very carefully. In history, geography and physical education standards are average when compared to those expected nationally. Standards in religious education are average compared to the expectations defined by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the rites of other religions when questioned and have a sound understanding of a number of different faiths, customs and traditions. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment although their written work is very limited. In music the standards achieved by seven-year-olds are satisfactory but the achievement of 11 year olds is below average compared to the standards expected nationally. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to play tuned or untuned instruments or to compose and their skills in these areas are underdeveloped.
8. The school places great emphasis on ensuring that all pupils receive the support necessary for them to achieve well. Teachers and support staff work very well together and the support given to pupils with special educational needs is very good. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve in line with their abilities. Teachers ensure that tasks are matched to the pupils' needs and that their access to the curriculum is facilitated by good quality interventions and explanations. However, the progress of pupils, who are higher attainers, is inconsistent because teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Overall their rates of progress are satisfactory but they could be better.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good and parents have confirmed that their children enjoy coming to school. Children in the Nursery and the Reception class quickly learn the rules and routines of school life and as a result are confident and know what is expected of them. Their good behaviour and their interest and participation in the range of activities provided show this. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and involved in most activities. There was a good example of this in a Year 2 literacy lesson where the pupils discussed traditional stories. They quickly settle down to do their work and listen to their class teacher and each other. This was also evident in a Year 5 literacy

lesson, where pupils listened carefully when the teacher talked about science fiction stories. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their work. They are very enthusiastic about the work they do in small groups with teachers and support staff because it is at the right level of difficulty for them. Teaching staff are patient and use praise appropriately which encourages the pupils to learn and persevere when tasks become more difficult. Good attitudes to school contribute well to successful learning and the standards the pupils achieve.

10. Behaviour in and around the school is very good and the pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. The pupils know what is expected of them and understand the difference between right and wrong. This is because the school's expectations for good behaviour are clearly explained to parents and pupils in the code of conduct. This was written in co-operation with parents, pupils and teachers. Parents also receive leaflets explaining school rules and ways of working together with the school. Teachers and other staff manage and control occasional incidents of challenging behaviour effectively because they have established very good relationships with the pupils. Pupils are frequently reminded of the code of conduct and good manners, so that they understand the effect their actions can have on others. There were no bullying or racially motivated incidents during the inspection. In the last complete school year no pupils were excluded from the school. The very good behaviour of the pupils has a positive effect on the quality of learning in lessons and contributes to the very pleasant atmosphere in school.
11. Relationships within the school are very good. Relationships between the pupils and the pupils and staff are caring and friendly. They are based largely on mutual respect, which is a key factor in securing positive patterns of behaviour and response in lessons. At lunchtime, the pupils talk sociably with each other and with supervising staff. The pupils work and play well together in pairs and groups regardless of gender. Very good relationships are a strong feature of the school.
12. The school satisfactorily promotes the personal development of its pupils. The pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was evident in a Year 1 religious education lesson, where the pupils discussed friendship without fear or embarrassment. Pupils take responsibility for tasks around the school and are reliable and trustworthy. They act as class, library, milk and register monitors. The school has recently established a school council so that the pupils can convey their views to the school. The pupils are also developing an awareness of the needs of others through the school's fund-raising activities. During Christmas 2001 the pupils filled shoeboxes to donate to Eastern European countries. These responsibilities have a good effect on the pupils' personal development.
13. Despite the rigorous efforts of the headteacher and staff, the overall attendance rate is poor and well below the national average for primary schools. The school has made attendance a priority and a thorough analysis of attendance is undertaken by the headteacher. However, the school is hindered in attempts to raise attendance levels by the fact that the movement of pupils in and out of the school is in excess of 20 per cent of those on the school roll. The school is unable to remove pupils from the school roll until notified of their new school. In many cases pupils remain on roll for weeks or months after they have stopped attending. There is also a small group of pupils who despite continual efforts by the school and outside agencies do not attend school. Unauthorised absence is also well above the national average as some families are difficult to contact and the school cannot obtain absence letters. Registration meets legal requirements and is efficiently undertaken, but some pupils are frequently late for school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good overall and has significantly improved since the last inspection. The amount of good or very good teaching is now much higher. Teaching is good or very good in nearly three-quarters of lessons and in a quarter of lessons teaching was very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed.
15. In the nursery, the teaching observed was good or very good and is a major reason for the children's good start. The teacher uses assessments well in order to plan a wide range of carefully targeted activities, which develop the children's basic skills effectively but also foster good social development. Children are managed very effectively and they respond to the teacher's high expectations. In the reception class teaching is always at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Children continue to be presented with a good range of activities and elements of the National Literacy strategy are being introduced and implemented well. Children make good progress because of the good quality of teaching in both classes. The staff have high expectations of the children, particularly in social skills. Support staff work closely with the teachers and make a positive contribution to children's learning.
16. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 was generally good and often very good. Evidence from past work confirms that learning in this part of the school is usually good. The quality of teaching seen in Years 3-6 was wider ranging but was also generally good and sometimes very good. Only one lesson observed was unsatisfactory, due to the teacher's ineffective class control. Good teaching is contributing to improvement of attainment in mathematics and reading. Teachers are particularly effective in using the resources available, especially in ensuring that teaching assistants are well used. The level of communication between teachers and assistants is very good and they work closely together, often in very effective partnerships, which make a good contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school.
17. The implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is having a good effect on teaching, particularly the teaching of mathematics and reading. Mathematics lessons are often characterised by a brisk introduction that maintains a high level of pupil involvement. Expectations are generally appropriate and the activities in the middle part of the lesson extend the work started in the introduction. At the end of the lesson, the teachers make good use of questions and discussion to develop pupils' thinking about what they have learned and consolidate their new ideas. The teaching is usually brisk and pupils enjoy the stimulating sessions. Teachers are skilled in using literacy lessons to develop pupils' reading skills. Years 1 and 2 teachers clearly pronounce words when modelling reading and develop pupils' phonic skills through clear enunciation of sounds when building words. Older pupils enjoy a daily reading session at the start of the afternoon, which enables them to build on the skills they have developed in literacy lessons.
18. Teachers' planning of lessons is good and they are generally clear about what each group of pupils need to learn. Activities are usually planned to match the differing needs of the pupils and generally expectations of pupils are satisfactory although higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged in some lessons. In some lessons teachers have high expectations of their pupils. For example, in an effective science lesson for Year 5, careful planning ensured that the lesson was well structured with a challenging activity involving the pupils in making a prediction and subsequently carrying out an experiment to test their ideas. In a Year 2 literacy lesson with lower

ability pupils, activities were well organised in order to suitably challenge all the pupils. The teacher's carefully targeted questioning and explanations enabled pupils to make good gains in phonic skills when reading. Teachers' expectations often reflect their confidence in a subject. There are areas where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, particularly in some Year 3 to 6 classes. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson this was indicated. The teacher set pupils an activity to find the location of countries in the European Economic Community. This lacked challenge for the higher attaining pupils who had little difficulty when using an atlas to locate the nine countries specified by the teacher and subsequently colouring in a previously prepared map. The school is aware of the need to widen teachers' skills in some subjects, for example science and music, so that all aspects of each subject are taught to older pupils. Teaching in most lessons, however, showed that teachers' subject knowledge was satisfactory and, on occasions, good.

19. A strength of the teaching is the very good relationships created in classrooms. Teachers have very good class management skills and high expectations of behaviour. Whilst teachers have a firm approach and expect pupils to work hard, they also have a friendly approach, which successfully creates a happy, secure learning environment. This results in well-ordered lessons with pupils attentive and eager to learn and a good atmosphere that encourages hard work and concentration. For example, in a Year 4 geography lesson a successful discussion was held which explored the differences between two locations. The teacher's knowledge of his pupils and the manner in which he acknowledged their comments fostered a friendly atmosphere and enabled pupils to respond confidently, even when they were unsure of their answers. Although very good management techniques were evident in virtually all lessons, the unsatisfactory lesson was the result of the teacher's ineffective control and failure to ensure that pupils paid attention. This resulted in a noisy session in which pupils learnt very little.
20. In most lessons, teachers move around groups in order to give good support to pupils and assess their progress. The quality of the marking is generally good with effective use of positive comments to develop pupils' learning and enhance their self-esteem. Arrangements for homework are good and teachers effectively link work done at home with learning in lessons.
21. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are very good. This is because the special educational needs coordinator, teachers and support staff co-operate very well together to plan work which is specifically designed to meet the particular needs of individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well when they are provided with support in small groups or through one-to-one teaching. The school's records show clearly that the need for support often reduces significantly and is sometimes removed altogether. On the other hand, the school's commitment to equal opportunities ensures that any pupils who receive a statement of special educational needs continue to be taught and supported effectively within the school.

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

22. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception class is very good. The curriculum is based on the six areas of learning appropriate for this group. Because of the children's particular needs, special emphasis is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development as well as to communication, language and literacy and to mathematical development. Appropriate elements of the National Literacy strategy

and the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated into lessons in the Reception class. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas.

23. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is generally broad and balanced. Teachers' planning is good overall and provides a wide and interesting range of learning activities to support pupils' academic and personal development. There has been good improvement in the curriculum for information and communication technology, English and mathematics since the last inspection. Teachers throughout the school include the use of computers and other technology in their planning for subjects across the curriculum. They also successfully promote literacy and numeracy skills using the national strategies and through teaching in other subjects. There remain areas for development in science and music. In both subjects, the school allocates too little time each week to enable all aspects of these subjects to be fully addressed. In science insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to design their own investigations carrying out experiments. In music, teaching in Years 3 to 6 places appropriate emphasis on the development of singing but provides few opportunities for pupils to play instruments or compose music. This was also recognised as an area for development in the last inspection.
24. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social, and health education fully meet statutory requirements. This reflects some improvement since the last inspection, when it was reported that the school did not successfully promote drugs awareness. This issue is now fully addressed through the recently introduced scheme of work, which is in the early stages of development and places the school in a good position to improve further. Issues such as healthy eating are explored through science and the school nurse contributes to older pupils' understanding of their sexual development. The headteacher has made good use of grants from the 'Eco Schools' programme in recent years and has involved pupils in planting trees and bulbs to improve the school environment.
25. The school makes every effort to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all that is offered and this aspect of its work has improved to become a particular strength since the last inspection. The headteacher has made very good use of specific grants to enable himself and colleagues to carry out extensive research into the reasons why some children become excluded from education. On the basis of these findings, he has built a team of teaching and non-teaching staff whose role is to identify and support potentially vulnerable children and their families. This support extends to teaching assistants making home visits where there are concerns and makes a major contribution to the well-being and self-esteem of many pupils throughout the school. The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is also clearly reflected in its very good arrangements for teaching and supporting pupils with special educational needs. There is a successful policy of ensuring that pupils with a statement of special educational needs are fully supported within the school and all pupils on the special educational needs register receive very good quality support from teaching and non-teaching staff.
26. The community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. There are strong links with the local church and visitors to the school such as police officers, the local Mayor and members of Tranmere Rovers Football Club enrich pupils' understanding of the world outside school. In the same way, visits to local places of interest such as Thurstaston Country Park and links with the Laird Foundation and the Birkenhead Chamber of Commerce help to extend and enrich the curriculum.

27. Teachers give their time generously to provide a good range of extra-curricular sports and activities. Sports include football, cricket, badminton, athletics and gymnastics and there are clubs for science, design technology and writing. The school provides opportunities for its pupils to enjoy adventurous outdoor activities on a residential visit to Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre in North Wales. Over recent years, it has established and successfully developed the 'CATS Club', which is recognised by parents in the community as a means of extending the school day for their children in a safe and secure environment. The school is a good provider of training opportunities for students on work experience and on nursery nurse or initial teacher training.
28. The school gives good emphasis to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All areas make positive contributions to the personal development of pupils. However, pupils do better in some of these aspects than in others. This is because there are no curriculum guidelines to ensure that all areas are equally well represented. Moral, social and cultural development receive much greater attention than spiritual development and are good features of the school.
29. The spiritual development of the pupils is satisfactory, but teachers do not plan carefully enough for this aspect of pupils' learning in religious education, assemblies and other lessons. Moments for reflection are too fleeting and pupils have little opportunity to experience the different moods of music and moments of prayer. The school now complies with legal requirements in respect of a daily act of worship, which was raised as an issue at the last inspection in 1997. Class or whole-school acts of worship are held each day. Pupils express moods or feelings in classroom discussions, which sometimes contribute to their spiritual development. There are few planned opportunities for pupils to experience the joy of learning or to explore the spiritual aspects of art or music. However, some pupils gasped in amazement at the paintings of Matisse and the new buds and shoots appearing in the Memorial Garden during the inspection.
30. The school promotes the pupils' moral development very successfully which confirms the views expressed by parents. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All adults in the school provide good moral leadership and give the pupils a clear sense of direction about moral issues. All the staff work hard and successfully reinforce the school code of conduct, developing mutual respect and understanding. Praise is frequently used to improve the pupils' self-esteem and confidence. There is an effective scheme of rewards and sanctions, which is consistently applied and clearly understood by the pupils. Pupils are reminded of the need to consider the effect their behaviour has on others and the school's code of conduct and class rules are clearly displayed. This assists the pupils in distinguishing right from wrong and acquiring good self-discipline. Staff make good use of classroom discussions and assemblies to establish collective moral values. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 religious education lesson where the pupils discussed the need to say 'sorry'. The consistent and positive approach to the moral development of the pupils results in very good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
31. The school provides a good range of experiences to promote the pupils' social development. The staff are good models of social behaviour because they show respect for others and promote very good relationships. There are many opportunities for the pupils to work together in lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils worked effectively in groups to research sources of light during the inspection. Pupils also learn to co-operate and work together by taking part in school plays, special events and residential visits. They are also developing an understanding of

citizenship by raising money for charitable appeals. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school. For example, some pupils are class, library, milk and register monitors. Visits such as the Year 6 residential to North Wales make a good contribution to social development and the after-school activities enable many pupils to expand their personal interests.

32. The cultural development of the pupils is good. The school celebrates the culture of the area through its community involvement. For example, the pupils participate in the local music festival and explore the local area for subjects such as geography and history. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism in religious education lessons and through a study of festivals such as the Chinese New Year. Visits to the local multicultural centre have taken place. Subjects such as history enable pupils to find out about past cultures and beliefs, such as those of Tudor times and in geography, pupils have researched aspect of life in Mexico and the Ceiriog Valley in Wales. Music makes some contribution to the cultural development of the pupils who have attended orchestral concerts. Examples of paintings in the style of Mondrian are displayed and Year 2 pupils have been studying the paintings of Monet. Year 5 have researched the Aztecs and famous authors. However, there has been a lack of visitors in school such as dance and theatre groups and people from other faiths to further develop the pupils' appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. This is a very caring school in which the well-being of the pupils is a priority. This area is a strength of the school and confirms the views of the parents. The pupils know that they are valued by their teachers and respond accordingly. During the inspection the staff were seen taking the time to give breakfast to a pupil who had arrived late. The school grounds accommodate the independent breakfast club, after-school and holiday club run by the Childcare and Training Scheme. The use of the school's facilities enables many of the parents to leave their children in the knowledge that they will be safe, secure and well looked after before and after school and during the summer holidays.
34. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The school follows the procedures in the governing body's health and safety policy. Fire precautions, electrical checks and whole-school risk assessments are carried out regularly. Staff and ancillary assistants supervise pupils carefully at breaks and lunchtimes. There are good arrangements for dealing with accidents and two members of staff, including the headteacher, have been trained in first-aid procedures. The headteacher is the named person responsible for child protection and 'looked after' children. The child protection policy has recently been revised and all staff are aware of procedures and have received regular training, including non-teaching staff.
35. The school gives rigorous attention to monitoring and improving attendance and procedures are very good. The headteacher and staff take a firm line on attendance matters and rigorously implement procedures to raise attendance levels and analyse attendance information. Attendance is monitored by the first-day contact officer who telephones the homes of pupils who are absent from school. However, the school does have problems in contacting some homes to discover the reason for absence and obtaining the necessary absence notes. Confirmation that a pupil has been withdrawn from the school due to the family moving out of the area is often not received for weeks or months before they can be taken off the school roll. The school

employs three support assistants to make home visits if problems persist. The attendance officer also monitors punctuality and medical appointments and all absences are correctly recorded. Bronze, silver and gold certificates are awarded for attendance and punctuality along with end of year prizes. The school awards a trophy each week to the class with the best attendance. Attendance levels do fluctuate but the school is working very hard and does all it possibly can to try to raise attendance levels.

36. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. There are effective behaviour guidelines in place, which are consistently applied by the staff and lunchtime supervisors. The pupils understand the behaviour guidelines, known as the Code of Conduct, and an appropriate scheme of sanctions is in place. Parents, pupils and staff have helped to establish the school's expectations for good behaviour and have agreed the Code of Conduct. Parents receive booklets clearly informing them of the school rules and ways of working with the school. The school holds a weekly celebration assembly where pupils are rewarded with certificates for outside activities such as swimming and monitor badges are awarded for effort and achievement. No bullying was seen during the inspection but when it occasionally occurs it is dealt with by the headteacher in discussion with the pupils and parents involved. All incidents are recorded and action taken as necessary.
37. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. They are founded on the very good relationships between the staff and pupils. The teachers know the pupils well. This makes the pupils feel secure in the school and develops self-esteem. Personal, social and health education is taught within assemblies and lessons such as religious education and science. This makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. In the last two years the school has introduced pupils' Records of Achievement which make the pupils evaluate their own learning and gives them insights into the progress that they make. The Records of Achievement are also shown to parents each year at the parents' meetings and taken home at the end of Year 6. The school maintains effective links with outside agencies, such as health professionals and the police, which also help to support the academic and personal development of the pupils. The success that the school achieves in the support and guidance of the pupils has very good effect on attitudes, behaviour and learning and contributes to the school's efforts to raise standards.
38. The school has very effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in English and Mathematics. A carefully planned and systematic programme of statutory and non-statutory testing is carried out throughout the school. The results are analysed very thoroughly and used effectively to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and to set appropriate targets for future attainment. This gives the school a very clear overview of how well it is doing and what it needs to target for future action. The special educational needs' coordinator has also developed very clear and efficient systems for assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Each pupil is given an individual education plan, which contains realistic and achievable targets for improvement. The coordinator meets regularly with teachers to review progress and set fresh targets.
39. The marking of pupils' work, particularly in English, is central to the assessment procedures in place to let pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The 'way forward' assessments recently put in place are particularly effective in informing pupils and teachers about the progress pupils are making in

their writing and for deciding targets for improvement. As a result, the teachers know the needs of their pupils well and make appropriate and informed provision in most lessons for different learning needs. The individual pupil targets for writing and mathematics are used very effectively and most pupils know what their targets are and strive to meet these in their lessons. The pupils' individual records of achievement are successful in developing their self-esteem and a sense of pride in their achievements.

40. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is carried out effectively in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Appropriate methods of monitoring pupils' progress are implemented in art and information and communication technology. However, arrangements for monitoring and recording pupils' progress in other subjects throughout the school are not sufficiently systematic and informative about the pupils' progress in relation to national expectations. There is scope for strengthening the systems so that they are consistently applied and updated to give relevant information about the progress pupils make in their learning in all subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents have expressed good support for the school. At the parents' meeting they indicated that they are pleased with the communication between home and school and confirmed that the school works well in partnership with parents. However, some parents indicated concerns on the questionnaire about the amount of homework the pupils are given and after-school activities. The inspection team judged the use of homework and the range of after-school activities to be good. The positive partnership between parents and the school is having a good effect on pupils' attitudes to the school.
42. The school works hard to maintain very good links with parents. Regular letters are sent home to keep parents informed of events and achievements. The headteacher and staff are accessible to parents who have concerns. A suitable home/school agreement has been distributed and the majority of parents have signed and returned it. School productions and coffee mornings are well attended and the school hosts an induction meeting for the parents of nursery and reception class children. Parents' questionnaires have been distributed to assess their views on issues such as behaviour and the school's code of conduct.
43. Parents of children with special educational needs are properly involved in their children's education plans, and the school provides them with the opportunity to attend reviews. Where parents fail to attend, the special educational needs coordinator sends home details of the outcomes of these meetings.
44. Parental involvement has a satisfactory effect on the life of the school. Parents organise social and fund-raising events and money raised is used to benefit the pupils through the purchase of books and classroom equipment, such as construction kits. Many parents assist during educational visits and four parents act as volunteer helpers in classrooms.
45. The quality of information for parents is good. The school has hosted sessions for parents to help them to understand national tests. The school brochure is informative and contains information on what the pupils will be taught in each subject of the curriculum. The governors' report is attractively presented as a newspaper. In the school reception area parents can collect information leaflets and newsletters on relevant topics including the school rules, code of conduct and ways of working

together. Parents have the opportunity to consult the staff formally each term to discuss their child's progress but attendance at these meetings varies. The pupils' progress reports are satisfactory. They include all the required information, but reporting of non-core subjects such as history and geography is brief and teachers do not always indicate what pupils could do to improve their work.

46. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. A number of parents help their children with homework tasks and listen to their children read. All parents have been informed about the school's expectations regarding homework. The home/school reading record books are a valuable channel of communication between home and school; some parents use these books well. The nursery nurse also runs a toy library, which encourages the parents to become involved in their child's learning. The childcare and training scheme housed at the school, also runs classes for parents in areas such as cookery, decorating, first-aid, literacy, numeracy and a 'Keeping up with your Children' course. This has the potential to assist the parents in helping their children to learn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher provides very good leadership and gives the school very clear educational direction. He has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear plan for the continued development of the school. The senior staff work together most effectively, and set the tone for the school's positive learning atmosphere and sense of community. All staff understand the school's aims. Policies clearly identify the need to consider all pupils whatever their abilities, background, ethnicity or gender and this underpins all areas of the school's work. All staff, including non-teaching staff, are valued for the contribution they make to the school. They are strongly committed to ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they can and they work well together to develop the quality of education that the school provides. There is a strong focus on supporting and developing teachers and the quality of teaching has been improved. Relationships within the school are very good and there is a happy, supportive atmosphere, which is enabling both teachers and pupils to improve their performance and raise the standards of the work of the school. As a result, pupils feel valued and are happy to come to school.
48. Effective leadership and management are evident in the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Procedures for monitoring the performance of the school are good. The school makes very good use of data to support the raising of standards, monitoring its results in comparison to schools nationally and those with similar characteristics. It is aware of the need to raise the standards attained by 11-year-olds and has taken action in a number of ways to address this situation. Standards in mathematics are improving and the school is taking determined action to raise attainment in writing and science. Targets are set for pupils and teachers review pupils' performance in discussion with colleagues. Subject management is good. Coordinators make an effective contribution to the development of their subjects by reviewing policy and resources, providing guidance for other staff, monitoring teachers' planning and assessing the quality of work produced by the pupils. They have produced action plans outlining planned development of their subject. This commitment to continued improvement is a major factor in the good progress that pupils make in most subjects.
49. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very effectively and its overall involvement in the strategic management of the school is good. It manages its affairs efficiently through its structure of committees with clearly defined terms of reference.

Governors are very supportive of the work of the school. They are kept well informed through the headteacher's regular written reports and they gather further information from their visits to the school to observe its work. The experienced and knowledgeable chair of governors is committed to the school, has a clear knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the governing body and works very well in close partnership with the headteacher. As a result, the governing body has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the issues that the school is working to develop. Regular meetings are held to keep governors fully informed on all matters relating to the school. The governing body is suitably focused on the important issues of maintaining high standards, pupils' progress and ensuring value for money. The school fully complies with statutory requirements.

50. The school development plan is a comprehensive document and is clearly linked to the school's budget, resulting in the successful targeting of resources in accordance with the school's priorities. The school uses its grant money appropriately and augments these with funds from the budget and other sources in line with its priorities. For example, the school lays great stress on equal opportunity for all pupils and has been involved in a project to develop inclusion. The extra grant money has been used very successfully to ensure that all pupils are given the support required in order to learn effectively. The school has clear policies and procedures for school self-evaluation and staff performance review. Co-ordinators have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their respective subjects, carrying out audits, which form an important part of the process of determining priorities for action to be included in the school development plan. The results of observations of teaching are fed back to teachers and used to develop the individual and set targets for improvement, whilst more global issues are dealt with through training sessions for all staff. The school uses performance review effectively to support the development of teaching and the raising of standards.
51. The management of special educational needs is very good. The coordinator provides very good leadership. She makes best use of the time available to her away from the classroom to discuss the progress of pupils on the special educational needs register with teachers, support staff and other agencies. She has established a very positive ethos within the school where the efforts and achievements of pupils of all abilities are equally valued. There is a very good supply of suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the demands of teaching pupils with special educational needs. All support staff have participated in training which has equipped them well to meet the needs of the particular children with whom they work every day.
52. Financial planning is good and the school is efficiently run. The governors are fully involved in the financial management of the school and this results in a prudent approach to managing the budget, close attention to getting value for money and careful consideration of financial implications in the longer term. The school is applying the principles of best value successfully. It is constantly comparing its work with other schools and seeks best value for money when obtaining services. The school has a high level of expenditure per pupil, but it provides a good quality of education. Pupils' achievements are good in progressing from very low-level skills on entry to levels that generally compare well with similar schools. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are also very good and they develop a positive approach to schooling. The school makes efficient and effective use of the funding it gets for special educational needs and as a result special educational needs pupils make good progress. The cost of providing this support means unit costs in the school are high, but it is money well spent and the school represents good value for money.

53. Financial administration is of a high quality and the school makes good use of information and communication technology to track spending. The school properly administers specific budgets for pupils with special educational needs and for staff training. The chair of the finance committee meets regularly with the headteacher to review the budget and monitor expenditure. Funding obtained from specific grants is effectively used. The school's administrative staff are efficient and help to ensure the smooth running of the school. The day-to-day financial administration of the school is well organised, the recommendations of the latest audit of the school being fully implemented.
54. The school has very good staffing levels. Teachers have an appropriate range of qualifications and experience and there is a high number of support staff. Staff are deployed effectively. Very good arrangements are in place to assist the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school.
55. Resources for learning are satisfactory. The accommodation is generally satisfactory. Whilst recent building works have improved the teaching areas, the school has limited space for a computer suite and library. However, high quality displays in classrooms and around the school create an attractive and pleasant learning environment for pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. To continue to improve the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards of attainment in science* by:
 - Improving curriculum provision throughout the school in order to ensure that the national curriculum requirements are covered in more depth;
 - Giving pupils more opportunities to design and carry out scientific investigations and experiments;
 - Supporting this by increasing the time allocated to teaching the subject;
 - Promoting the development of pupils' scientific vocabulary.

(Paragraphs 1,6, 23, 93-95)

- (2) Raise standards of attainment in music for pupils in Years 3-6* by:
 - Ensuring there is an appropriate emphasis on composing and performing in the school's planned programme of work for music;
 - Reviewing the allocation of time given to the subject in each class;
 - Developing the subject expertise and confidence of teachers through in-service training in the teaching of music

(Paragraphs 7,23,125)

- (3) Raise standards in writing* and speaking and listening* by:
 - Improving pupils' skills in writing by applying consistently the strategies outlined in the Action Plan already identified;
 - Improving pupils' speaking and listening skills by more use of open ended questions to promote extended answers in lessons;
 - Presenting pupils with more planned opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills;
 - Giving pupils more opportunities to contribute in plenary sessions in lessons and in assemblies.

(Paragraphs 4,66,74, 76, 79-81)

*The school has already identified this as an area for further improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

52

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

28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	25	13	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	25%	48%	25%	2%	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 approximately 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)	13	200
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	139

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	94

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	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	16	17	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	14
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (78)	88 (74)	91 (87)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	14	16	14
	Total	29	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (83)	91 (87)	88 (87)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	14	18	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	9
	Girls	11	11	10
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (76)	56(71)	59(76)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	6
	Girls	13	12	11
	Total	20	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63(76)	59(71)	53(82)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

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	2
White	196
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	22.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	314.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	538,613
Total expenditure	569,103
Expenditure per pupil	2,518
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,488
Balance carried forward to next year	7,998

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	213
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	38	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	47	6	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	13	1	0
The teaching is good.	63	34	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	44	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	5	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	46	44	8	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	41	9	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	44	25	7	8

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

57. Children enter nursery with a broad range of abilities and experiences, though overall their attainment is well below that expected of this age group in all areas but especially in communication, language and literacy, personal and social development and mathematical development. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development and good progress in all other areas as a result of the rich curriculum provided and the overall good quality of teaching and learning. Children with special educational needs are identified early and receive a very good level of support so that they make very good progress alongside their peers. Despite the good progress made, children's attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is well below average when they start in Year 1. However children achieve well in all other areas of learning and most will reach the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
58. Since the previous inspection, the Foundation Stage has been established in line with national guidance. The children continue to make good progress while the overall quality of teaching, which was judged in that inspection to be sound, is now good. More than half of all lessons seen were good or better. Teaching in the nursery is consistently good and occasionally very good. Teaching in the Reception class is satisfactory with examples of good teaching in all the areas of learning.
59. Staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of educational play and first-hand experiences. They use praise and encouragement very effectively in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. This has a good effect on the progress children make and provides a firm foundation for learning when they reach Year 1. Children are given very clear instructions about what they are expected to do, and as a result, they move quickly to their tasks. Staff use questions, comments and observations well to assess what children know and can do, which helps them to plan for each child's future learning. Staff are very enthusiastic and have high expectations of the children. They work very well together which has a positive effect on the quality of the learning.
60. There are good induction procedures, which enable children to settle quickly into class routines. Parents and children visit the nursery in the term before they start which establishes good relationships from the outset.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Children in the Nursery and the Reception class enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards learning. Their good behaviour and their interest and participation in the range of activities provided, as well as their sustained application to concentrate on one activity at a time, show this. The rules and routines of school life are explained well and as a result, children are confident and know what is expected of them in a safe and secure environment. They share resources amicably, for instance when engaged in water play and construction activities or taking part in role-play. They confidently express a range of feelings. For example after a particularly enjoyable music lesson, nursery children broke into spontaneous clapping.

62. Teaching in this area is very good. Both classrooms are well organised to allow the children to get what they need and the children make very good use of the available resources. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and give them many opportunities to act independently and make their own decisions. Opportunities to promote personal, social and emotional development are built into all aspects of the curriculum. Children deliver registers to the school office, choose activities, put on their own aprons and help to tidy up at the end of sessions. Reception children gain experience about other aspects of school life when they attend assemblies and join older pupils at lunch and playtime. Children are taught to consider the points of view and feelings of others, for instance when engaging in role-play in the 'bakery' or 'building site'. Timely intervention by the teacher extends their play. The teacher models caring attitudes which children adopt also.

Communication, language and literacy

63. The Nursery and Reception classes provide a wide range of stimulating experiences and activities to develop and extend children's communication, language and literacy skills. In the reception class elements of the National Literacy strategy are implemented well. Children make good progress because of the good teaching in both classes. Staff encourage children to share conversations and articulate their ideas, increasing their skills effectively in the whole of this learning area. As children engage in role-play and other activities, staff intervene to develop children's vocabulary and thinking skills. Although most children in the nursery know what they want to say, a significant minority have difficulty in pronouncing some words correctly. However, some showed good negotiating skills as they discussed who should wear the hard hats in the 'building site'. In response to questioning, Reception children describe what their jam tarts might be like when they come out of the oven. 'They'll be rock hard' said one, while another said 'They'll be nice to eat'.
64. Attractively labelled displays, writing-tables, word banks, alphabet friezes and individual name cards help children to develop early reading and writing skills. In the Nursery, children learn to handle books carefully and correctly. Each morning on arrival in class they become absorbed in books in the attractive and comfortable reading area, some looking at books on their own, others sharing them with adults. Some children talk about their favourite story. The majority select their own name card as they register their presence at the start of the session. The teacher effectively draws attention to initial letter sounds when telling the children what activities are available for them to choose. The relevance of reading is continually emphasised. Children understand that making fairy cakes involves consulting a recipe. Planting cress seeds is accompanied by looking at a series of written instructions. In the Reception class the children are surrounded by written words to support their activities. They select words from the word bank for their writing and use name cards to indicate particular areas as they make models of a zoo. Games such as phonic bingo, played with small plastic animals, effectively focus children's attention on initial letter sounds and make learning fun. Most children recognise at least some letter sounds. Higher attaining children recognise the names of characters and simple words in their reading books and sound out and build some three-letter words.
65. In the Nursery children are encouraged to make marks on paper and are taught how to hold pencils and other drawing materials correctly. In the Reception class children make good progress in formal writing sessions when well supported by the staff. When they are provided with other incentives for writing they respond well. One child wrote a notice for his toy zoo, warning people not to put their fingers into an animal's

cage. Most children write their name independently and write a few words and letters to represent what they want to say. Higher attaining children write short sentences.

66. Nursery children listen carefully and with great enthusiasm to stories but their limited vocabulary affects the quality of their responses when encouraged to make comments and answer questions. When telling the story, the teacher develops the children's vocabulary by repeating words and draws attention to particular aspects of the book such as the title, the words and the pictures. By the time children move into the Reception class, they have become attentive listeners, able to follow instructions about their tasks and to enjoy interesting stories and rhymes. These stories and rhymes are used well to develop skills such as predicting what a missing word might be or identifying initial sounds and letters in words.

Mathematical Development

67. The children make good progress in their mathematical development in the Nursery class and satisfactory progress in the Reception class and this reflects the quality of the teaching. Provision in the Nursery class is consistently good. Opportunities for developing mathematical understanding and skills are incorporated into many of the routines, activities and experiences engaged in every day by the children. They count out pieces of fruit for their snack and order Humpty Dumpty figures according to size in order to act out a nursery rhyme. They have recorded their favourite pet in graph form and considered which pet is most people's favourite. Adults regularly bring their attention to shapes in the environment such as the triangles of toast for their snack and the rectangular bricks in the building site area.
68. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are used successfully in the Reception class. A number line is used to develop children's number recognition and sense of number order. Children count the happy faces confidently as they record the number of children present. Sad faces show those who are absent. The teacher uses the combination of faces very effectively to develop a variety of mathematical skills and introduce the concept of subtraction. As children manipulate pastry and play dough, adults refer to the spheres and circles they are forming and discuss how many more pieces of pastry need to be rolled to fill all the spaces in the tray. Most children count up to 12 objects correctly and identify the correct numeral. Higher attainers count beyond this and add and subtract one or two more. They also recognise higher numbers when, for example, their attention is drawn to these on the date each day. Occasionally children are given tasks which are not appropriate to the stage of learning they are at. For instance, some had difficulty with the concept of 'more than' because they were dealing with written numbers rather than objects.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Teaching of this area is good. Teachers plan a variety of interesting experiences including out-of-school visits, to enhance children's knowledge of the world around them. An exciting visit to a local urban farm helped children to gain some first-hand knowledge about living creatures. Nursery children made some good observational pictures after their visit and Reception children wrote about their experience, describing what they liked best.
70. In both classes the computer and listening centre are popular choices. The Nursery class teacher demonstrated a computer program, referring to the 'screen saver' and 'clicking on the mouse'. Nursery children are confident in using different programs to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. Reception children

use the mouse and cursor to access different tools to make simple patterns. They have also used a programmable toy. Children learn about the passage of time, talking about what they do on different days of the week. This concept is reinforced when they are frequently reminded about what they have done on previous occasions and discuss what they will be doing in the future. Cooking activities such as making fairy cakes and jam tarts help children to learn about the changes brought about by heating.

71. The 'building site' in the Nursery and the 'bakery' in the Reception class encourage involvement and collaborative play, which give the children practical and relevant experiences of everyday life. Sand and water are available daily for children to explore and these activities are stimulating and well planned to extend children's knowledge and understanding.

Creative development

72. Teachers give good attention to children's creative development. In the Reception class and in the Nursery, children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences, children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. Very good provision in the Nursery has ensured that by the time children are in the Reception class, skills, such as painting, cutting and joining materials are well developed. Staff provide a wide range of materials from which children can choose to create their own designs, patterns, pictures and collages. These materials are used to fulfil their own independent ideas as well as to work with others to produce a class or group effort. There are opportunities to explore different smells, tastes and textures when Nursery children bake fairy cakes and Reception children take on the role of the Queen of Hearts and make some tarts. Their role-play is actively supported and extended by staff involvement. For example, nursery children very much relished travelling to their next 'building job with their teacher at the wheel of the lorry. The children enjoy singing and join in with songs and nursery rhymes within a range of class activities. Nursery children listen carefully and identify a variety of recorded sounds. All children have opportunities for making music with a range of musical instruments. Reception children take part in singing with the rest of the school.

Physical development

73. Teachers' give children many opportunities to develop their manipulative skills throughout the Foundation Stage and teach this area well. Children use scissors, tools, moulding materials, brushes and pencils in a variety of activities. They also use construction kits to develop these skills. Most children in the Reception class handle and control pencils well and a significant minority already demonstrate good letter formation skills. Children in the nursery class have regular access to an attractive enclosed outside play area and their physical development benefits from the use of a range of small and large apparatus. They are already developing good spatial awareness as they move round the area, running and pedalling wheeled toys without bumping into one another. They learn to control the way they move and demonstrate good balancing skills as they move over a range of equipment. Reception children join other pupils in the school for playtimes and have one structured physical education lesson in the school hall each week. Planning shows that children have opportunities to hop and run around the hall and to use some small equipment. However, they do not use the enclosed play area on a regular basis to use the

equipment available to the nursery pupils and this restricts the development of skills such as climbing or handling wheeled toys.

ENGLISH

74. Standards in English are below the national average throughout the school. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in reading and writing from a low starting point, although progress in reading is better than in writing. In reading, standards are close to those expected for the age group and pupils achieve well. In writing, and in speaking and listening, standards are below those expected nationally and, whilst they are improving over time, more attention is required to the development of these literacy skills. The national test results in 2001 showed a decline in standards from the time of the last inspection. This was due largely to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the groups of pupils of test age and significant numbers of pupils who had only recently joined the school. The standards observed in lessons during the current inspection are much closer to the national expectations and indicate improvement due largely to the strategies the school has put in place to raise standards.
75. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests the attainment of pupils aged seven was below the national average in reading and writing but high in comparison with similar schools. The great majority of pupils reached the level expected for their age (level 2) but only a few exceeded this level in reading and no pupils reached the higher level in writing. The attainment of pupils aged 11 was well below the national average but average when compared to similar schools. Over half of the pupils eligible to be tested reached the expected level for their ages (level 4) but only a few exceeded this level. A high proportion of the pupils in both these age groups had special educational needs and this had a significant impact on the overall picture when compared to national figures. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that pupils are achieving standards that are much closer to the national average.
76. Throughout the school, the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills is unsatisfactory due to the low priority given to this aspect in lessons. Pupils of all ages are often given opportunities to answer questions posed by their teachers but the answers they give are usually brief and they are not often encouraged to give longer explanations or express opinions about issues that arise in lessons. When required to explain something at length, they often lack confidence and struggle to find the appropriate words to communicate their meaning. Throughout the school, the pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking skills, especially when listening to their teachers but they are less good at listening to the answers given by their classmates. During the inspection there were too few opportunities for the older pupils to extend their formal speaking skills to a wider audience, such as in assembly or in discussions planned as part of class lessons.
77. The school's strategies for teaching reading are largely successful and pupils of all ages show satisfactory levels of interest in books for information or pleasure. Reading strategies are taught well and pupils are enabled to tackle familiar and unfamiliar words with reasonable success and confidence. Regular sessions of group reading are used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding about books and to encourage confidence and expression when reading aloud. By the end of Year 2 many pupils can recognise frequently used words on sight and can apply phonic strategies to read unfamiliar words. They are beginning to respond well to stories and can talk about the main characters and events in the books they read. By the end of Year 6 many pupils have become independent in their reading and have

developed satisfactory levels of literal understanding of books, although the ability to interpret and draw inference from texts is less well developed. Research and library skills are under-developed, due in part to limited access to the school library during recent building work.

78. The use of good quality texts is having a beneficial influence on the way pupils respond to books and is effective in stimulating many pupils to explore the texts further for themselves. In a Year 4 lesson, the pupils responded very well to the poetry of Allan Ahlberg and were able to recognise and identify with the humour of the poems. The younger pupils enjoy traditional stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. In Year 2 they engaged very well with the story of 'The Fisherman and his Wife' and were quick to recognise the moral of the story. The reading texts chosen for the literacy lessons usually have a strong appeal for both boys and girls and this is a significant factor in the good levels of interest shown in books.
79. The achievement of pupils in writing is below that expected and is capable of further improvement. The school has correctly identified writing as a priority for development and has implemented effective strategies that are already having an impact on the quality of pupils' writing. The impact of constructive marking strategies, individual writing targets, target groups and focused assessment is helping to improve the quality of pupils' writing by raising their awareness of what they do well and what they must do to improve. There is sufficient emphasis on the development of writing skills in other subjects.
80. By Year 2, many pupils can communicate meaning in writing at a simple level, especially when they are writing about familiar experiences in their own lives or retelling familiar stories. They are able to write in simple sentences using capital letters and full stops. Most are able to spell short, frequently used words correctly and they make plausible attempts at longer words. The higher attaining pupils are able to use descriptive language in longer sentences and adapt their writing for different purposes. However, many pupils need high levels of support in structuring their writing, especially when they are required to write in their own words.
81. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress in the development of their writing skills, in relation to their prior attainment. The more able pupils write in correctly punctuated sentences and many are able to structure their writing correctly in paragraphs. Spelling is usually correct and plausible attempts are made at more ambitious vocabulary. Extended sentences and descriptive phrases are sometimes used to great effect but many pupils are unable to sustain these features throughout their writing. The overall structure of writing for different purposes is often insecure. Narrative openings are usually effective in gaining the interest of the reader but many pupils have difficulty in developing plots and themes in logical sequence. A significant proportion of pupils has difficulty in drawing their writing to a logical conclusion. Many pupils make careless mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation, although they can often recognise and correct errors when required to review their work. The pupils make good progress with their handwriting throughout the school. They learn to join their writing from an early stage and by Year 6 the majority write in a clear and neatly formed cursive style. The presentation of work throughout the school is generally good.
82. Teaching in the literacy lessons seen was mostly good or very good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the National Literacy Strategy. They are able to enthuse their pupils about different reading texts and writing forms. They maintain very good

relationships with their pupils and this promotes very positive attitudes towards learning. Basic skills, such as the matching of letters to their sounds, are taught carefully so that pupils become increasingly independent in their reading. Most teachers use questioning well to check recall and understanding of previous learning but it is less well used to stimulate thinking and promote thoughtful and reflective extended answers. They work hard to ensure that new vocabulary is explained and this is reflected in the pupils' written work. Planning for lessons is usually thorough and follows the guidance of the National Literacy Strategy. However, the learning objectives for the lessons are not always made specific and are seldom shared with the pupils. This results in pupils often not being clear about the purpose of tasks they are given and they are unable to evaluate their own progress against the expected learning at the end of lessons.

83. The best teaching has high expectations of what the pupils can do and makes constant demands on their productivity levels. The teaching is lively and successful in engaging the pupils' interest. The pupils' writing targets are used consistently to provide a focus for improvement. When teaching is less good, the tasks do not have a clear learning purpose and sometimes provide insufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Occasionally, the shared and guided reading sessions are used inappropriately and teaching sometimes fails to inject pace and urgency into the learning. Overall, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and too little attention is paid to this aspect in lesson planning.
84. Good provision is made for pupils of all abilities to have access to the English curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons and they make good progress towards the targets in their individual learning programmes. The identification of target groups enables teachers to provide appropriate focus and support in order to accelerate learning.
85. Information and communication technology has insufficient emphasis in English lessons. During the inspection there was some use of ICT for research purposes and for supporting reading. However, there is insufficient evidence of ICT being used for drafting and editing in writing.
86. The subject is well managed and the subject leader has correctly identified appropriate areas for development. The action plan and targets for the subject are entirely appropriate and good strategies have already been put in place to raise standards, particularly in writing. The teachers have undergone intensive training for teaching literacy and the subject leader is closely in touch with new developments. The subject makes particularly good use of assessment information to set writing targets for each pupil and to give the pupils feedback on how well they are doing. This is a strong feature in the improving standards evident in the subject. A visit to school by the author, Mo Kermode, conveyed positive images about books and writing. The impact of this was illustrated particularly well when one of her books, 'Bronwen the Brave', was used very effectively to stimulate writing in a Year 2 lesson.
87. The resources for the subject are good. A good range of equipment, such as whiteboards and overhead projectors, enables all pupils to be actively involved in lessons. The library contains an adequate range of fiction and non-fiction books to support the pupils' learning at home and at school, although there is scope for the replacement of some books that have been well used. The range of big books and class texts is sufficient to provide a good resource for teaching reading.

MATHEMATICS

88. Standards by the age of seven and 11 have risen broadly in line with national trends in recent years although the standards achieved by 11 year olds fell sharply in 2001. This was due to a higher than normal rate of mobility among pupils in the Year 6 class. Inspection findings indicate that there is a more stable picture in the current Year 6 and that pupils are on track to achieve improved standards but they will be below national expectations. The standards now being achieved in the Years 4 and 5 suggest that this improvement is likely to continue. Standards by the age of seven rose to below average in 2001 following a sharp drop in results for the previous two years. Inspection findings broadly reflect last year's results. The mathematics curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use the National Numeracy strategy well and the quality of planning and teaching is now good throughout the school. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average, but as a result of good teaching and support, pupils of all abilities achieve well and the school is now in a strong position to raise standards further.
89. By Year 2, most pupils are becoming confident with numbers to 100 and count on or backwards in tens on a number square. They place two digit numbers in the correct order, for example 17, 25, 43, 86, and mentally recall the two, five and ten times tables. Some higher attaining pupils identify the place value of numbers up to 1000, whilst a significant minority of lower attaining pupils need support to count money and work out change from a 10p or 20p piece. In other areas of mathematics, pupils in Year 2 recognise two and three-dimensional shapes, identify the number of sides and faces and say, for instance, whether they 'roll', 'stack', or 'slide'.
90. By Year 6, most pupils work confidently with numbers greater than 1000 and to two decimal places and multiply or divide decimal fractions accurately by 10. Some higher attaining pupils write six or seven digit numbers with a clear appreciation of place value. By this stage, most pupils use more than one strategy for arriving at an answer and clearly explain the method they have used. They recognise angles up to and greater than 90 degrees and measure these with a protractor. Lower attaining pupils write whole numbers up to three or four digits and work out simple percentages independently.
91. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school and has improved since the last inspection. A strength of teaching is the way in which teachers encourage their classes to use the correct mathematical terminology and to explain clearly how they arrive at answers. As a result, pupils by Year 2 pupils use a variety of words for multiplication, such as 'times', 'lots of', and 'multiplication'. Another strong feature is the lively pace of teaching and the imaginative range of games and activities which teachers use. For example, a very good Year 5 lesson ended with a very challenging but enjoyable game of 'Round the World' which captured the interest and imagination of the whole class and consolidated what had been learned during the main body of the lesson. In the vast majority of lessons, relationships and the management of pupils are very good and this results in very good attitudes to work. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the behaviour of the class from beginning to end of the lesson was exemplary. These very good features of teaching are also reflected in the amount and presentation of the work in books, which are consistently good throughout the school. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to achieve well. Teaching is sometimes less successful when the planning of work for the different ability groups does not include more challenging,

independent work for higher attaining pupils and this is the main area for future development.

92. Mathematics benefits from very good leadership, which provides clear educational direction for the subject. The co-ordinator has established a mathematics team, which reviews the curriculum regularly and produces useful short-term action plans. This is having a positive effect on the quality of teachers' planning and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout the school. She has also introduced a 'maths recovery' initiative, which is currently helping the progress of lower attaining pupils in Year 2. Very good assessment procedures are in place to track each pupil's progress and set targets for improvement, although better use of these could be made to plan suitably challenging work for higher attaining pupils. The coordinator also ensures that teachers are now including appropriate opportunities for using information and communication technology, for example to create spreadsheets or rotate geometric shapes.

SCIENCE

93. Standards are below average. In the 2001 national tests the attainment of pupils aged 11 was very low and, on the basis of teacher assessment, pupils aged seven also attained standards below the average of those expected nationally. The work seen during the inspection indicated that standards throughout the school are improving but remain below average. Standards in experimental and investigative science are comparatively low because in the past pupils have undertaken too little of this sort of work. There is evidence that this shortcoming is being rectified and more investigative work is taking place. Whilst standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and their achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment.
94. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average but there is evidence to indicate that they are improving. Some good examples of investigative work were observed although much of the work in pupils' books does not reflect that this aspect of science has previously received sufficient attention. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils investigated different light sources and looked for similarities and differences when comparing two objects to see which gave the brighter light. By the use of clear explanations and careful questioning, the teacher enabled all pupils to understand that objects such as a bulb, candle, torch and the sun can be light sources and that some objects use mains electricity whilst others use a battery. In a lesson with Year 2 the teacher made effective use of the school environment to develop an understanding of the properties of materials. Pupils touched the fabric of the building to develop an understanding of the texture of the surface and could describe this using terms such as hard, soft, smooth and rough. Good questioning by the teacher and learning support assistant helped pupils make the distinction between the different surfaces.
95. By Year 6, pupils have covered a wide range of scientific topics but their work shows a limited understanding of the need to make tests fair. Their work is neatly presented but insufficient attention is given to developing their skills in carrying out and recording of experiments. As a consequence, their understanding of scientific concepts is under-developed. For example, they learn about the human body and the circulatory system and draw well-presented graphs of heart rate but are unable to interpret the graph to show their understanding. However, there are clear indications that the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' skills in carrying out experiments and investigations. For example, Year 6 pupils learn that light travels in straight lines and

bounces or reflects off objects and use torches and light boxes in an experiment to show the angle of reflection. The pupils worked enthusiastically in twos and threes and the teacher and class assistants supported them well to develop their awareness of the care needed in carrying out the experiment in order for the results to be accurate. In another lesson, Year 5 pupils developed an understanding of forces by carrying out an interesting experiment to determine which material will slow a marble the most when travelling down a tube. The teacher held a lively discussion in order to reinforce the need for the test to be accurate and 'fair'.

96. Standards in areas of science, which are dependent on knowledge, are higher. For example, in Year 2, pupils understand the need to eat healthy food and that eating too much sugar is bad for the teeth. They produce very simple labelled diagrams of plants and know that plants require light and water to make them grow. Year 5 pupils show a sound understanding of habitats and animal life cycles and are able to devise a circuit to light a bulb using a switch. They understand that objects may be subject to more than one force at a time, and make generalisations and predictions based on their scientific knowledge and understanding. Year 6 pupils' work is well presented and shows satisfactory coverage of a range of topics including the water cycle and evaporation and condensation; the life cycle of humans; temperature and solutions. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to use computers in order to develop their learning. For example, in Year 1 they label the parts on a picture of the human body.
97. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. Lessons are well planned and have a clear purpose. All teachers have a sound subject knowledge, which results in them being able to provide clear explanations and use questions effectively to develop pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher held a review of earlier work, which effectively developed pupils' understanding of how shadows are formed, that light travels in straight lines and that it is reflected from shiny surfaces. Teachers make good use of direct factual teaching and the most successful lessons also involve the pupils in practical activities. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the teacher carefully defined a force and demonstrated pushing and pulling forces using a brick prior to explaining the setting up of an experiment to determine which surface would most slow a marble. Pupils were encouraged to make a prediction before testing their hypothesis by carrying out the test. Teachers teach and use scientific vocabulary consistently to promote learning. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher emphasised correct vocabulary when explaining that light comes from a source, that everything has to be connected and that a circuit has to be complete for the bulb to light. Pupils were keen to learn, and responded very well to the teacher's encouragement to use the correct scientific vocabulary, although they did not find it easy to communicate their ideas clearly. Teachers make very good use of learning support assistants to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can participate fully and as a result pupils are interested in their work and concentrate well when carrying out tasks. As a consequence of this good teaching pupils of all abilities are making good progress.
98. The attitudes of pupils to science are positive. They work hard, stay on task and maintain a good level of concentration. They are eager to answer questions and show enjoyment in their work, especially practical activities. Relationships in classrooms are very good and pupils work well together.
99. Coordination of the subject is good. The coordinator is enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, having carried out an audit, and has formulated an appropriate action plan. He is aware of the need to give more time to the subject and greater attention to scientific

investigation and experimentation in order to raise standards and the school is well placed to improve further.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Standards throughout the school are broadly in line with national expectations for the age and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is a similar picture to that existing at the time of the last inspection.
101. By Year 2, pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding of how to mix and use paint in a variety of ways, for example by using sponges instead of brushes. The pupils in Year 2 demonstrated particularly sensitive use of colour in their interpretations of Monet's painting of water lilies. They mixed and applied different shades of green paint very effectively to create water effects and chose their own imaginative ways of representing the bridge and water lilies in different collage materials to produce a convincing impressionistic picture in the style of Monet. The pupils study the work of a good range of artists and are able to identify the key features of each artist's work. They are able to express opinions and preferences in their evaluations of different works of art. In a lesson about the work of Matisse, the pupils responded particularly well to the paintings they were shown and displayed very good art appreciation skills. They use an appropriate range of different media for their work in art and use information communication technology effectively to make self-portraits and to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. Over time, they gain experience of drawing materials such as charcoal and chalk pastels. They use these to great effect to make sensitive observational drawings, as in their studies of trees in the school grounds.
102. Progress slows slightly as pupils move up the school due in part to a reduced emphasis on art in the light of other curriculum pressures. However, the pupils continue to build satisfactorily on their creative skills and use a satisfactory range of media for creative purposes. Their drawing skills become increasingly confident, such as in studies of Aztec designs where they show great awareness of line and detail. Chalk pastel studies of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I show good facial proportions and effective use of smudged chalk to produce convincing portraits. They use information communication technology appropriately for creative purposes, such as in the creation of repeating patterns. The pupils' sketchbooks show evidence of a range of appropriate work for their ages and abilities. Close observational drawings of plants, studies of Clarice Cliff designs that they later used to create their own plates, exploration of marbling effects and studies for a Punch and Judy puppet with a clay head, indicate that they are making appropriate progress across the breadth of the art curriculum.
103. The quality of teaching in art lessons is at least satisfactory and there is some good teaching, particularly in Year 2. The teachers know how to enthuse their pupils and gain their interest in the focus for the lesson. This ensures very positive attitudes to work in art. Evidence of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson about the work of Matisse when pupils showed great enthusiasm for the painting they were studying and in a Year 5 lesson about Aztec design when pupils could not wait to start work. The teachers' planning is effective in providing for the requirements of the art curriculum and they manage the lessons well.
104. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader is well qualified to support her colleagues and rightly feels that further staff development is needed to

extend expertise and confidence in teaching the subject. The subject policy gives useful and appropriate guidance on how to assess the pupils' progress. The school's 'curriculum map' for the subject shows an appropriate range of activities but the more detailed lesson plans from the programme of work for art have not been reviewed recently to ensure that they still meet the school's needs in the light of new national guidance. The taught curriculum is not monitored sufficiently closely to ensure that it matches the full curriculum requirements. The resources for the subject are good overall but there is a need for good quality, soft graphite pencils to enable the older pupils to use more ambitious effects in their observational drawings.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards are above those expected for the ages of the pupils and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is a better picture than that seen at the time of the last inspection when standards were found to be average and confirms the views of the head teacher that design and technology is a strength of the school.
106. By Year 2, the great majority of pupils have developed good levels of understanding about designing and making products to meet a need. In Year 1 the pupils examined the design features of existing bags and designed and made their own bags to meet a specified purpose, such as carrying pencils or sweets. The finished bags showed a good range of joining and fastening methods chosen by the pupils. They successfully evaluated their bags by saying what they liked about them but did not test them for the purpose for which they had been designed. In Year 2 the pupils were very successful in designing and making vehicles with moving wheels to carry a teddy. In their evaluation of the finished products, they tested the vehicles to see how successfully they met the original design purpose and some pupils were able to suggest modifications to their original designs.
107. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress in further developing their knowledge and understanding of the design process. They are becoming proficient at analysing existing products, such as torches or biscuits, and note significant design features that make a product suitable for its purpose. They are able to draw up detailed design proposals and understand the importance of exploring mechanisms and using prototypes before finalising their designs. They have satisfactory levels of understanding about cutting and joining different materials. They select and use suitable materials and tools for making their products. The pupils in Year 6 were very successful in designing and making working models of fairground rides, using electric motors and simple pulleys as drive mechanisms. This work showed good links with learning in science in its utilisation of the pupils' knowledge of electric circuits and switches to control the models.
108. Teaching in the lessons seen was never less than good and some very good teaching was observed. Most teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and teach the different stages of the design and make process very carefully so that pupils understand the purpose of what they are doing. In most classes the very good relationships that exist between teachers and their pupils enable high levels of practical activity to take place in an organised and productive way. The pupils behave very well and show good levels of responsibility and care in handling tools and materials. The appropriate skills for cutting, shaping and joining materials are taught carefully so that pupils are aware of safety issues. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to explore mechanisms in order to incorporate these into their own designs. All teachers provide opportunities for pupils to carry out product analysis, create

design proposals, explore prototypes and make good quality finished products. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on evaluating the products against the original design proposal and suggesting modifications to the design. This results in some lack of challenge for the more able, older pupils. Some teachers provide pupils with very good methods of recording the different stages of each unit of study. The younger pupils are encouraged to produce booklets that contain product analysis, labelled design intentions, photographs of the finished product and simple evaluative statements. This good practice helps the pupils to understand the distinctive nature of the design process. This practice is not always continued further up the school and older pupils have less opportunity to develop a structured overview of the designing and making process.

109. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader has very good levels of subject knowledge and the capacity to support his colleagues in developing their own expertise. He has already done much to move the subject forward by providing training and support sessions for staff. He has a clear overview of the strengths in the subject and his priorities for development are entirely appropriate. The range of materials, resources and equipment is adequate to support the subject. The subject makes a positive contribution to developing literacy and numeracy skills and consolidates learning in science. The school has recently made the decision to adopt the national programme of work for design and technology and this is already having a positive impact on the teaching and the standards achieved by the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Whilst only three lessons were observed during the inspection, from the work seen and displays around the school both seven and 11 year olds continue to reach standards that are average compared to those expected nationally, maintaining the position found in the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well compared to their attainment on entry to the school.
111. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory awareness of their local area. They begin to learn about geography through looking at the types of houses in the vicinity of the school. For example, in a lesson with Year 1, most pupils used photographs effectively to identify different styles of houses and used appropriate vocabulary in order to describe detached, semi-detached and terraced housing. They were able to relate this to their local area and showed a satisfactory knowledge of features in the local area. They learn about the wider world through the travels of a cat and have identified a number of countries where the cat has been on holiday such as France, Turkey and Greece. They draw on first-hand experiences of the weather to develop skills in using vocabulary related to the climate of different seasons and have a satisfactory understanding of months of the year and days of the week.
112. By Year 6, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding about geography. They are able to compare and contrast different locations in order to understand about places. For example, Year 4 pupils compared the local area of Birkenhead to Glyn Ceiriog in Wales in a lesson in which the teacher made effective use of photographs and maps. The lesson successfully developed the pupils' skills in determining similarities and differences between the two locations and they understood that both locations developed by the side of a river and were centred on a church. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and demonstrated a growing awareness of both locations and the vocabulary to enable them to describe their geographic features. Year 6 pupils study the European Economic Community (EEC) and in

particular the location of Leishout in Holland, comparing this to the local area in Birkenhead. The teacher made effective use of maps and photographs to show the location of Leishout and the countries in the EEC. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and were excited when given the opportunity to use atlases in order to produce their own map. Year 5 pupils have carried out a study of Mexico and have a good understanding of the difference between a farming environment and the urban environment in which they live. Their work shows steady progress in the development of geographic skills and they have a satisfactory understanding of the features of rivers, environmental pollution and the effects of climate.

113. Lessons and other evidence indicate that teaching is generally satisfactory and there is some good teaching. The range of work covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and teachers plan their lessons carefully and are clear about what pupils are going to learn. Teachers use resources effectively to motivate pupils and aid their understanding. They explain things in an interesting manner in order to encourage pupils to listen carefully and this maintains their interest. In the lessons seen, pupils had good attitudes to the subject and generally learnt at a satisfactory pace although there were instances where the challenge of work was not high enough. This was evident in the lesson with Year 6 pupils when the use of atlases to locate different countries presented insufficient challenge to the more able pupils.
114. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and gives advice and guidance if required. The curriculum has been reviewed and the programme of work for each year group has been clearly identified and indicated in the school curriculum map. This reflects national guidance and enables teachers to make sure that pupils' work builds systematically on work they have already covered. However, the work presented to higher attaining pupils does not always provide sufficient challenge at a higher National Curriculum level or enable them to plan and carry out their own geographical investigations. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

HISTORY

115. Standards in history have been maintained since the last inspection and the attainment of both seven and 11 year olds is average in comparison to that expected nationally. Only one lesson was seen so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching but it is clear from the work in pupils' books and displays around the school that they have been taught satisfactorily. Pupils' spoke very enthusiastically about the work on the Tudors in Year 6 and were very interested in their current topic about World War II. The work in books is satisfactory, although pupils have too few opportunities to write independently about historical events. As a result, the degree of challenge for higher attaining pupils is sometimes too low. However, pupils' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
116. Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of events and people in the past. Pupils learn about the Great Fire of London and apply their writing skills to recount the story. They develop an understanding of how times have changed through stories about famous people. For instance they learn about the life of Florence Nightingale and understand that things such as medicines and hospitals changed as a result of her work and conditions were made better for soldiers.

117. By Year 6, pupils show satisfactory understanding and knowledge of the key events and people in the periods of history studied. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of the life in Tudor and Stuart times and awareness of the changes brought about to the church following Henry VIII's divorce and how it is still impacting on the present day. They understand that they can find things out about what happened in the past by looking for evidence and clues and by talking to people about what they remember from the past. Their enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in a number of individual studies carried out whilst on holiday, including an interesting display on the Mary Rose by a pupil who visited Portsmouth. The work of younger pupils indicates that the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered well. Most pupils are aware of important differences between life today and life 100 years or 1000 years ago and can give some examples to reflect these such as clothing, homes and medicine. They are developing an awareness of the sequence of important events and show these on timelines indicating an awareness of chronology. In a successful lesson with Year 5 pupils, the teacher made effective use of a timeline to show the period of the Aztecs and held an interesting discussion in order to develop the pupils' understanding of the terms Anno Domini (AD) and Common Era (CE). The teacher gave a small group of pupils the opportunity to use a computer in order to look for information on the Aztecs and information and communication technology is generally used satisfactorily to support learning in the subject. However, pupils are less clear regarding the consequences of events and changes and make few comparisons between different periods.
118. It is not possible to make an overall judgment on the quality of teaching, but other evidence indicates that teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the subject and plan lessons carefully. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. The activities helped pupils to become more aware of the importance of chronology and use the time conventions BC, AD or CE to locate the dates of the Aztecs. The teacher explained things clearly to pupils and phrased her questions to encourage them to talk. Suitable use was made of a CD ROM to enable a group of pupils to research information. The lesson stimulated pupils' interest and curiosity about the past, and they were attentive, hard working and enthusiastic.
119. The subject has been successfully managed, resources are good and there is a clear programme of work that meets the National Curriculum requirements and clearly outlines the topics to be covered in each year. An interesting range of visits is used to enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' learning. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained but there is room for further improvement, particularly in making sure that there is sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain standards that are average compared to those expected nationally. This maintains the standards reported in the last inspection and reflects good improvement because the demands of the National Curriculum have risen significantly in recent years. Since the last inspection, the governors have made good use of specific grants, subsidised by the school's budget, to provide a computer suite and teachers are now using this facility regularly to enable pupils to develop an adequate range of computer skills. Consequently all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well.
121. By Year 2, the majority of pupils use computers confidently and independently and are aware of the wider uses of information and communication technology. For example, they operate a tape recorder independently to listen to stories, they direct a floor robot

to travel from one point to another and recognize that many devices in their day-to-day lives rely on computer technology to operate. Word processing skills are well developed at this stage for pupils of this age. Most pupils use computers confidently to compile a list of information about themselves or to help with their work in subjects such as science, where they label the parts on a picture of the human body. A small minority, particularly those without regular access to computers at home, still lack confidence and rely on help from adults or classmates.

122. By Year 6, all pupils use computers with at least adequate confidence and a minority demonstrate above average keyboard skills for their age. They are becoming aware that computers are an efficient means of communication beyond the classroom and use them to send electronic mail, for example to Tranmere Football Club, and to operate a variety of 'search engines' using the internet. They also use control software to programme a set of traffic lights or the beam from a lighthouse. In their day-to-day lessons, computers become a useful tool, for example to handle complex calculations on a spreadsheet, for combining text with pictures to enhance the presentation of their work, or to rotate geometric shapes. The majority of pupils use computers independently and look for alternative routes to find information if they are unsuccessful at first.
123. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. This is because teachers integrate the development of computer skills into their planning for subjects across the curriculum. For example, they provide opportunities for their classes to use computers independently to look for information on the Aztecs in history or to edit and improve their extended writing in English. They plan a range of interesting activities using other forms of information and communication technology and make good use of it themselves, for example to plan their work or by using overhead projectors in the classroom. They also provide good opportunities for the pupils to work together and talk constructively about their work. Consequently, pupils throughout the school are very responsible and cooperative when using computers. They help each other out when in difficulties and treat equipment with respect. They are enthusiastic about the subject and keen to learn more. On a small number of occasions, the eagerness of both teachers and pupils is frustrated by inconsistencies in the computer service provision. Both pupils and teachers display patience and flexibility when this happens, although it does slow the rate of achievement. The school recognises this and is working hard to address the issue.
124. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who has placed the school in a strong position to improve standards further. She has phased in the various elements of the scheme of work, enabling the pupils to gradually develop sufficient skills, year on year, to meet the demands of the curriculum. She has worked hard to support colleagues and to encourage the integration of the use of information and communication technology and the computer suite in day-to-day teaching. She has also introduced a very good awards and assessment system, which, whilst in need of some minor adjustments, is a very useful tool for measuring progress.

MUSIC

125. By the time pupils reach the age of seven they have taken part in a good range of musical experiences and attain standards broadly similar to those seen in most schools. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. However, by the time pupils reach the age of eleven, standards of attainment are below average. Pupils have had insufficient opportunities to play tuned or untuned instruments or to compose and their skills in these areas are underdeveloped. This is a similar situation

to the position in the last report. However, the school has been successful in addressing one of the identified weaknesses, which was that many pupils lacked confidence in singing, finding it difficult to pitch notes accurately. Now, because of improved provision, pupils sing tunefully and with clear diction. This is evident in assemblies and when pupils are rehearsing their singing. They sustained 'Pease Pudding' successfully as a round in two parts.

126. There is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching in a Year 1 lesson was very good. The teacher established very good relationships with the pupils and the lesson proceeded at a good pace with interesting activities, which effectively developed pupils' skills. Pupils demonstrated their ability to maintain a steady beat as they accompanied a piece of music with appropriate actions. They identified a range of percussion instruments such as Indian bells, tambourines and triangles and made appropriate choices when selecting instruments to accompany their performances. For example, they selected a wooden block to represent hammering and a scraper to represent a sawing action, holding the instruments correctly when performing. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their singing lessons and about how much they enjoy learning how to sing and singing in two parts.
127. The co-ordinator has produced a planned programme of work for the whole school but has not taken sufficient opportunities to monitor its implementation. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development. The school regularly sings in the Birkenhead Music Festival and the Wirral Schools' orchestra has performed a concert in the school. Music is played as pupils enter the hall for assemblies, and the name of the composer is displayed. References to these pieces and their composers increase pupils' knowledge of music in general. The pupils' singing enhances Christmas performances. A small number of pupils take the opportunity to learn to play an instrument such as the flute or the clarinet.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. The school has faced considerable disruption in the past year due to extension work to the building. It has been impossible to use the outside play area for games or to use the hall for gymnastics during the autumn term because it has been used as a temporary classroom for one or more classes and this has clearly hindered progress in these aspects of the subject. However, the school's good arrangements for extra-curricular activities, which are well attended, have compensated to some extent for this temporary lack of facilities. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have regular opportunities to take part in sports such as football, badminton, cricket, gymnastics and athletics. There were three lessons observed during the inspection, one in Year 1 and the others in Years 4 and 6. On the basis of these observations, inspection findings indicate that standards by the age of seven and 11 are broadly similar to those seen in most schools and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily despite the recent disruption.
129. By Year 2, pupils are able to control their movements to a standard expected for their ages. They have a reasonable awareness of the space around them and use it safely. They follow instructions carefully by, for example, slowing down or speeding up their movement in response to their teacher's beats on a tambourine. They are making satisfactory progress in building a simple sequence of movements on floor and apparatus and are taking increasing responsibility for setting out and storing equipment safely. Teachers also provide opportunities for them to develop throwing, catching and striking skills and to respond to music through movement. By Year 6,

the vast majority of pupils are confident and safe in water and reach the minimum requirement of being able to swim 25 metres. The school works hard to ensure that all Year 6 pupils are competent swimmers before they take part in canoeing on the residential outdoor activities trip which it arranges every year in North Wales. The majority of pupils successfully remember and perform a sequence of dance or aerobic steps to music and keep time to a variety of rhythm patterns. A small minority are well coordinated and move with a confidence above expectations for their age, whilst some are self-conscious in their movement and need several tries to master a set of steps.

130. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education are good overall. In the lessons seen, they were confident and authoritative and managed their classes well. This had a positive effect on pupils' response and attitudes to the subject. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, many pupils were unsure of the steps of a dance routine at first, but the teacher's confident and lively approach helped them and they quickly improved. In all of the lessons seen, teachers paid appropriate attention to safety, stressed the importance of regular exercise and emphasised the need to warm up properly before strenuous activity. Teaching is only occasionally less successful where teachers miss opportunities to drive up standards by asking the best performers to demonstrate to the rest of the class.
131. There is currently no permanent co-ordinator for the subject, although the school's action plans indicate that it is on track to fully reinstate the scheme of work now that building work is complete. The immediate area for future development is to appoint a co-ordinator to monitor the curriculum to ensure that pupils develop the necessary skills in all areas of physical education, step by step, as they grow older.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. Attainment is in line with the expectations of the local syllabus when pupils are seven and eleven years of age. The school has maintained the standards achieved in the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Because only one short lesson was observed in Years 3 to 6, judgements on standards have also been based on an analysis of pupils' work together with discussions with pupils from Years 5 and 6.
133. By Year 2, pupils are aware of events in the life of Jesus and of Christian Festivals such as Christmas and Easter, and practices such as Baptism. Pupils from Year 2 animatedly discussed their visit to a local church, vividly recalling the appearance of the church and its contents. This visit was used well to increase their understanding of Christian worship and this understanding is reflected in the quality of their written accounts when they refer to their amazement at seeing the size of the church and describe in detail every aspect of the visit and how they felt. Pupils are also becoming aware of other religions such as Hinduism.
134. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and use questions very well to assess pupils understanding of what is being taught. Year 1 pupils made good progress in their awareness of the concept of friendship because the teacher effectively related what she was teaching to circumstances in their own lives. Whilst no judgement can be made on teaching in Years 3 to 6 because of the limited amount of teaching seen, other evidence shows that there is a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for pupils to develop and enrich their spiritual and religious awareness. Pupils' knowledge of major world religions is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils have studied

Judaism and talk about some Jewish beliefs and how these beliefs affect the everyday lives of Jews. Year 5 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their investigative work on the Bible, which has increased their knowledge of Christianity. When given opportunities, pupils throughout the school write very perceptively about wider spiritual and moral issues. Year 6 pupils write about what faith means to them and Year 4 pupils write about forgiveness and the qualities they would look for in a friend.

135. Pupils' positive attitudes to religious education are demonstrated by their good behaviour and response to teachers' questions in the lessons observed, and by the quality of their written work. Literacy skills are promoted appropriately when pupils are given opportunities for independent writing. For example, Year 6 pupils write knowledgeably about Dr Barnado. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
136. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about the work being done by pupils in each class. She has prepared a good programme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and supports colleagues very well. At the time of the previous inspection, resources for religious education were limited. There is now a good range of resources including artefacts to support the teaching of the religions studied. The co-ordinator has made a book of pupils' own prayers, which are used regularly in assemblies, showing pupils that their contributions to this book are valued. Visitors, such as the local vicar and the Wirral 'Youth for Christ' group, together with visits to the local church and to the Liverpool Cathedrals, enhance provision for the subject. The co-ordinator hopes to arrange some visits to places of worship of religions other than Christianity in the future.