

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Southport

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104916

Headteacher: Mrs S Wilson

Reporting inspector: Stephen Lake  
22191

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 June 2000

Inspection number: 195459

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grantham Road Birkdale Southport Merseyside
Postcode:	PR8 4LT
Telephone number:	01704 568375
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tony Hibbs
Date of previous inspection:	1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephen Lake	Registered inspector	Design and technology English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
Terry Heppenstall	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Pat English	Team inspector	Children under five English Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Keith Sanderson	Team inspector	Science Special educational needs Physical education	
Don Kimber	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography	
Noel Simmonds	Team inspector	Information technology Music	
Shirley Duggins	Team inspector		Attitudes behaviour and personal development
Terry Mortimer	Team inspector	English as an additional language (support)	

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is set in a residential area in Birkdale near the centre of Southport. It serves an area of private and local authority housing from the surrounding communities. The school has 426 pupils including 27 children in the nursery. An unusual feature of the school is the extra intake at Year 3 from a neighbouring infant school. The majority of the children entering the school have some pre-school experience. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low but in line with other local schools. There are 89 pupils on the register of special educational needs which, at 22.3 per cent, is above average. This includes 12 pupils who have the protection of a Statement of Special Educational Need. This represents 2.8 per cent of the school, which is well above the national average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average at 12.2 per cent. On entry to the school at age three attainment is broadly in line with that found in children of a similar age. At the time of the inspection temporary teachers taught five of the 14 classes.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school that is committed to improving further. There is a strong Catholic ethos which is supported by a markedly high level of mutual care and respect that ensures a good learning environment for all of the pupils. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment and by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average. The quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. Taking all factors into consideration, the school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The standards attained in English, mathematics, science, art and geography by the age of 11.
- The outstanding provision made for pupils with special educational needs that promotes their learning very effectively.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher and senior staff supported by the whole staff.
- The good quality curriculum.
- Teaching is consistently good especially the way in which behaviour is managed. This fosters very good attitudes to school and promotes good behaviour and relationships.
- The very good overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- Support that school provides for parents so that they can help their children learn at home.

#### **What could be improved**

- Resources for outdoor, vigorous and imaginative play in a secure area for children under five.
- Role of governors' active involvement in school policy making.

*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 1996 and has made considerable improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is much better, with hardly any unsatisfactory teaching. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements. Skills are taught systematically. Standards have risen significantly and the quality of leadership and management, especially the role of subject managers has improved. Taking into account the strong leadership of the headteacher and the support of the senior management team and governing body the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	B	B
Mathematics	B	B	B	B
Science	C	B	B	B

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

The table above shows that standards in the core subjects were all above the national average in 1999. The inspection finds that the school is maintaining high standards and in some cases improving further. The improvement in standards over the last four years is broadly in line with the national trend. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and the school meets the targets set for attainment. At present attainment at Key Stage 1 is above average in mathematics and English and average in science. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science with some aspects well above average. Attainment in art throughout the school and geography at the end of Key Stage 2 is above that normally found and attainment in all other subjects is in line with that normally found. A specific strength of the school is the attainment of pupils with special educational needs. All of these pupils make at least good, and often very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Those pupils identified as gifted or talented make good progress and some of these attain very high standards especially in mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and show interest in the wide range of activities on offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall very good. Pupils behave well. They respond quickly to instructions and move about the school with purpose and consideration. The very good behaviour makes a significant contribution to learning.
Personal development and relationships	Overall good. Relationships are very good. Pupils are very polite and friendly they relate very well to adults and each other. There is a strong atmosphere of care and concern where individuals are valued.
Attendance	Good. Pupils' regular attendance makes a good contribution to learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good. Out of the 82 lessons observed 12 per cent were very good, 46 per cent were good, and 41 per cent were satisfactory. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Strengths of the teaching are:

- the very good management of pupils especially those with special educational needs so that all pupils have opportunities to make best progress;
- the very good use of resources and support staff;
- the enthusiasm and knowledge of the teachers that are infectious and make pupils want to learn.

Teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to motivate and stimulate all pupils including those with special educational needs. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Breadth and balance of the curriculum are good. There are good cross-curricular links.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. The school provides an outstanding support for these pupils and enables them to learn very effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall very good. The provision of spiritual and moral development is very good and reflected in the thoughtful, well-behaved pupils. The provision for the social and cultural development of pupils is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. An undeniable strength of the school. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. A very caring school.

A clear strength of the school is where the school supports and encourages parents to help their children. A number of courses are run for this purpose. A large number of parents help within the school. Parents' views of the school are that it is effective in its links with them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. The very good leadership and vision of the headteacher are well supported by the deputy headteacher, co-ordinators and all key staff who make significant contributions to the good management of the school. The school works well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall satisfactory with some strengths such as the budget management. The knowledgeable governing body is very supportive of the school. Several governors are in school every week, including one volunteer who helps in classes on a regular basis. The governing body has many new members and has not yet fully defined its policy-making role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The regular and detailed evaluations of how well pupils are achieving and how much the school is improving make a significant contribution to how pupils learn.
The strategic use of resources	Resources in the school are adequate and are used well. The school is very well staffed and particularly good use is made of the learning support assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation is spacious and generally used effectively. Learning resources are satisfactory in most areas except for children under five where a shortage of large wheeled toys, or a suitable enclosed space in which they can be used, limits opportunities to plan for children's physical development effectively. Governors are applying the principles of best value satisfactorily although this is in an early stage of development.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High expectations of children.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Children have good behaviour.</li> <li>• The school helps the children to mature.</li> <li>• Children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The way in which the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive statements, but the evidence shows that the amount of homework is satisfactory. Furthermore the school has many initiatives to work with the parents.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The school's assessment of children when they enter the school at age three or four shows that attainment is broadly in line with that found in similar age children.
2. The results of the 1999 national assessments for pupils aged seven, show that overall attainment is above the national average. In reading and mathematics pupils' attainment is above average. In writing attainment is average. Over the last four years attainment in reading and writing has improved but attainment in mathematics, although good, has dropped significantly. The 1999 assessments for pupils aged 11 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities do equally well but boys do not perform as well as girls do. The difference in performance is approximately a half term's work. The school is aware of this and has set up systems to attempt to identify the reasons for this difference.
3. By the time children start the National Curriculum almost all of them have attained the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age, with some exceeding them in language and literacy. Many have made a successful start on the National Curriculum.
4. The inspection finds that the high standards are not only being maintained but are improving overall and pupils make good progress throughout the school in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and achievement is high for all groups of pupils. Early information from this year's assessments indicates that the school has met or exceeded the targets set for this year. However no national comparison is available yet.
5. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in reading is above average with many pupils attaining the expected Level 2 and many achieving beyond this. Pupils' writing is average by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils are writing for a variety of purposes using correctly formed letters and many pupils are starting to join their letters. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average with some pupils attaining well above the national average. Speaking and listening skills are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other and make good contributions to class discussions. Reading skills are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils read fluently and accurately from a range of texts and demonstrate a suitable understanding of library skills. Pupils' good literacy skills are used effectively to support learning in other subjects such as history and geography. For example, keeping a diary of a Viking child. By the end of Key Stage 2 almost all pupils read effectively from a range of texts including Shakespeare. Most pupils retrieve information effectively but opportunities to develop library skills to a very high level are limited due to the dual use of the library.
6. Attainment in mathematics is above average by the end of both key stages and in the area of numeracy many pupils are achieving standards that are well above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils are confident when calculating with numbers up to 100. They understand that doubling and halving are inverse operations and the higher attaining pupils recognise equivalence in simple fractions such as a half and five tenths. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils handle positive and negative numbers up to two decimal places with ease. They have a good understanding of number sequences and can identify patterns. Pupils at both key stages have a good understanding of shape and space. Numeracy skills are used well to

support learning in other areas of the curriculum such as science and physical education. For example, when pupils measure the effects of exercise upon their bodies and present the information in a range of styles, including through the use of information technology.

7. Attainment in science is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are attaining above the national average. By the age of seven the majority of pupils know about a range of physical phenomena such as light and sound. Many pupils are able to accurately identify parts of a plant, and are able with support, to set up experiments to find out what plants need to grow. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils can plan and carry out a 'fair test' when investigating. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of forces such as friction and magnetism. They answer such questions as "How would you make the bulb light?", and can tell from circuit diagrams whether bulbs are switched on or off. Pupils draw conclusions from recorded evidence and some can draw on their knowledge to explain their findings, often making sound use of information technology to do this.
8. Attainment in art is above that normally found at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work with collage materials, paint and pastels to create plates and kites in the style of Chinese artists. At Key Stage 2 similarly good progress is made in experimenting with styles and emulating the work of famous artists such as Miro and Lowry. Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school.
9. Standards in design and technology have improved from those noted in the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn basic joining techniques through the use of construction equipment and make small models and frames for photographs. At Key Stage 2 pupils extend their skills appropriately, making puppets and models such as a Viking longboat. They show suitable understanding of design and decoration when they produce model house fronts as part of a project on houses and homes.
10. The standards attained in geography are in line with that normally found at the end of both key stages with some pupils working above that normally found at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 1 learn about how the quality of an environment can be sustained and improved through listening to a story. At Key Stage 2 pupils have suitable knowledge and understanding of physical geography. When discussing life in an Indian village, pupils demonstrate good understanding of the influences of the environment and economic factors on a settlement.
11. Standards observed in history are in line with those normally seen with children of a similar age. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a sound understanding of chronology and are able to explain why changes take place over time. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make good use of sources of information to gather evidence and demonstrate the ability to empathise with the past. Achievement is sound at both key stages.
12. Information technology was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen since then and are now in line with national expectations at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use the keyboard and mouse with confidence. They can input text and edit and improve it and save and retrieve it. Pupils control a programmable toy to move in different directions and around a simple maze and predict the results. They use information technology to support their learning in other subjects. For example using 'Dataplot' to create graphs such as the numbers of letters in surnames or ways of travelling to school. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to build on skills taught in Key Stage 1 and use word processing for a range of purposes across the curriculum, with work in science, history and physical education as well as mathematics and English. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are rising.

13. Attainment in music is in line with that normally found with similar age pupils. In Key Stage 1 pupils sing action songs, memorising simple songs and can keep a simple beat. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils create rhythmic patterns using symbols and have opportunities to play a wide range of instruments. Satisfactory progress is made throughout the school and pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
14. It was only possible to observe some aspects of physical education, but the evidence shows that attainment is in line with that expected for similar age pupils. Attainment in swimming meets national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have sound hand-to-eye co-ordination and throw and catch accurately. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate a range of passing and catching skills and use racquets appropriately. They have a sound understanding of team games and co-operate well when playing in teams. Progress through the school is sound and pupils achieve satisfactorily.
15. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their previous attainment due to the excellent support that they receive. Pupils make good progress towards targets set for them. Targets are well defined and constitute achievable steps for the pupils concerned. The knowledge that the school has of individual needs and its use in framing targets has a positive impact upon attainment. Progress towards targets is reviewed each term. It is a testament to the school that, although the percentage of these pupils is high, they are integrated well into classrooms and follow the same curriculum as other pupils.
16. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. Their progress is indistinguishable from that of the other pupils. A particular strength of the school is the programme to support gifted or talented pupils and these achieve very high standards particularly in mathematics.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. Attitudes to school have significantly improved since the previous inspection report when they were found to be sound. Pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning are very good. They really enjoy coming to school where a very caring, secure atmosphere successfully promotes positive approaches towards learning. Pupils listen attentively, show genuine interests and are keen to contribute to learning knowing their views and ideas are valued. The pupils' capacity for personal study is very good. Concentration is sustained to complete tasks even when not under the close supervision of the class teacher. They co-operate very effectively in pairs and small groups in which they actively encourage and support each other. Parents express strong agreement with the positive attitudes and values promoted by the school.
18. The inspection team agrees with parents' views expressed at the pre-inspection meeting that pupil behaviour is good. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. They respond quickly to instructions and move about the school with purpose and consideration. Pupils are thoughtful, courteous, polite and helpful. The school's behaviour policy, which is based on the concept of assertive behaviour, is effective in practice. The greater majority of pupils understand what is expected of them and they try successfully to achieve the high expectations of their teachers. They demonstrate their acceptance of a clear moral code and show care for one another, their belongings and school property. Teachers quickly and successfully deal with any unacceptable behaviour in a firm yet sensitive manner. No bullying of any type was observed during the inspection. There were no exclusions in recent years. Pupils are confident and know what to do if feeling threatened in any way. Their good behaviour makes a significant contribution to learning.

19. The quality of relationships between pupils of all ages and between pupils and teachers is very good. Pupils support each other well in lessons and appropriately consider others' points of view. They appreciate each other's achievements and celebrate their successes. The achievement boards for each year group effectively exemplify pupil achievements and are a popular focal point where successes are shared. Pupils have only limited first-hand experience of other cultures, values and beliefs. Nevertheless, they are accepting of the very few pupils from different cultural and social backgrounds. Pupils are very tolerant, understanding and supportive of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils mix well together and there is social and racial harmony. Pupils show very good levels of respect and politeness to their teachers and other adults during lessons. They readily ask for help if they need it.
20. Pupils accept responsibilities well and enjoy helping with the routines of the class and school such as register monitors. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.
21. The level of attendance has remained good since the previous inspection. It has been consistently above the national average with over 95 per cent attendance. The level of unauthorised absence is low compared to the national average but there are small inconsistencies in the attendance data that cause some uncertainty in the accuracy of the published information. A similar problem was noted in the previous inspection report.
22. Some late marks are indicated in the registers but punctuality was not observed to be a problem during the inspection. Registration periods start promptly and they proceed efficiently. This allows lessons to start on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

23. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons observed 12 per cent were very good, 46 per cent were good and 41 per cent were satisfactory. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Strengths of the teaching are:
  - the very good management of pupils, especially those with special educational needs, so that all pupils have opportunities to make best progress;
  - the very good use of resources and support staff;
  - the enthusiasm and knowledge of the teachers that are infectious and make pupils want to learn.

The quality of teaching has improved considerably from that observed in the last inspection. Skills are now taught in a systematic manner that support pupils' learning well.

24. The quality of teaching with children under five is good overall. It is satisfactory overall in the nursery with one lesson in four judged to be good and one lesson in four judged to be unsatisfactory. In reception classes teaching is never less than satisfactory with a half of lessons observed being good and a third very good. This quality of teaching makes a major contribution to the progress made by all children. All teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the recommended areas of learning, the desirable outcomes and, most importantly, how young children learn. This is well illustrated by the quality of planning that provides opportunities for children to develop skills and understanding through a structured range of practical and purposeful activities so that they are eager to be involved and their interest is sustained. Assessment information is used well to target questioning as, for instance in a reception number activity so that each child is appropriately challenged and learning is

promoted. A good balance of whole-class and group activities is achieved so that children have the support of direct teaching and opportunities to explore for themselves in self-chosen tasks. This is illustrated well in nursery sessions and reception literacy and numeracy sessions. All staff relate very well with the children so that they feel secure and valued. The sensitive management of children with special educational needs allows all the children to make best progress. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the planned learning activities inappropriately challenge the children and too much time is spent waiting to be involved in the activity. This has a negative impact upon children's learning.

25. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers plan carefully making good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to motivate and stimulate all pupils including those with special educational needs. Introductory sessions are lively and set the tone for the lessons. This ensures good learning and pupils respond well to the challenge set in most lessons.
26. In all subjects teachers have clear objectives for lessons that are usually shared with the pupils. In many lessons the evaluation at the end asks pupils to assess if the objectives have been met. This involvement of the pupils in assessing their own learning is making a good contribution to enabling more pupils to start taking some responsibility for their own learning. In many of the plenary sessions the good questioning from the teachers deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively.
27. Throughout the school teachers use a wide range of teaching techniques to motivate pupils. The enthusiasm with which teachers - from under-fives to Year 6 - approach lessons creates enthusiasm in the pupils and contributes to the very effective behaviour management. It is significant that, despite the large number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, the classrooms are calm and effective learning environments. In this positive atmosphere pupils are able to work effectively. They are encouraged to sustain effort and work at a good pace.
28. Teachers make good use of the detailed assessments to guide their planning. This is supported by the high quality informal assessments that teachers make during lessons. Most teachers know their pupils very well and use this knowledge to ensure that achievement is high. The temporary teachers also know the children well after only a short time in the school and there was little noticeable difference between these classrooms and those of the permanent staff. The analysis of the result of tests, and of other on-going teacher assessments, is used well to guide the planning. This enables good arrangements for supporting particular group of pupils such as:
  - underachieving boys in English;
  - pupils with special educational needs;
  - pupils who will benefit from alternative classes in mathematics in Year 2 (Maths recovery) and Year 6 (booster classes);
  - potentially high attaining pupils who are identified for more challenging activities, such as in Year 6 mathematics.
29. The quality of teaching with pupils with special educational needs is very good. The very knowledgeable and experienced special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) works closely with colleagues and gives excellent support. As she is not class-based she is able to give support often at very short notice. As one of the learning support assistants observed, in discussions, "A child, after five minutes with the SENCO, would return and be in a positive mood for the rest of the day". Support staff who work with these pupils are enthusiastic and

committed and have a very good understanding of their work. Involvement in planning and close monitoring of activities enables them to guide pupils with skill and purpose and they make a very good contribution to the attainment and progress of these pupils.

30. In many classes the computers are starting to be used effectively to support learning. In physical education pupils graph their pulse rate after exercise. In English pupils compose and arrange prose and poetry and in art pupils use computers to explore ways of drawing. The use of information technology to research for subjects such as history and geography is only just starting, as the new computer suite gets under way. Research through use of the reference library has improved since the last inspection but the distance to the library poses difficulties for pupils in Key Stage 1.

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

31. The curricular provision for children in the nursery and reception classes and both key stages is good overall. This represents improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils have equal access to a curriculum that is broadly based, suitably balanced and appropriately relevant for their ages. This makes a considerable contribution to their intellectual, physical and personal development as they move through the school and effectively prepares them for the subsequent stages of education.
32. The curriculum for children under five in nursery and reception demonstrates the importance the school places on providing purposeful, practical learning experiences in all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age so that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. This makes a considerable contribution to the good progress most of them make towards achieving the agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes and ensures a smooth transition to the work of the National Curriculum at a time best suited to each child. However, now that the school includes a nursery maintained by the local education authority the new policy for the institution of the foundation stage does not yet fully articulate the school's approach to, and subsequent policy for, the provision of education for children from entry to Year 1.
33. The high quality display of pupils' work throughout the school and the range of documented policies demonstrate well the breadth of the curriculum opportunities provided for pupils. Suitable policies are in place to ensure that the statutory requirements for each of the core subjects of the National Curriculum and the provision for religious education are met. Appropriate policies are in place to guide the work in the foundation subjects and a programme of reviews has been instituted, in the light of recent National Curriculum revision. The reviews of provision for children in the foundation stage, geography and art have already been identified. This indicates that the school is committed, and well placed, to further improve the quality of guidance for teachers and, subsequently, the effectiveness of monitoring the quality of provision in all subjects. Through an appropriate range of policies clear guidance is provided for pupils' personal, social and health education that includes the governors' policies on sex education and the misuse of drugs.
34. The balance of the curriculum is supported well by the allocation of time to subjects and care is taken to review this from term to term. This illustrates two things well; firstly, the particular priority the school gives to English and mathematics in order to improve literacy and numeracy skills further and, secondly, the commitment to maintain the provision of a richly diverse curriculum for all pupils. The school effectively uses the advice of the literacy and numeracy strategies as whole-school schemes of work. After careful review, teachers confidently make

well-considered adjustments to meet pupils' needs as they arise. The clearly defined structure of these schemes and useful guidance developed by the school ensure the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding as pupils move through the school.

35. Overall the organisation of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils is good. There is a clear commitment to, and policy for all pupils to have equal access to all subjects and aspects of school life. This makes a major contribution to the progress all pupils make and particularly to those pupils who present with special educational needs. To achieve this, whole-school schemes of work are in place. Overall, they provide good support for teachers' mid and short-term planning so that clear learning objectives are set and pupils are systematically developing knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. This represents improvement in the provision for information technology and design and technology since the previous inspection. The good practice of many teachers to make appropriate cross-curricular links when planning work enhances the quality of the curriculum but there is, at present, insufficient structure to ensure consistency in this practice. The preparation of guidance to support teachers' cross-curricular planning is included in the current school development plan so that the school is well placed to improve further.
36. Very effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The policy closely follows the requirements of the Code of Practice. Identification of needs is made at an early stage through parent and teacher observations and analysis of the results of assessment procedures. The individual education plans subsequently prepared provide very precise learning targets and advise on strategies for achieving them in short measurable steps so that pupils, parents and teachers can easily recognise progress made. This has a significantly positive impact on pupils' progress in learning and on the development of self-esteem and confidence. These pupils have a good balance of support both in class and in withdrawn groups.
37. The curriculum is significantly enriched by the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities although most are open only to pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to engage in sporting activities such as football, hockey, gymnastics and dance as well as clubs that extend subject knowledge and skills such as French, mathematics, computer, music and art. The local authority peripatetic service provides an appropriately wide opportunity for some pupils to develop particular talents through guitar, clarinet and flute tuition. The school is actively involved in the community and supported by it through, for instance, involvement in the Creative Arts Festival, choir and recorder concerts and carol singing in the shopping centre. Visitors with particular expertise such as an artist in residence and a 'local Viking warrior' provide significant support for the quality of teaching and learning. The school effectively uses opportunities to support pupils' learning through visits to sites ranging from the local launderette to Eden Camp. The opportunity for older pupils to have residential experience makes a major contribution to their personal and social development.
38. Good links are made with pre-school providers and feeder schools, where appropriate, and with parents of new entrants so that there is useful exchange of information from which teachers can plan effectively to meet pupils' needs. There are good procedures in place to ensure that pupils transferring to the secondary sector are well prepared through visits and opportunities to meet with receiving staff and other pupils from neighbouring schools. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs.
39. The school has very good procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' academic attainment. Arrangements for baseline testing on entry to the school, and for the assessment of standards in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven and 11 years meet statutory

requirements. There are very effective methods to ensure the regular assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in other foundation subjects. The school has responded successfully to criticisms in the last inspection report (1996) about assessment, record keeping, and inconsistent marking and major improvements are to be seen in this area. Staff are currently being trained to use 'Assessment Manager' - a system that is planned to further increase the efficiency of assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress.

40. Provision for special educational needs is outstanding. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice. The school makes early identification of special educational needs a priority. Pupils are identified as soon as they join the school, usually in the nursery. Parents are encouraged to become involved as soon as needs are identified. They are invited to all reviews, strongly support the school and they, along with the local education authority, have a very high regard for the school's efforts and expertise.
41. Procedures to assess the attainment of pupils with special educational needs and to monitor their progress against their individual education programmes are very good. Targets are regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Support staff contribute fully to the assessment process. All staff work very hard to include all pupils in curriculum activities.
42. Overall, the provisions for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good and this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
43. Spiritual development provisions are very good. The school prospectus states that 'the development of spiritual values is implicit in the life of the school' and inspection evidence confirms this view. Religious education and collective worship provide important occasions for pupils to reflect on the spiritual aspects of life, but the range of opportunities is much broader. Good reflective work was found, for example, in very sensitive writing about life in an Indian village. Much written work in English has a marked spiritual content such as discussions about things which are important and beautiful. In science, a sense of awe and wonder was observed in a lesson about seeds.
44. Moral development provisions are also very good. The nature of the overall moral attitude is, perhaps, best illustrated by the way in which many pupils with a wide range of special educational needs are welcomed, encouraged and fully integrated within the life of the school. Moral questions are considered throughout the curriculum and good examples were observed in English and geography. The school has a behaviour policy that is based on rules and pupils understand the concepts of right and wrong. For example, Year 6 pupils have a contract with the school that emphasises the need for trustworthiness, showing respect and having acceptable behaviour.
45. Social development provisions are good. Teachers set good examples and treat their pupils with respect. Although religious education was not inspected for the purposes of this report, it was noted that the religious education programme considered, in detail, problems concerned with friendships. The discussions observed made an important contribution to the pupils' understanding of social interaction. Social development is enhanced by visits into the community and, in particular, by a residential visit for Year 5 pupils. There are some opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school but the range is limited.
46. Cultural development provisions are good. There are excellent examples of pupils' work in the school which are based on wide ranging cultures throughout the world, for example, American Indian, Indian, African and Aborigine and the pupils benefit from an artist in residence and theatre visits. The programme of extra-curricular activities that includes foreign languages,

dance and art, considerably enhances the cultural development. However, a significant weakness in the provisions is a failure to reflect sufficiently the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom. There is some study of world religions but, during the inspection, ethnic minorities, their cultures and religions were not represented in any of the school's activities.

47. The school has good links with the community that enhance the curriculum provision. For example, trees and plants in a newly formed orchard have been donated by local organisations and the work of the choir in the community has been recognised by a Duchy of Lancaster Citizenship Award. The curriculum is enhanced by visits in the locality to places such as local shops and of scientific interest and there are visitors to the school who address a wide range of topics. Programmes of Study in literacy and numeracy for parents are also an important community link that indirectly contribute to pupils' learning.
48. Links with other schools are good. Many pupils arrive in Year 3 from a nearby infant school and discussions with them indicate that the transition is smooth and gives no concerns. Considerable effort is also made to ensure that there are suitable arrangements for the pupils' move to the secondary school. There are visits by secondary staff and by the pupils to the secondary school and, in addition, good attention is given to curriculum co-ordination. The programme of education for parents involves important links with a local college and there are good relationships between all the headteachers in the local authority.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

49. The ethos and practices of the school clearly promote a caring attitude and the school's overall efforts to provide for the welfare of its pupils are very good. A key feature is the support that can be made available for pupils *and their families*. Child protection arrangements are good. They include a policy that provides good guidance, a designated teacher and regular staff training. Lunchtime supervisors are familiar with their duties and responsibilities, which are outlined in written guidance. They perform effectively although there are no formal induction or training procedures. Arrangements to ensure suitable standards of health and safety are satisfactory. There is a good policy and the caretaker is aware of his responsibilities, which are fulfilled conscientiously. Statutory inspections are carried out. However, the governors are uncertain about their responsibilities and, consequently, there is no co-ordination of activities. During the inspection, no significant health and safety issues were identified and a serious medical emergency and a fire drill were dealt with effectively.
50. Arrangements to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory. Registers satisfy legal requirements and they are monitored regularly by the headteacher. There is a good relationship with the education welfare officer and appropriate procedures to communicate with parents are in place. The lack of a consistently understood procedure to deal with absence without a known cause results in a small number of absences. Some are categorised as unauthorised in the registers but not in the statistics. Temporary absence in the course of the school day is not recorded but the school is introducing a new system to monitor this.
51. Arrangements to monitor and promote good behaviour are good. The policy is based on rules reinforced by rewards and sanctions. These are understood by and influence the pupils. The rewards are particularly valued and public recognition and certificates celebrate good behaviour. The influence of the behaviour policy extends to pupils with severe behavioural problems and it provides a basis for good control in these circumstances. Difficulties have been identified regarding friendships with some older boys and arrangements are in hand to introduce circle time in the junior school with a view to reducing these problems. Lunchtime

supervisors monitor and record poor behaviour but there are no provisions for them to reward pupils who behave well.

52. Arrangements to monitor personal development are satisfactory but they are based on the professional judgement of the staff rather than formal procedures. However, the provisions for personal support are very good, evidenced, for example, by the very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and their inclusion in the life of the school. The provisions are due, in part, to the school's deliberate policy of employing high numbers of classroom support staff. However, the school's caring ethos, good relationships and the confidence which pupils have in their teachers contribute to the monitoring and support of personal development.
53. The school manages its links with and support from outside agencies very well. The SENCO has provided training for staff in writing individual education plans and this along with the numbers of appropriate staff has a very positive impact on the standards pupils with special educational needs attain in relation to their prior attainment.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

54. Evidence from a range of meetings with parents and from the parents' questionnaire indicates that they like the school. They are particularly pleased with the school's expectations of their children, the way it helps them to mature, their progress and their good behaviour. Most reservations have been expressed about the amount of homework (most comments suggest too much) and the way the school works with parents. Inspection evidence supports the parents' perceptions of the strengths of the school but it does not justify the concerns.
55. Information provided by the school about its activities is very good. A particularly significant strength is information and other support provided for parents to allow them to help with their children's learning at home. These provisions include meetings and documents about the curriculum, detailed guidance about homework and an opportunity for parents to attend courses on numeracy and literacy through the school's participation in a local authority initiative, Families and Schools Together. In addition, the school provides regular and informative newsletters and a useful booklet that describes the school's routines and arrangements, for example, about attendance. A separate booklet is produced for reception children. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both well presented but neither complies exactly with statutory requirements regarding content. The school has acknowledged the deficiencies.
56. Parents' evenings concerned with pupils' progress are well attended and staff are available every day after school for brief, ad hoc discussions. The approachability of the staff is appreciated. However, the pupils' progress reports have some unsatisfactory features. Not all the subjects of the curriculum are clearly distinguished and the comments tend only to emphasise achievement in general terms. There is little constructive criticism or few indications of the steps that pupils should take to improve.
57. Parents have a very good involvement in the life of the school. They provide indirect help through the Home School Association, which organises social events and raises in excess of £4000 per annum for school use. There is also good direct help by parents working in classrooms. In total, over 30 parents provide regular help and, of these, about 12 are learning support assistants who qualified through the Families and Schools Together scheme run by the school.



## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the senior management team are very good but the governing body is yet to have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and their impact on long-term strategic management. There has been considerable improvement in this aspect since the last inspection, where although the area was judged overall to be satisfactory, there were a considerable number of aspects of it that needed to be improved. The most important of these was to develop the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators in order to monitor school improvement. This issue has been addressed well.
59. There are a number of new governors on the governing body and, as yet, it is not as effective as it might be in fulfilling its responsibilities. Appropriate committees are set up and individual governors have responsibilities for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. Several minor statutory requirements relating to publication of information are not met and the annual reports on pupils' progress do not comply with statutory requirements. The governing body acknowledges the tremendous progress has been made since the last inspection in all aspects of leadership and management and wish to continue this improvement. A plan is in place to attach a governor to each class in order for governors, especially those relatively new to the governing body to gain an understanding of the workings of the school and the staff, but plans to enable the governing body to involve all of the members in the long-term strategic planning are not sufficiently clear. As a result this places a greater workload upon the headteacher.
60. The agreed set of aims and values form the basis for a clear vision for the school based securely upon its strong Catholic foundation. These are clearly stated in the school prospectus and are reviewed regularly by the staff and the governors. The implementation of the aims and values is seen in a strong commitment to raising standards and to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.
61. The managers for all subjects, special educational needs and assessment carry out their duties well. The weaknesses in design and technology and information technology reported in the last inspection have been addressed. The roles of subject managers are now well developed. They have clear roles and responsibilities, which include input into school development planning and some monitoring of planning and the quality of teaching. Most subjects have two managers - one for each key stage. This ensures consistency across classes and continuity through the school and across key stages. Subject managers are responsible for updating policies and schemes of work and for resources for their subjects and they make bids to the school development plan for these. They report regularly to the governing body on the developments that have taken place in their subjects. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. Subject managers are also responsible for ensuring that staff expertise is sufficiently developed to deliver the subject. Subject managers are proving effective in co-ordinating their subjects and this is having a positive effect on school improvement by raising standards.
62. The governors have set out an appropriate policy for special educational needs and the school makes a significant financial commitment to providing outstanding levels of support. The governing body receives regular reports and information from the SENCO and the designated governor for special educational needs. This enables it to evaluate the effectiveness of its policy.
63. The headteacher and subject managers undertake the monitoring of planning and the quality of teaching. However, there is no clear policy for this to happen, and, as a result, good practice or weaknesses may go unnoticed which could have an impact on standards. There is no system to

encourage teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching or for the senior management team to monitor this.

64. The good quality school development plan covers a period of two to three years and addresses all aspects of the curriculum including literacy, numeracy and assessment. There are clear identified measures to raise attainment that contain some detailed analyses of test results. Appropriate targets are set and attention is being paid to the differences in attainment of boys and girls. There is a clear timetable and success criteria to achieve the many targets set in the development plan and the necessary resources to achieve them are detailed in the budget.
65. The school has a satisfactory number of teaching staff whose qualifications and experience broadly match the demands of the National Curriculum. All staff have clear job descriptions that clearly state their roles and responsibilities, but no targets are stated for staff to achieve. Staff meet with the headteacher twice each year for appraisal purposes where the raising of pupil attainment is discussed. The good number of well-qualified and experienced support staff work closely with teachers and provide support in the nursery, for pupils with special educational needs and for the accelerated learning programme and also general classroom support.
66. Professional development is co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher and is prioritised through the school development plan and appraisal. Much emphasis recently has been given to training for literacy, numeracy and information technology. The school has a useful staff handbook that provides clear guidance to teachers. The policy for the induction of newly qualified teachers includes a good quality plan to train mentors for providing support and guidance.
67. Learning resources through the school are, overall, sufficient for the school's curriculum and the range of pupils. Resources are used well to support learning in mathematics, science, history and physical education. The recently developed computer suite provides good access and good quality resources for information technology. This represents a major improvement since the time of the last inspection, as does the provision of satisfactory resources for design and technology, and the development of the school library. However, the library is not always readily accessible to pupils, and is not fully used. The lack of a satisfactory outdoor play area and equipment for the nursery children limits the opportunities to provide a suitable range of physical activities for the children under five.
68. Overall, the accommodation is judged to be satisfactory since it is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. The overall design of the buildings is far from ideal but it is due to the school's history and significant changes to the basic layout are unlikely. However, there are useful features such as a separate gymnasium, music room and rooms for the use of pupils with special educational needs and efforts are made to make good use of the available space. There is no grassed area, which presents obvious difficulties for many outside activities, and the use of the library is restricted because of its location and dual use as an information technology suite. Also, the main entrance to the school buildings is unimpressive and difficult to monitor. The decoration of the school is generally satisfactory although there are some very poor areas, particularly in the gymnasium and a stairwell. The use of pupils' work and other displays greatly enhance the internal appearance of the buildings.
69. Budgets are planned well based upon the needs of the school development plan and are monitored effectively. The finance committee of the governors has a good understanding of the need to plan the budgets effectively and in advance. Care is taken to obtain value for all purchases and work done in the school although the principles of best value are in an early stage of development when applied to the effect of the budget upon standards of attainment,

although it is unclear if this has been applied appropriately to the new resources for information technology supplied through an arrangement with the local authority. At the end of the last financial year the budget carry over of £108,263 was well above the recommended five per cent. This is reducing considerably this year as greater expenditure is incurred, especially on buildings and support staff and the governing body has appropriate plans for much of the balance to be used to support further building work. The budget is monitored well with all governors receiving useful reports on expenditure. All relevant recommendations of the last audit report have been addressed. The smooth and effective day-to-day management of the school by the efficient office staff supports teachers well and is carried out with minimum disruption to teaching. The expenditure per pupil is in line with the national average. Taking into account the good standards attained and the many strengths in provision, the school gives good value for money.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

70. In order to build upon its many strengths and continue the improvements made, the headteacher staff and governors should:
- (1) improve the resources available to children under five for adventurous outdoor play and seek to provide a secure and distinct area in which these can be used;
  - (2) build upon the many strengths and experience of the members of the governing body and set out a plan that enables the whole governing body to become more involved in the long-term strategic planning.

A number of minor areas for improvement that the school may wish to include in the action plan are identified in paragraphs: 24, 30, 32, 46, 49, 51, 55, 59, 63, 67, 78, 81, 82, 99, 106 and 116.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	45	42	2	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	399
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	52

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	86

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	95
National comparative data	94.1

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	19	38
	(1999)	(21)	(28)	(49)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19 (18)	18 (16)	18 (19)
	Girls	18 (28)	18 (26)	16 (28)
	Total	37 (46)	36 (42)	34 (47)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	95 (86)	89 (96)
	National	N/A (82)	N/A (83)	N/A (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19 (18)	18 (17)	19 (18)
	Girls	18 (28)	16 (28)	17 (28)
	Total	37 (46)	34 (45)	36 (46)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	89 (92)	95 (94)
	National	N/A (82)	N/A (86)	N/A (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	41	36	77
	(1999)	(37)	(30)	(67)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37 (27)	33 (29)	38 (32)
	Girls	33 (25)	30 (25)	35 (25)
	Total	70 (52)	63 (54)	63 (57)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (78)	82 (81)	95 (85)
	National	N/A (70)	N/A (68)	N/A (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28 (24)	33 (30)	36 (28)
	Girls	32 (21)	30 (27)	35 (24)
	Total	60 (45)	63 (57)	71 (52)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (67)	89 (85)	92 (78)
	National	N/A (68)	N/A (69)	N/A (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	354
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	28.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	148.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	77.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	720,195
Total expenditure	717,798
Expenditure per pupil	1,743
Balance brought forward from previous year	105,886
Balance carried forward to next year	108,263

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	412
Number of questionnaires returned	189

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	31	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	41	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	43	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	46	14	4	0
The teaching is good.	62	30	5	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	39	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	33	6	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	40	13	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	36	7	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	37	10	1	4

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

71. In January of this year the previously private nursery class received local authority maintained status so that the early years stage within the school now includes a nursery class and two reception classes. Children attend the nursery class part time, either in the morning or afternoon. At the time of the inspection eight children in the reception classes had not yet had their fifth birthday. On entry to the nursery children show the full range of stages of development and, overall, it is in line with expectations for children of this age. At the time of entry to reception and full-time education there are children with different pre-school experiences joining the year group. The results of baseline assessments made in the first half term in reception indicate attainment to be broadly average. Children make good progress as they move towards Key Stage 1.

#### **Personal and social development**

72. By the age of five children's personal and social development is very good. The well-organised induction procedures ensure that most children enter the school with a good measure of confidence. A high priority is placed on the development in this area so that children have an appropriate understanding of social conventions and relate well with each other and the adults who work with them. This was well illustrated by a nursery child, chasing his ball, who felt confident enough to divert from the chase to explain to an unfamiliar adult that he is the "very fastest runner". Whilst most of the youngest children happily work along side others rather than with them they know that they must take turns when, for example, using butter to prepare jam sandwiches or playing on the slide. Older children are able to co-operate and often support each other in group activities. For example a child who realised his friend was having a spelling problem unpretentiously went off to find the picture that illustrated how to write the particular sound. Most children develop positive attitudes to learning and settle promptly to self-chosen and teacher-directed tasks sustaining concentration for relatively long periods be it persevering with setting up of skittles or completing their dialogue journal. By the time they reach statutory school age most children have a well-established understanding of what is accepted as right and wrong and become increasingly thoughtful towards one another. They readily take and enjoy responsibilities such as accessing and clearing away equipment. Children with special educational needs make particularly good progress in this area of learning. The good progress all children make owes much to the good teaching and the consistently sensitive support provided by all the adults who work with these children.

#### **Language and literacy**

73. Children make good progress in language and literacy as a result of the good teaching and by the time they reach statutory school age the overall attainment is above average. Most children listen attentively to instructions, stories and rhymes, eagerly joining in with familiar phrases. As the bank of words they understand and can use increases children confidently talk about their ideas and feelings to adults who work with them and to each other. This was well illustrated by two nursery children discussing which shaped block should "be next" if they were to successfully "balance more bricks" in a tower. Older children confidently ask adults to explain the meaning of unfamiliar words. Support for the development of language permeates the life and work in each room. By five most children know how books are organised and, with appropriate support, talk about the pictures to interpret the contents. Higher attaining pupils know books record fiction or information. They understand that print carries meaning and

eagerly join in reading with the teacher as a group. Older children recognise an increasing number of letter shapes and the associated sounds along with an appropriate range of frequently occurring words and use these to read simple text for themselves. Parental support for the development of these skills is evident in the progress children make. Most children make appropriate progress in recording their ideas through pictures, letter-like symbols and then copied words. By five all children identify their work by writing their name. Higher attaining children are able to use their extending knowledge of phonics and commonly used words to respond to letters from the teacher in dialogue journals, to retell the story of Red Riding Hood and make lists of items to be packed for holiday.

## **Mathematics**

74. By the age of five overall attainment is above age-related expectations. All children make at least satisfactory progress and for most progress is good. The youngest children sort and match objects for colour, shape or size and use appropriate language to explain the activity. The language associated with two and three-dimensional shapes is acquired and reinforced through play with a range of construction material. They develop mathematical language associated with comparative measures well through water and sand activities. They are introduced to counting through the consistent support of adults prompting the counting of such things as, blocks in a tower, people in the group or obstacles to climb over. By five children count objects to ten recognising the associated numerals and many accurately do so to 20. Through a range of practical activities such as finding the number that follows a given number between one and 15 children begin to develop an appropriate understanding of addition and subtraction. Higher attaining children are well challenged by, for example the introduction to coin values and recognising how a clock registers the passing of each hour. The good quality of teaching is a significant factor in the progress recorded above.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

75. Children make good progress in understanding the world through a suitable range of topics and overall attainment is broadly in line with expectations for children of this age. Through practical experiences such as handling old and new toys, visiting a local launderette and then trying out an old mangle they develop awareness that changes take place over time. They notice the different properties of materials when creating a collage picture or observing which items float or sink and explore how the properties of sand change when water is added. Making such things as pancakes develops an appropriate awareness of the result of mixing substances and the effect of applying heat. Through the stimulus of a travel agency children begin to interpret simple maps, recall their own holiday destinations and recognise that changes in temperature necessitate adopting appropriate clothes. The younger children use construction equipment to illustrate what they know about the world. Good progress is made in gaining confidence in using information technology such as operating a computer program using a mouse and directional keys.

## **Creative development**

76. Children have a suitable range of opportunities to develop their creativity and by five overall attainment is what is normally expected of children of this age. They experience a range of techniques and use media such as paint, pastels and modelling materials with increasing skill and confidence. They enjoy these activities and often find significant pleasure and surprise at the outcomes. Children in reception draw and mix secondary colours with a good measure of success to paint flowers and an old fashioned rocking horse from direct observation. They successfully use recognised styles such as that of Aboriginal artists to create a banner and modroc to build up a Totem pole. Children enjoy singing and do so with enthusiasm, good

articulation and pitch. They have appropriate opportunities to explore the qualities of untuned instruments although this was not directly observed. A suitable range of opportunities are provided to encourage imaginative role play but of those observed using the travel agencies all engaged in personal activity but none developed a group activity with several roles being developed.

### **Physical development**

77. By the age of five most children's development is in line with what is expected. Fine manipulative skills are developed well through daily opportunities to handle pencils, scissors and manage small construction equipment. The development is supported by the well-judged intervention of adults to directly teach strategies to improve control. By five children move around the indoor and outdoor areas with appropriate awareness of space and the position of themselves and others in it. Children in the nursery demonstrate appropriate development in running, jumping and balancing and confidently use the adventure play equipment under supervision. They are developing strategies for managing small games equipment and the more mature children do so with a good measure of success. However the lack of easy access to a secure and suitably equipped designated area for these children to engage in vigorous imaginative play has a negative impact on the progress they make.
78. Overall the management of provision for children of this age is satisfactory. The planned refurbishment to accommodate the inclusion of a maintained nursery is significantly behind schedule and this currently, has a negative impact on the provision for the youngest children in this stage. The current policy ensures the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. Schemes of work covering all the required areas of learning support the systematic development of skills and understanding and the successful transition to the work of the National Curriculum at the time best suited to each child. In the light of newly developed nationally agreed curriculum, guidance the school policy for early years provision has been redrafted. However, in its current form, it is still predominately concerned with the older children in the key stage and does not sufficiently show how the school sees the foundation stage is to operate at its best, particularly as it is designated to support children with special educational needs in the nursery class. Effective procedures for assessment on entry to full-time education are in place and ongoing assessment is suitably recorded and used well to track progress and subsequently to inform planning. This makes a significant contribution to the very good provision for children who present with special educational needs so that all involved have a team approach to meeting specific needs. The accommodation and resources for the reception classes are, overall, satisfactory but those for the nursery class are, currently, unsatisfactory. For example the development of independence is hampered because there is no easy access to toilet facilities and much time is spent organising group toilet visits. Neither is there ready access to a secure outdoor area equipped with a range of resources such as wheeled toys and large construction equipment to support suitably regular opportunities for vigorous, imaginative play.

### **ENGLISH**

79. At the end of Key Stage 1 the results of national tests in 1999 indicate that standards in reading are above average when compared with all schools and with schools of a similar context. Standards in writing are broadly average when compared with all schools and with those of a similar context. These results reflect the trends over time. At the end of Key Stage 2 national assessment results in 1999 indicate that standards in English are above average when compared with all schools. When compared with schools of similar context the proportion of pupils

attaining the expected level or above was not significantly different but the proportion attaining beyond age related expectations was above average. These results maintained the trend over time. And in both key stages it broadly reflects the national trends.

80. Inspection evidence at the end of Key Stage 1 indicates that overall standards in speaking and listening and reading are above average and in writing they are, average overall. In Key Stage 2 standards in English are above average. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when writing at both key stages was judged to be unsatisfactory and at Key Stage 2 reading for information was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school promptly instituted strategies to improve provision in these areas and, as a result, progress has been made. Further support for the development of reading and writing skills in Key Stage 1 are included in the current school development plan. The school is well placed to make further improvement.
81. Overall speaking and listening skills are above average at the end of both key stages. Most Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively to stories, questions and instructions and respond appropriately. This is clearly illustrated when, after whole-class session pupils disperse to their groups and start tasks promptly. When speaking, the youngest pupils confidently use the technical vocabulary to which they are systematically introduced. By the end of the key stage Year 2 pupils show an awareness of the need to hold the attention of the listener by providing appropriate detail. They confidently raise questions to clarify their understanding. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, most maintain good listening habits and continue to acquire and use an ever-increasing vocabulary. They respond to open questions with increasing fluency and detail, show a sound understanding of the basic conventions of standard English and are aware of when it is appropriate to use them. In discussions pupils offer considered opinions, readily listen to the opinions of others and develop their thinking further. The good development of speaking and listening skills owes much to the value teachers place on pupils' oral contributions and the emphasis all teachers and support staff place on extending pupils' working vocabulary. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs. However the development of skills associated with speaking to a range of audiences is not sufficiently structured and opportunities are often overlooked.
82. Attainment in reading at the end of both key stages is above average. At the time of baseline assessment children's overall attainment is broadly average so that by the time they leave the school good progress has been made. This good progress owes much to the practice of direct teaching of skills and strategies and daily opportunities to talk about what is read with the teacher. On entry to Key Stage 1 most pupils handle books appropriately, know letter shapes represent sounds in words and pictures provide clues when attempting to decode words. Year 1 pupils recognise an increasing number of frequently occurring words and common combinations of letter sounds in order to read simple text. Year 2 pupils continue to build up their knowledge of phonic rules and strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They recognise punctuation conventions and many use these to support fluency and understanding. They talk about the plot and the characters and anticipate what may come next. They recognise the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts and the purpose and organisation used in compiling indexes and tables of content. However the library is remote from pupils in this key stage and the focus of the weekly visit, for many, is the opportunity to practise computer skills rather than to explore the library. The school has recognised this and plans to provide a Key Stage 1 library are at an early stage of development.
83. At Key Stage 2 the direct teaching of more complex letter strings and irregularities is systematically continued throughout the key stage and the range of texts pupils have opportunities to read and discuss with the teacher is extended. In Year 3 most pupils are able to name favourite authors and express and explain their preferences. Pupils in Year 4 identify

the characteristics the author includes that relate to a character's personality and track how a writer develops a dilemma and resolves it. Year 5 pupils scan a passage for main points and recognise the differences in layout and style of vocabulary related to the purpose. By the end of the key stage most pupils effectively read a range of texts. For example they are introduced to the language of Shakespeare and are able to read and interpret figurative language or the contrived style using spoonerisms in a modern poem. Higher attaining pupils are able to retrieve information. This represents improvement since the previous inspection although independent use of the library remains limited because of the dual use of the room.

84. Attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is above average. Assessment made when children enter the school shows that attainment is in line with age-related expectations. This indicates that, by the time pupils leave the school, good progress has been made. This represents improvement since the previous inspection. Year 1 pupils build on their early experience of writing to record their ideas using pictures, copied words and their developing knowledge of letter shapes and associated sounds. They write for a range of purposes such as personal news, retelling the story of Goldilocks and poetry about the wind, based on a given model. Most use a well-formed print script and can seek out unusual words from prepared word banks. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are developing a joined script to record their work. They use appropriate structure when explaining directions for a journey, writing a party invitation to the Three Bears or developing adventure stories or a poem. Most pupils demonstrate that they know about the basic rules of grammar and punctuation and higher attaining pupils are beginning to use interesting words and dialogue in their stories to hold the attention of the reader. They use their increasing knowledge of phonics sensibly to spell polysyllabic words and turn to dictionaries for help with more difficult words.
85. Throughout Key Stage 2 grammar, punctuation and spelling conventions are taught systematically so that older pupils, for example confidently organise their work using paragraphs. This has a markedly positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The range of formal and informal writing is extended. Teachers consistently make strong connections between reading and writing so that pupils confidently experiment with the styles and techniques used by established writers. Year 3 pupils, for instance, attract the reader's interest with story openings such as, ' "Hang on a minute," said Mark.' More complex sentences such as, 'Having read both points of view, my opinion is...' are developed by Year 4 pupils. Older pupils experiment with the imaginative use of words to create such effects as the personification of the sea 'stretching across the land, screaming in pain' or '...dewdrops paint the grass silver'. By the end of the key stage pupils draft their work and revise it to improve the style, content and presentation.
86. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The progress made owes much to the appropriate use of the National Literacy Strategy, the precise and realistic targets set in individual education plans and the consistent and sensitive support of teaching and support staff.
87. Pupils' attitudes to English are good throughout the school. They listen attentively to teachers and each other and readily involve themselves in whole-class sessions. They confidently answer questions, exchange ideas and opinions and respect each other's contributions. This was well illustrated in Year 6 when pupils shared quite sensitive personal feelings while developing poems. Regardless of age pupils settle quickly to tasks that are set and sustain attention to them for relatively long periods. This makes a significant contribution to the progress they make.

88. Overall the quality of teaching in both key stages is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and one lesson in each key stage was judged to be very good. This consistency of teaching makes a major contribution to the attainment and progress of all pupils. It represents an improvement since the previous inspection. In the most successful lessons the planning identifies exactly what the pupils should understand, know and be able to do by the end of the lesson. This is shared with the pupils so that their activities have a clear focus, their work is purposeful and a brisk pace can be maintained. Introductions to the lessons catch pupils' attention and the teacher clearly demonstrates personal enthusiasm for the subject. Knowledge of the subject is good and appropriate links are consistently made between reading, writing, speaking and listening. Questioning is used well to encourage all pupils to share their ideas and to move learning on as well as to assess understanding. This was well illustrated in Year 6 with such questions as "What do you feel about...?" and "What do we know about the poet from what we have read?". The management of pupils is very good and owes much to the considerable respect teachers show to pupils when responding to their contributions so that pupils' self-esteem is raised and they are encouraged to be actively involved in learning. The management of pupils who present with challenging behaviour is particularly good and enables all pupils to make best progress. Teachers ensure that language and literacy skills both support and, are supported by, the work they plan in other areas of the curriculum. For instance pupils in Year 3 write diary entries in the role of a child in a Viking settlement.
89. The management of provision for this subject is good. The co-ordinator has successfully overseen the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and specific funding and in-service training opportunities have been used well to support the implementation. Already the school has reviewed the outcomes of this initiative and, where necessary, suitably adapts the advice to best fit the needs of pupils. Useful supplementary guidance has been developed to support the development of extended writing and ensure a good balance of experience in literature. However there is not yet specific guidance to ensure consistency in the systematic development of speaking skills as pupils move through the school. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place and good use is made of them to set appropriate targets for improvement for school and individual pupils. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Good procedures are in place to monitor the quality of provision for this subject through the monitoring of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work although these are not yet consistently annotated in relation to National Curriculum descriptors. The headteacher has observed teaching of the literacy hour but as yet there are no agreed procedures for the co-ordinator to do so and this limits the information on which she can evaluate provision and plan developments. Overall resources are satisfactory and effectively organised to ensure access for pupils and teachers. In response to the previous inspection a library has been developed and this represents appropriate improvement. However the library is relatively remote for many classes and housed in a room used as a computer suite. This has a negative impact on its use. The school is aware of this and plans to develop a Key Stage 1 library to improve access and use.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. The pupils' levels of attainment in mathematics, as indicated by the National Curriculum tests in 1999, are above the national average for both key stages. While the trend in these results over the four years 1996 to 1999 has remained above the national averages, at Key Stage 1 there has been a fall off since a high peak in 1997. At Key Stage 2, the trend has shown a steady improvement in results, and these have continued to be above the national averages, which have also risen over that time. In comparison with those of pupils in other schools of a similar type, the pupils' levels of attainment in mathematics, as indicated by the 1999 national tests, were above average for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

91. Inspection evidence shows that the level of attainment achieved by many pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is above the national average. In lessons observed and work scrutinised, many pupils are achieving standards that are above national expectations. This is particularly so in the case of their understanding of number. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced over the last year. Although it is still too early to assess fully the influence it might have had upon standards of attainment, it is evident that it has contributed to the very positive attitudes that teachers and pupils have towards mathematics, and has thus helped to promote learning.
92. There have been improvements in mathematics since the last report in January 1997. There is now more even coverage of mathematics topics, and this is shown with pupils having a more developed understanding of shape, space, and measure and handling data. Often this is linked to productive work in information technology.
93. In both key stages there is good provision in mathematics for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress according to their individual abilities and in relation to their prior learning.
94. Most pupils enter the reception class with levels of ability in line with those expected for children of their age. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. This maintenance of steady progress is an improvement on that for the last report when pupils' overall progress was 'satisfactory but inconsistent throughout the school'.
95. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well given their previous attainments. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils, when talking about tens and units, demonstrate a good understanding of place value up to 100. Many Year 2 pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers without crossing the 100 boundary. They can also, when dealing with numbers such as 32, 24, 8, 28, show their understanding that doubling and halving are inverse operations. Pupils are also very capable at describing their strategies for working out calculations. When using number facts to add and subtract pairs of numbers in the range of zero to 20, Year 1 pupils revealed previous learning and could apply it. "What is 20 take away two?" "18". "How do you know that?" "I know that 18 needs two more to make 20, so I changed the numbers round". Year 2 pupils, when asked how they work out how many legs do two cats have, show their understanding of multiplication as an 'array' ("two sets of four"), and as repeated addition ("four add four"). They can also record their methods in a number sentence, and know that in the operation of multiplication the order of the numbers can be reversed.
96. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use the four operations to solve number problems with increasing confidence. They have a good understanding of place value, and many can round numbers to two decimal places. They are able to reflect simple shapes in a mirror line, know the eight points of the compass, and can represent collected data in frequency diagrams and interpret such diagrams. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 can use a Carroll diagram to handle data, and can recognise the equivalence between fractions such as a half equals five tenths. Year 4 pupils can describe three dimensional shapes by way of the number of faces, vertices and edges, and can estimate and measure the perimeters of rectangles. Year 5 pupils know the terminology of fractions and can manipulate from improper fractions to mixed numbers. Many are able to order numbers from plus 734 to minus 734, including arrangements to two decimal places. Year 6 pupils work on number sequences in a five by five grid, and can identify and explain the patterns in going along the rows, or up and down columns. Average attaining pupils can devise their own patterns using addition and subtraction functions, and higher attaining pupils can use multiplication functions to develop patterns on a number grid.

97. Overall pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and work with enthusiasm. Their attitudes, interest, and behaviour were good or very good, without exception, in all lessons observed. They co-operate well with each other, and pupils are noticeably very supportive of those pupils among them with special educational needs.
98. The quality of teaching mathematics during the lessons observed was predominantly good and often very good. This shows another improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is characterised by good planning and the clear identification of objectives, very good management of pupils, and very good pace. Learning is also enhanced by the very good contribution of support staff. The mental mathematics session is typically conducted in a lively manner, and pupils are fully engaged from the start. Pupils make their contribution to the good mathematics lesson by their willingness and ability to share their strategies. Numeracy skills contribute well to other subjects, such as the use of graphs in Year 2 science (movement of cars down a slope), and of Venn diagram in Year 4 geography (when studying similarities and differences in ways of life in St Lucia).
99. The subject manager and co-ordinators provide good leadership and management for mathematics, and the National Numeracy Strategy has been very successfully implemented to date. Staff have been on a range of in-service training courses to support this initiative. Resources are readily available in classrooms and are used to good effect. The practice of regular homework throughout the school supports pupils' learning, and this practice represents another positive response by the school to a weakness suggested in the last report. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in more investigative work in mathematics, and, where appropriate, to supplement some parts of data handling such as the appropriate use of line graphs.
100. Pupils' standards in mathematics are also fostered by the development of a comprehensive system of assessment, monitoring and recording of their progress and attainment. This is another improvement since the time of the last inspection. Regular assessments of all pupils are made on a half termly basis. The results from these assessments, and from other tests, such as the national assessments at the end of each key stage, are analysed. This information is then used to provide more specialised support for pupils as appropriate. Examples of support include the 'Maths Recovery' in Year 2; individual targets for pupils with special educational needs; the trialing of sets in Year 4; booster classes in Year 6; and more challenging work for gifted Year 6 pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

101. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' standards in science are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, and are above national averages at the end of Key Stage 2. This is an improvement, since the previous inspection, at the end of Key Stage 2. There is no national test for seven year olds in science, but the teachers' own assessments in 1999 indicate that standards were average. In national tests for 11 year olds in 1999 standards were above average nationally, and above average in comparison with similar schools. Overall, since the previous inspection, by the end of Key Stage 2 the school's performance is improving in line with the national trend.
102. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress, and for pupils with special educational needs progress is good when set against their prior attainment. Effective teaching enables pupils to learn from 'hands-on' opportunities at trying things out. By the age of seven

the majority of pupils know about a range of physical phenomena such as light and sound. Many pupils are able to accurately identify parts of a plant, and are able with support, to set up experiments to find out what plants need to grow. In a Year 2 lesson pupils were able to set up a range of experiments to help them determine key factors for growth. Some pupils were able to make predictions, thus being introduced to higher Level 3 work and the skills of experimentation.

103. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have a sound knowledge of forces such as friction and magnetism. They answer such questions as “How would you make the bulb light?”, and can tell from circuit diagrams whether bulbs are switched on or off. They investigate dissolving, separation and filtration and are aware of evaporation and change of state. Opportunities are provided both for pupils to devise and carry out experiments for themselves, and to apply their scientific knowledge in new situations, as in a Year 6 lesson exploring how micro-organisms feed and grow. The majority of pupils can plan and carry out a ‘fair test’ when investigating. They draw conclusions from recorded evidence and some can draw on their knowledge to explain their findings.
104. By the end of the key stage pupils have made good progress. Opportunities to enquire and investigate feature regularly in a balanced curriculum programme. Pupils use apparatus well, organise their work more purposefully and quickly assimilate new scientific terms into their own language. This was very apparent in a Year 5 lesson looking at names and functions of parts of a plant. After careful dissection and investigation of flowers, pupils were soon confidently identifying ‘carpel’, ‘stamen’, ‘anther’ and ‘stigma’. Pupils with special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress. This is due to good planning, very good use of curriculum support staff and good use of resources. Staff and support staff are very aware that although some pupils may have poor literacy skills, they can succeed in the practical aspects of science and can make good oral contributions.
105. Pupils’ attitudes to learning are positive throughout both key stages and their responses in lessons are good. Pupils enjoy science and display curiosity and interest especially when involved in practical activities. As they become more mature they show good collaborative skills and relationships are good throughout.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall and this helps pupils to make good progress. At both key stages teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and methods of classroom management and organisation are very good. Teachers make very good use of resources and support staff to provide first-hand experiences and equal access to all activities for all pupils. The most successful lessons highlight clear learning objectives with challenging work that is matched closely to the need of pupils of different abilities. All pupils appreciate these outcomes so that teachers and pupils share a good sense of purpose and awareness of making progress. In the Year 5 lessons looking at names and functions of parts of a plant the learning objectives were clearly introduced, and restated through the sessions. The feeling of focus to the lessons was almost tangible, and at the end both teachers and pupils displayed quiet satisfaction in knowing the job had been vigorously tackled. Teachers regularly mark and correct pupils’ work. Some teachers offer guiding comments. However, expectations regarding the quality of presentation of work are inconsistent.
107. The science managers provide good leadership and support. Good documentation has been developed providing strong, clear guidelines for teachers in planning work, and helping ensure progression in the development of pupils’ knowledge and understanding. Subject managers have a good overview of the subject and have developed a wide range of assessments. Especially effective are the ‘concept maps’ used at the beginning and again at the end of a

particular topic. Progress since the previous inspection has been significant. Assessment information is now well used to develop new work and the quality of teaching has improved.

## **ART**

108. Only one lesson was observed in each key stage during the inspection. Evidence from these observations and from the very effectively displayed range of pupils' work throughout the school indicates that by the end of both key stages attainment is above that which might be expected of pupils of these ages.
109. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with an appropriate experience of expressing their ideas in a range of media and in Key Stage 1 they build on this and their awareness are raised of the different ways in which artists and crafts-people work. For instance in Year 1 they work with collage materials, paint and pastels to create plates and kites in the style of Chinese artists. They continue to develop drawing skills through direct observation of household articles and flowers. By the end of the key stage pupils demonstrate increasing control when using tools and a good range of media. This is enhanced by opportunities to work with an artist in residence. They mix and use secondary colours for themselves when painting pictures and developing patterns. Pupils explore the skills associated with using clay when creating individual thumb pots and working collaboratively to create a native American Totem. At Key Stage 2 similarly good progress is made in experimenting with styles and techniques of established artists. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know that Paul Klee's work celebrated blocks of colours and was open to the viewer's interpretation. Having created personal designs Year 3 pupils invited others to see what they could discover in their designs. Year 4 pupils take their designs on a stage further to create a 'future town' painting. Using the style of an ancient civilisation Year 5 pupils create masks and from their history work develop wood block designs based on Tudor rose and knot patterns. Pupils in Year 6 look closely at the work of artists as diverse as Lowry and Miro identifying the characteristics associated with each and using them when recording townscapes and enigmatic creations of their own.
110. Because of the practical nature of the subject and the well-judged support teachers and support staff provide, pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress in this subject.
111. The subject supports the development of literacy skills well. Pupils are expected to use subject-specific vocabulary when discussing their work. Pupils make written responses to what they see. For example a pupil explained his reaction to the work of Miro, "I like his backgrounds but don't understand his symbols". A colleague wrote, "He used symbols so that he wouldn't let the cat out of the bag".
112. Pupils' attitudes to art are very good and this has a positive impact on attainment and progress. In the lessons observed pupils listened to teachers and settled to tasks without fuss. In both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils shared their ideas and handled equipment responsibly. They enjoyed the activities.
113. It is inappropriate to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching except to report that in the two lessons observed teaching was judged to be good.
114. The management of the provision for this subject is satisfactory overall. The current policy ensures that pupils have an appropriate range of experiences. A useful curriculum framework indicates the main focus of teaching for each term, which teachers can interpret for themselves. However, currently, there is insufficient detail to ensure that skills and techniques are developed systematically as pupils move through the school. A newly appointed co-ordinator is to take up the role in September and a review of provision for the subject is appropriately

prioritised in the school development plan so that the school is well placed to make further improvement. Resources are satisfactory and the access to an artist in residence makes a significant contribution to the quality of provision for this subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards attained in design and technology are in line with those normally found at the end of both key stages. The areas of concern expressed in the previous inspection report have been addressed effectively. Skills are now taught systematically and pupils make sound progress throughout the school achieving standards that are appropriate in relation to their prior attainment.
116. At Key Stage 1 pupils learn the basic skills of joining using a variety of materials and techniques. For example they construct picture frames and consider ways in which they can be improved. Pupils cut carefully using templates and consider ways in which the frames can be decorated or improved. They annotate their designs and share them with each other. Pupils make sound progress and at Key Stage 2 they extend their design skills through the use of planning sheets. They consider the suitability of materials and their fitness for the purpose they wish to put them to. For example when considering the type of materials that can be used to simulate windows in a model house front. Pupils demonstrate suitable skills when making models or producing wood blocks for printing and talk confidently about their work reflecting upon ways in which they can improve. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 many opportunities are taken to integrate design and technology with other subjects. This is particularly so with art where the overlapping skills and techniques are combined well in projects. For example, when printing material using woodblock designs that are based upon history work and techniques taken from their artwork. Pupils show a sound understanding of the inter-relationship between art and design. Although pupils make working models such as small wheeled vehicles using a variety of materials they do not have enough experience using more technical construction equipment or of controlling models using information technology. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is planning for this work to be covered in the next academic year.
117. It was only possible to see one lesson in each key stage and therefore an overall judgement on the quality of teaching is not possible. However, in the lessons observed the quality of teaching was satisfactory or good. The good behaviour management of teachers and the way in which they show enthusiasm for the subject encourages good attitudes from the pupils who behave well and sustain concentration. The subject manager has drawn up a good quality scheme of work that focuses on skills progression and links closely with art. The themes chosen support the school's aim of encouraging good cross-curricular links by suggesting ways in which the subjects can be related to topics in history and geography.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

118. Three lessons were seen during the inspection - one at Key Stage 1 and two at Key Stage 2. From these lessons and from looking at pupils' work it is evident that overall standards of attainment are in line with those expected in schools of a similar type at the end of Key Stage 1. This reflects the level of achievement noted in the last report in 1997. However, some work with Year 6 pupils showed them working at a level above that normally expected for pupils of this age.

119. Pupils in Year 1 learn about how the quality of an environment can be sustained and improved through listening to a story. They draw pictures to illustrate some of the ways in which people can spoil the environment, and suggest ways in which we should try to look after our environment.
120. Year 4 pupils share their observations on similarities and differences between ways of life in St Lucia and the United Kingdom. They talk about aspects such as farming, tourism, and school. In doing so, they show their increasing knowledge and understanding of places; and of some of the human and physical processes which affect the landscape and people's ways of life. Year 6 pupils engage in activities, which focus upon life in an Indian village. In pairs they discuss statements about village life, which are on 30 cards. They are fully involved in their work, and in a draft text for homework, they offer evaluations that also raise questions of equal opportunities, and of citizenship. The standards achieved are often at a higher level than is normally expected for pupils of this age range. There was also an impressive piece of writing from a pupil who normally finds it difficult to sustain concentration.
121. Progress in geography is sound in both key stages. Pupils build up their knowledge of a geographical vocabulary; develop simple map reading skills; and increase their knowledge and understanding of places and of environmental issues as they move through the school. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
122. Pupils are attentive and very interested in their work in geography. They work well together in pairs when required. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social, and cultural development.
123. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall. Strengths include the good knowledge and understanding of the topics being taught; detailed planning; and good quality questioning and skills, which promote thinking and high quality discussion between pupils. Learning is also enriched by the good cross-curricular links with other subjects, such as design and technology, English and art.
124. The school has plans to review the geography policy, which will be done following the appointment of a new geography co-ordinator. There are also plans to extend use of the recently published curriculum guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Resources are satisfactory in quality and use. Good use is made of visits to promote learning in geography. Additional benefits could be derived from an increase in enquiry based work, where pupils generate more questions for themselves; and more field work in the local area, with more experience of working with large scale maps such as the Ordnance Survey 25 inches, or 50 inches, to the mile.

## **HISTORY**

125. Two history lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, and one in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. From an examination of pupils' work, teachers' planning, and discussion with pupils, attainment in history is judged to be that which is expected of pupils in primary schools. Pupils make sound progress in acquiring appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

126. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a growing understanding of the concept of change over time. Using pictures, they make comparisons between life today and that of 100 years ago. They consider aspects such as bicycles, irons, houses, lighting, and can give reasons to account for some of the changes, such as the use of electricity. They learn about famous people from the past, and are introduced to simple timelines that provide a basis for their developing chronological knowledge and understanding.
127. In Key Stage 2, younger pupils learn about the Vikings and the Romans, and why they came and succeeded in their invasion of this country. They demonstrate an increasing degree of historical imagination and empathy, as they are encouraged to write about a day in the life of a Viking. In this work they continue to develop and understanding of how and why people acted as they did in the past. They also study differences in the lives of the rich and the poor, and this theme is touched on again when Year 6 pupils study life in Victorian Britain, and Britain since the 1930s. In investigating life in a Victorian school, Year 6 pupils make good use of sources such as photographs, copies of school rules, and a daily timetable to prepare to write a report as if by a school inspector. Thoughtful planning builds in links with other subjects such as English, and these opportunities for reports and diary work, provide an additional benefit to pupils' learning.
128. Pupils are interested in, and enthusiastic about, their work in history. This often comes across in the care that they show in their work, as well as their response observed in lessons, and when talking with them. They also enjoy and gain from visits to places such as Crosby Hall Educational Trust, Rufford Hall (Tudors), and Wigan Pier (Victorians). The 'Roman' and 'Viking' visitors also contribute well to their historical knowledge and imagination.
129. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make good use of resources, use methods that gain the attention of pupils, and conduct lessons that have pace and very good management.
130. The history co-ordinator provides good quality leadership and management. There are comprehensive schemes of work, and it is planned to adapt the curriculum guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This can then link with Curriculum 2000, due to commence in September. Currently there are insufficient opportunities for open ended and independent enquiry in history, but pupils' research skills are more in evidence than they were at the time of the last inspection. There is now a good system for regular assessment and recording of pupils' progress, and this is another notable improvement since the time of the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

131. There has been significant progress since the last inspection in all aspects of information technology where the lack of an appropriate information technology curriculum was a key issue. Attainment across both key stages is in line with national expectations and pupils are making good progress. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the use of information technology are improving rapidly as is their confidence in teaching it. The role of the subject co-ordinators is clearly identified and this plays a significant role in the development of the subject.
132. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to develop a range of skills, which enables them to use the keyboard and mouse with confidence. They can input text and edit and improve it and save and retrieve it. They use 'Dataplot' to create graphs such as the numbers of letters in

surnames or ways of travelling to school. They can program the 'Roamer' to move in different directions and around a simple maze and predict the results.

133. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils continue to build on skills taught in Key Stage 1. They further develop them, so that they can use word processing for a range of purposes and across the curriculum, with work in science, history and physical education as well as mathematics and English. For example, they use spreadsheets to collate jumps and throwing in physical education and then average their results for individuals and groups. They create advertisements and write poetry and accounts and then improve their work by using a range of fonts and enhanced by graphics. They produce a range of graphs such as block graphs and pie charts to look at favourite sports and type of school dinners and extract information from CD-ROMs to enhance science work. They can create graphs in Excel, then use windows to move them into the word processing program to create titles and write about them.
134. Pupils are making good progress in both key stages. Their range of skills is steadily improving as their confidence grows. Their information technology skills are used to cover a wide range of curriculum areas and they use a growing amount of equipment including programmable toys, CD players, a digital camera and some control technology.
135. Pupils use information technology to support literacy in a variety of ways using CD-ROMs and word processing to create book reviews, poetry and nursery epitaphs and support numeracy through a wide range of data handling, Venn diagrams and spreadsheets.
136. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are consistently good. They listen attentively to the teacher. Pupils are well motivated and have a clear understanding of the tasks they are undertaking. Pupils are able to stay on task and many of the tasks are challenging but achievable for all pupils. They show high levels of interest and concentration when using information technology. Pupils readily ask for help when needed and are always eager to help other pupils in difficulty. They behave well in information technology lessons and respect the equipment they are using.
137. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of information technology are steadily improving, as is their confidence to teach it and tackle the technical difficulties that inevitably occur during lessons. Lessons are well planned and teachers make effective use of resource sheets to help pupils improve their skills and understanding of information technology. Time is well used and the brisk pace of lessons is effective in maintaining high levels of interest while developing and reinforcing skills appropriately. Pupil management is good.
138. The curriculum for information technology is good. There is a detailed policy that includes clear aims, organisation, assessment and monitoring. The school is adopting the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines as its scheme of work. This is yet to be fully implemented but plans are firmly in place to do so. The school has a good resource bank of software and a computer suite that is newly in place and funded by money from the National Grid for Learning, as well as a number of older computers in classrooms. The subject is well supported by two subject co-ordinators - one for each key stage. A programme of training is in place for staff and, using National Opportunities Fund money, when the Internet connection is in place will extend further. Information technology is a priority area in the school development plan. There are a number of extra-curricular activities including after-school clubs for children and parents. Sampling of pupils' work by co-ordinators takes place on a regular basis and regular reports on progress and developments in information technology are given to the governing body.

## MUSIC

139. Standards of music noted in the last inspection have been maintained and, in the few lessons observed, attainment was in line with that expected of pupils of similar ages. Music was not timetabled in some year groups during the week of the inspection. Teachers have made a decision to make music a priority area and to raise its profile in the curriculum.
140. In Key Stage 1 pupils sing action songs, memorising simple songs and can keep a simple beat. They know the names of some percussion instruments and the sound that they make. They can recognise fast/slow patterns and sounds and listen for a steady beat and they can create patterns and sequences of sounds. Pupils can clap their own patterns to each other and to the whole class.
141. Talking to pupils in Key Stage 2 shows that activities build on what has been taught in Key Stage 1. Pupils are taught a wider range of songs and have the opportunity to listen to a broad range of music including music from different periods in history. They can create rhythmic patterns using symbols and have opportunities to play a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
142. Pupils' attitudes in music lessons are good. They listen well and are keen and able to follow instructions. They enjoy playing musical instruments and listen attentively to other pupils demonstrating sounds and patterns using percussion instruments. Pupils are able to concentrate during music lessons and behaviour is generally good.
143. Peripatetic teachers provide tuition for pupils to learn recorders, clarinet, flute, guitar and the school choir. Considerable numbers of pupils avail themselves of these opportunities. There are opportunities for pupils to sing and play in musical events in Christmas plays and concerts.
144. The quality of music teaching is at least, satisfactory in Key Stage 1. No teaching was observed in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good knowledge and a clear understanding of the skills that need to be taught and the experiences which pupils need in order to develop these skills. The pace of lessons is good which results in most pupils taking a full part in music lessons. Good explanations and questioning help pupils to develop a sense of rhythm and an understanding of tone. Organisation in lessons is good which enables pupils to take an active part in lessons and maintain high levels of interest. Specialist music teaching from the local education authority is bought in for instrumental teaching. The quality of this teaching is good.
145. There are two teachers who act as co-ordinators for this subject - one for each key stage. There is a clear policy for the teaching of music, which clearly states the aims, detailed objectives and suggestions for cross-curricular links. It also includes a statement relating to equal opportunities. The school has adopted the local education authority scheme of work. This is a detailed scheme of work and includes advice on whole-school planning, planning units of work and detailed progression and development of skills through both key stages. There is a newly created music room that includes instruments purchased as a result of the choir winning an award for community involvement. The level of resources overall is satisfactory. The subject is enhanced by visiting musical groups such as a steel band, concerts by peripatetic teachers, a group demonstrating historical instruments and keyboard demonstrations.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Evidence is drawn from observation in lessons in dance, games and swimming, from scrutiny of the school's planning and from discussions.
147. At the end of both key stages pupils' attainments are broadly what would be expected of pupils of that age. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection.
148. By the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils are developing improved levels of control and mobility. In a Year 1 games lesson observed, many pupils displayed sound hand-eye co-ordination when attempting to 'hit' various targets through bouncing and rolling a ball and 'landing' a beanbag, and many could throw and catch a large ball. In a Year 2 dance lesson many pupils were able to incorporate strong exaggerated shapes into their dance, with one or two showing rhythmic responses and signs of poise.
149. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils move around with increasing control and awareness of others, and demonstrate an expected range of passing and catching skills. Pupils show appropriate skill when using a racquet or bat and hitting a ball away, some demonstrating good grip and technique. The school currently supports an effective swimming programme in Years 3, 4 and 5, and the majority of pupils achieve the required 25 metre distance. Many go on to exceed this and also become proficient in water safety techniques.
150. Pupils work with enjoyment and enthusiasm in physical education, and these good attitudes enhance their learning. Without exception, in the lessons observed all pupils took the trouble to change into smart appropriate clothing. They co-operate well, are willing to share ideas and make good use of opportunities to practise skills. Behaviour is good and apparatus is used safely and responsibly. When given the opportunity pupils are able to evaluate their own and others' performance.
151. Of the lessons seen all the teaching was satisfactory and on two occasions was good. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for physical education and set a good example by always wearing appropriate clothing, both of which have positive effects on pupils' attitudes to the subject. Teachers, along with learning support assistants go to great lengths to ensure that all pupils are able to take part. All lessons are well planned with clear achievable aims. These lessons are structured to give time for reinforcement and for pupils to refine their actions. In a Year 4 games lesson, good sharp instant assessments of aspects of technique enabled the teacher to highlight good practice and helped pupils improve their performance.
152. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the subject is well managed. Extra-curricular activities cover such areas as football, netball, hockey, gymnastics, cross-country and cricket and are very popular with pupils. The school has enjoyed considerable success in inter-school competitions. Outdoor pursuits are developed at Crosby Hall Educational Trust. Coaching from Southport Hockey Club, Waterloo Rugby Union Football Club and Everton Football Club enhances the curriculum, and dance workshops and country dancing make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
153. Facilities for physical education are good with a hall, gymnasium and large outdoor hard surfaced area. There is no school field but the school has access to a local recreation ground. Resources are satisfactory.