

INSPECTION REPORT

WATERLOO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Waterloo, Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104870

Headteacher: Mrs L Bruford

Reporting inspector: Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 195641

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crosby Road North Waterloo Liverpool Merseyside
Postcode:	L22 0LD
Telephone number:	(0151) 928 4274
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Moss
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23158	Margot D'Arcy	Registered Inspector	Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
9468	John Arscott	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for pupils The school's partnership with parents
7958	Georgina Lewis	Team inspector	English Religious education	
3191	James Curley	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography History	
30124	Paul Wilkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science	The quality of learning experiences
23245	Alan Farrage	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education	
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25340	Robert Franks	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is much bigger than other primaries, catering for 551 boys and girls aged between four and 11, all of whom attend full-time. The school has two, ten-place, learning bases for junior pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and a similar six-place base for infants. There is also a ten-place nurture base for infant pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. With the exception of the pupils in the bases, all pupils are taught in classes containing others of the same age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (30 percent) is higher than average, as is the proportion with statements of special need. The range of needs includes specific, moderate, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and some pupils with visual and hearing impairments. Most pupils are of White UK heritage and speak English as their first language; the proportion that speaks English as an additional language, (one per cent) is low and none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. Twenty-two percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school other than at the usual times of admission and transfer. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school, which, overall, suffers from some social disadvantage. About a third of the pupils come from areas where there is significant social disadvantage. Overall, children's attainment when they begin school is below that which is expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Given their attainment on entry, the pupils do well to achieve standards that are at least average in all subjects and above average in many. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory and most is good or better. The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. There are particularly good strategies to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal opportunities to succeed and make progress. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By age 11, standards are above average in English, design and technology (DT), history and music, and they are well above in art and design.
- Throughout the school, good quality teaching supports pupils' learning very well.
- The school makes good provision to promote the learning and personal development of pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher's very good leadership and management skills and commitment to pupils achieving their best, underpin all aspects of the school's work and ethos and are pivotal to its success.
- Despite its large size, the school provides a very caring, family atmosphere where pupils' personal development is effectively promoted alongside their academic needs. As a result, pupils really enjoy school, behave well and gain confidence and independence.
- The school works hard at, and is very successful in, keeping parents informed and encouraging them to be as involved as possible in their children's learning.

Waterloo Primary is a very successful school with many strengths and no significant weaknesses. In the context of its many strengths, some minor points for improvement have been suggested and will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been very good improvements since the school was last inspected in June 1997. All of the issues raised at that time have been successfully addressed. In particular, the quality of teaching is much better and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen. Procedures for finding out what pupils know, understand and can do have improved significantly and the school uses

this information very well to ensure that the work provided for pupils of all abilities promotes their good progress.

Reports to parents about their children's progress are now more comprehensive and learning experiences to help pupils understand the multicultural nature of society are much improved. There have been major improvements to the accommodation.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	D	D	B
mathematics	A	D	D	B
science	A	E	E	D

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

When comparing 11-year-old's results with all schools, inspectors found a much more positive picture than depicted in the table. This is because the inclusion of the results of pupils with special educational needs in the learning resource base lowers the overall test results. Inspection evidence shows that when the performance of these pupils is not included, standards in English are above average and in mathematics and science they are average. Standards in mathematics are improving in response to the school's effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the impact of which is still working its way through the school. Standards are also improving in science because more emphasis is being given to experimental and investigative work. Test results of seven-year-olds in 2001 were below average in reading, well below in writing, but above in mathematics. However, these also include pupils from the infant resource base, so, again, they do not reflect the true picture of attainment for the majority. Inspection evidence shows that in reading, writing and mathematics seven-year-olds' standards are generally above average, whilst, in science, they are average. Their standards in ICT are above average, whilst 11-year-olds achieve average standards in this subject. As in mathematics, the difference is because the impact of the new ICT scheme of work has not had sufficient time to work its way through the school.

By ages seven and 11, pupils achieve standards that are above average standards in DT, history and music and well above in art and design, because the quality of teaching and learning experiences provided in these subjects are particularly good. Standards in gymnastics are average, but in dance they are above; swimming standards are below average, because the school has limited access to the local swimming baths. Standards in geography and religious education are average at ages seven and 11. Pupils make particularly good progress in speaking skills, because these are promoted very well in a range of contexts. Reception children make good progress in all aspects of their work and are on target to achieve the early learning goals expected by the end of the year. Pupils with special educational needs, both in the main school and the learning resource bases, also achieve well.

Over time, the trend in pupils' performance in tests is below that being achieved nationally, but here, too, the picture provided by the data is misleading in that it is skewed by the inclusion of the test results of pupils in the bases. The school's very good use of assessment information allows it to set realistic, but challenging, targets for pupils to achieve in the English and mathematics tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is a calm and orderly place and pupils have very good levels of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and mix easily with each other and adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. In line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

All of the teaching is at least satisfactory; most is good; and a significant proportion is very good or excellent. Consequently, the needs of all pupils, including those with special needs in the resource bases and main school, are well met. Throughout the school, the teaching of English and mathematics is good. Speaking skills are especially well promoted by teachers, who give pupils many opportunities to express views, discuss their work or engage in drama activities. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in specific lessons for these subjects and are also promoted effectively in other subjects, such as science, history and design and technology. There is very good teaching in art and design and a high proportion of good or better teaching in ICT, design and technology, history, music, physical education and religious education. The improvement in teaching since the last inspection has resulted in more consistent learning throughout the school and has raised standards in a number of subjects. Key strengths in teaching are teachers' very good subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils, varied teaching methods, very good relationships with pupils and good use of time and support staff. Most are effective in providing work that matches pupils' specific needs, so that those who experience difficulties are given extra help and those who learn quickly receive additional challenge. The main weaknesses in lessons that are satisfactory, overall, relate to some lack of pace, which results in pupils losing concentration, some limitations in planning and support staff not being used effectively enough.

In addition to subject-specific knowledge and skills, pupils learn to work independently and to collaborate as part of different sized groups. They are gaining a good insight into their own learning, because teachers tell them how well they are doing and how they can improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Whilst maintaining an appropriate emphasis on the basics, pupils receive high quality learning experiences in a broad range of subjects. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good with many very good features. Staff are committed, caring and professional in their approach towards supporting pupils' learning. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils are fully included in all that is on offer.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. No specialist support is deemed to be necessary, but teachers generally take extra time to explain things to these pupils and adapt their work to ensure they are satisfactorily included in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. Provision allows pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals who appreciate the beauty in the world around them; know the difference between right and wrong; interact well with each other and adults; and value and respect people's differences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a caring school where pupils are well looked after. There are very effective systems to check on and promote pupils' academic and personal progress.

Extra-curricular activities and community links are very good and there is excellent provision to ensure that all pupils are fully included in learning experiences; however provision for swimming is inadequate. The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' health and safety are excellent. The school has a very good partnership with the parents and carers of its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Highly effective leadership by the headteacher is the foundation upon which all other strengths are built. The senior management team of deputy and assistant headteachers play a central role in successfully managing different aspects of the school's work. Subject and other co-ordinators are very committed and, overall, conduct their responsibilities effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors provide valuable support and have grown well into their role of critical friend. They challenge the school by asking the right questions at the right time about standards and the quality of education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Senior managers know what works well and are aware of areas that require development. This is because there are rigorous systems and procedures to gather information about strengths and weaknesses that lead to very effective action to secure improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good, overall. Money is used very well to improve provision in a number of areas. Other learning resources, including most support staff, are used well to improve standards and support teaching and learning.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources is good. The school applies the principles of best value well in the spending and other decisions it makes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and behaviour is good. • Teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The headteacher and staff are approachable and are quick to sort out any issues. • The school has high expectations for their children and helps them become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • The interesting range of activities provided outside of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority would like their children to have more homework. • A minority feel they are not informed enough about their children's progress.

Inspectors endorse all of parents' positive views and find that the school provides very good quality information about how well children are getting on, particularly in annual progress reports. Provision for homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children begin school with standards that are, overall, below those expected for their age. During their time in the reception classes, they make good progress, so that, on beginning Year 1, many achieve the expected goals in all areas of learning. Achievement is particularly good in the area of personal, social and emotional development, where children gain confidence and independence and learn how to share and play amicably with others. Children also make good gains in learning the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, because these are emphasised continuously within relevant contexts, such as play and singing activities, as well as in specific lessons.
2. The results of national tests taken by the school's seven-year-olds in 2001 were below the national average in reading, well below in writing, but above average in mathematics. These results were more favourable when compared to schools with a similar intake¹, being below average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. However, neither of these comparisons is truly illuminating in terms of reflecting the majority of pupils' achievements, because they do not take account of the high proportion of pupils with statements of special need, whose results are included in the school's test performance data. Nevertheless, the 2001 results in writing and mathematics did show improvement over the previous year. In mathematics, especially, many more pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3); indeed the proportion at this level was considerably higher than the national average. Teachers' assessments showed that, overall, standards in speaking and listening were below average, but this included assessments of pupils with language and communication difficulties, of which there are many. The number of pupils with difficulties in this area is a significant factor in accounting for results in reading and writing being much lower than those in mathematics and for performance over time being below the national average in reading and writing, but exceeding it in mathematics.
3. The national test results of the school's 11-year-olds in 2001 were below the national average in English and mathematics and well below in science. In relation to pupils in similar schools, these results were above average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. As at Key Stage 1², the results include those of pupils with special educational needs in the learning resource base and are not truly reflective of the standards being achieved by the majority. Over time, the overall trend in pupils' performance in tests is below that being achieved nationally, but here, too, the school's data are skewed by the inclusion of the test results of pupils in the bases.
4. At both key stages, inspection evidence provides a much more positive picture of the standards being achieved than the test results. When the performance of pupils in the bases is extracted, standards in English are generally above average at ages seven and 11. In mathematics, seven-year-olds achieve above average standards whilst 11-year-olds' standards are average. This inconsistency does not reflect weaknesses in teaching or learning experiences at Key Stage 2³, simply that the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has not yet worked its way through the school. The standards of work in science are broadly average by the end of both key stages and reflect the continuing improvements that have been made to the school's provision for experimental and investigative science.
5. By age 11, pupils are confident speakers and good listeners. They are keen to answer questions and to explain their work, which they do clearly, providing good detail to ensure that they are

¹ Based on the proportion entitled to free school meals

² Years 1 and 2

³ Years 3-6

understood. By this time, most pupils have also become competent readers who are keen to extract as much meaning as possible from the wide range of books they choose.

They express preferences for various types of reading material and know a range of contemporary and traditional authors. All pupils have good attitudes to reading, but some lower attainers still struggle to apply word-building skills when they come across words they cannot read. Pupils have gained good experience in writing in a range of forms and do so enthusiastically, making effective use of descriptive vocabulary and strategies such as using metaphor and alliteration to enliven their writing.

6. In mathematics, 11-year-olds have gained a satisfactory range of skills to manipulate numbers mentally and use these to support learning in other aspects of mathematics, such as working with fractions, decimals and percentages. They have a sound knowledge of the mathematical areas of data handling, measure and shape. In science, pupils enjoy undertaking investigations. They understand the need to ensure that experiments are conducted fairly and provide ideas about how to achieve this. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the other aspects of science, such as life and living processes. For example, they name some of the functions of major organs in the human body.
7. In all other subjects, standards at ages seven and 11 are at least average. In design and technology, history and music they are above average, whilst in art and design they are well above. In physical education, standards are average, overall. However, in dance, they are above average, but in swimming they are below. Achievement in swimming is adversely affected because, despite much effort, the school is still experiencing difficulties gaining sufficient access to the local swimming pool. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements to standards in ICT and these are now above average at age seven and average at age 11. Again, the discrepancy between the two key stages is because the impact of the new scheme has not had sufficient time to work though the school.
8. Eleven-year-olds' test results in 2001 did not show any significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Whilst seven-year-olds' test results in the same year showed that girls outperformed boys in both reading and mathematics, there are no significant differences over time, except in reading, where girls achieve slightly higher standards than boys. However, this reflects the national picture and the school's data on gender performance at both key stages fluctuate considerably from year to year, depending upon the gender profile of pupils in the learning resource bases. Inspection evidence did not find any significant difference between the standards being achieved by boys and girls.
9. In mainstream⁴ classes the large number of pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in reading and also make good progress in writing. In most lessons, teachers exploit opportunities to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, which, for example, helps them to understand difficult vocabulary and apply number skills to practical tasks, such as measuring. The school's new tracking system enables them to carefully monitor individual pupils' progress as they get older. This information is then effectively used to target extra and specific support for pupils, which promotes their good progress. For example, Year 1 pupils with identified reading difficulties receive additional support from the school's special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Similarly, the clear identification of pupils who are gifted or talented, coupled with individual education plans that outline their needs and set targets for them, promote good achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. No additional support is deemed necessary to assist these pupils' access to the curriculum. Teachers generally take extra time to explain things to them and adapt their work to ensure that they are satisfactorily included in lessons.
10. The school's very good use of assessment data allows it to set challenging, but realistic targets for pupils to achieve in the English and mathematics tests. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good. Where standards were already above average these have been

⁴ All classes except the learning resource bases

maintained; there is clear evidence of improvement in ICT and standards are rising in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils continue to show very good attitudes to school. Most display genuine enthusiasm for learning and are very keen to be involved in lessons and extra-curricular activities. The good relationships pupils have with teachers mean that they are confident to play a full part in classroom discussions. Pupils are well motivated and work hard. They enjoy the learning challenges set by teachers and relish solving problems for themselves. Pupils are accustomed to organising their own work and take delight in shared learning activities, working effectively and sensibly with a partner or as part of a group. The majority have a healthy attitude towards learning from their mistakes.
12. Pupils behave very well in lessons and this makes a significant contribution to their progress. They move around the school sensibly and behave well in the dining room, showing good table manners and talking amicably during the meal. On the playground, the boys and girls co-operate well together as they play in groups. Although play is sometimes boisterous, it is not rough and no pupils are isolated. The majority understand that their actions affect others and accept responsibility for them. This is evident in classrooms, from the level of self-discipline exercised by practically all pupils, usually without the need for direction from the teacher. Many of the teachers are very quietly spoken and yet they can all be heard clearly; teachers rarely need to bring the class to order. Most pupils respond very well to the school's code of conduct. They are invariably courteous, trustworthy and respectful. Oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, sexism and racism are very rare occurrences despite the large number of pupils with behavioural disabilities. The incidence of exclusions is extremely low, but the single incident since the previous inspection indicates that the school has the courage to use this action of last resort when necessary.
13. The personal aspect of pupils' development progresses very well. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils show maturity as they reflect on and discuss their behaviour, feelings and experiences. They display great concern for those less fortunate than themselves and actively support charitable causes. They show initiative, such as the pupil who suggested the school should provide a homework club, and are happy to help out by conducting routine jobs in class and around the school. Pupils ensure that the school grounds are tidy and free from litter; volunteers willingly go on litter patrol. Older pupils undertake training as 'play leaders' where they learn leadership skills and the principles of first aid. It is also very common to see pupils helping and supporting one another in the classroom. In discussions with pupils it is clear that they have been made aware of the importance of safeguarding the environment. For instance, they earnestly explain that too many cars pollute the atmosphere and show concern about the adverse effect on people and wildlife of cutting down trees. They know that they are helping to maintain the environment when participating in school initiatives such as the recycling of paper, plastic and bottles and are keen to take part in these activities. Pupils' well-developed sense of responsibility is evident when they talk about their role as members of the school council, which they take very seriously, recognising their accountability to other pupils.
14. Children in the Foundation Stage have very positive attitudes to school and to each other. They behave well and the respect and understanding shown to children by staff boosts their self-esteem and supports their personal development. Children come into school without any anxiety when leaving their parents and carers. They feel safe and happy and work and play well together, as a result.
15. In most lessons, pupils with special needs have very good attitudes to learning. They show confidence when participating in class discussions and work well with others in group tasks. Pupils listen well to their teachers' instructions and try hard to complete tasks successfully.

They behave well and take on a variety of responsibilities that support their personal and social development.

16. Attendance rates are satisfactory. The level of authorised absence and the percentage of unauthorised absences in the last reported year are both in line with the national average. Procedures for registering pupils are good and meet statutory requirements. Most pupils are punctual, so lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory; 78 per cent is good or better, with 23 per cent being very good and four per cent excellent.
18. Effective teaching is seen in all areas of learning in the reception classes. Here, teaching is almost always good; it is very good in 21 per cent of lessons and excellent in seven per cent. All staff work as a mutually supportive team. Teachers have a good understanding of the way in which young children learn and plan a wide range of relevant and practical activities that meet the children's needs and capture their interest. The wide variety of activities, including play, is thoughtfully organised to promote learning across a range of areas. For example, in a physical education lesson, the children's mathematical skills were promoted very well as they played a game based on recognising two and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of the lesson, they had developed skills in travelling in different ways around the hall and could name and identify the basic properties of shapes such as a sphere and cube. Staff work hard to ensure that all children have the same opportunities to experience all the activities on offer. There is a good balance between child-chosen activities and those led by teaching staff. Staff intervene effectively and continuously to encourage skills of speaking, listening and personal and social development. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are also constantly promoted throughout the day. The quality of teaching provides children with a very good start to their education and prepares them well for beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1.
19. At Key Stage 1, teaching is always satisfactory and is good or better in 96 per cent of lessons; 32 per cent is very good and four per cent is excellent. At Key Stage 2, all the teaching is at least satisfactory; 71 per cent is good or better, with 20 per cent being very good and four per cent excellent. Teaching in geography and music is satisfactory, overall, and it is good in all other subjects except art and design where it is very good. At both key stages, really effective lessons are characterised by a number of common features, for instance teachers' good subject knowledge, and a high proportion of direct teaching. In numeracy lessons, for example, teachers spend all the time teaching and involve many pupils in answering questions and explaining their work. Moreover, they use these opportunities well to assess how effectively pupils are learning. Teachers then modify their questions and future lesson plans to provide more challenge for pupils who are coping well with the work and more support for those finding it difficult. This aspect in particular has improved since the last inspection. Another strong feature is the way teachers promote pupils' speaking skills, for example, by providing good opportunities for them to work collaboratively, discussing their views or how they will tackle work. Speaking skills are also very effectively promoted in lessons such as art and design, design and technology and physical education, where pupils are required to evaluate their own and others' work. A brisk pace underpins the teaching of many successful lessons. Teachers manage time well and achieve a good balance between instruction and explanation, and opportunities for pupils to work independently. Where teachers provide pupils with time limits to complete work, a sense of urgency is created and pupils are clearly motivated to work hard.
20. Weaknesses in lessons that are satisfactory, overall, relate to a lack of pace because teachers talk for too long, resulting in pupils losing concentration. Overall, teachers make satisfactory use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum, but some opportunities are missed to use classroom computers in the context of lessons other than ICT.
21. There were many examples of effective teaching, but two serve to illustrate some of the key features that promoted successful learning.
 - In a Year 1 science lesson, based on magnetism, the teacher provided a wide range of different types of magnets and objects for pupils to explore. She constantly encouraged them to discuss what they were finding out with their friends and to describe their observations to the class. This led to pupils making informed predictions about which objects would be attracted to a magnet, focused on the material of which they were made. The teacher's skilled questioning really took pupils' learning forward, particularly in

prompting them to suggest why not all metal objects were attracted to magnets. Time was used well, with a good balance between practical work and recording. Indeed, the simple recording task that followed pupils' explorations was very appropriate and had real meaning for them since it was based on first-hand experience.

- In a Year 3 lesson based on teaching pupils the key features of instructional writing, the teacher's very good use of a large text, shared with the class, was highly effective in explaining how instructions can be organised in different ways, and the importance of chronological order for this type of writing. To motivate pupils and help them relate the theory to practice, the teacher took on the role of a chef and, step-by-step, enthusiastically made a peanut butter and jam sandwich. For each step in the sandwich-making process, the teacher emphasised, verbally, the key points, which helped pupils to write a precise, matching, instruction. The lesson was made even more successful by the task requirements being carefully modified to allow pupils of different attainment to take a full part. For example, lower attainers were provided with a variety of written instructional statements and had to identify the one that accurately matched the action then place these in the correct sequence. This adaptation, together with the good help lower attainers received from support staff, ensured that a brisk pace was maintained and all pupils made very good progress.
22. Throughout the school, very good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident. Teachers clearly like pupils and treat them fairly; a good rapport was seen in many classes. This pays off in terms of the high standards noted in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the confidence they show in explaining their work or asking questions. Teachers' comments to pupils about their work, both verbally and in marking, strike the right balance between celebrating and encouraging their efforts and giving them achievable targets and developmental points to help them improve. All of this, together with the specific targets that teachers set for pupils or negotiate with them, gives pupils a very good insight into how well they are learning. Similarly, the way teachers share with pupils the objectives of lessons involves them very much in the learning process. Homework is set regularly and used satisfactorily to support the work done in class.
23. Most teachers make good use of support staff. These individuals are well briefed about their roles, for example about the questions to ask pupils and the extent of intervention they should provide. They make a positive contribution to assisting teaching and promoting learning.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, both in class and when withdrawn to receive individual or small group support. In most lessons, teachers match activities well to pupils' individual needs. The SENCO is a good role model for teaching and learning support assistants provide effective help for pupils during whole class lessons, group and individual work. All the adults who work with these pupils are sensitive to their difficulties and show considerable patience and understanding. They make sure that pupils are challenged, but are able to achieve success.

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

25. The school fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. It complies with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Since the last inspection, curriculum provision has improved and there are now detailed schemes of work in all subjects, which ensure that, as pupils get older, learning experiences build on what has been taught previously. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are being successfully implemented and, as a result, attainment in English and mathematics is improving. The curriculum is appropriately broad and well balanced, ensuring that, in addition to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, pupils have very worthwhile experiences in other subjects. This plays a significant part in the higher than average standards being achieved in art and design, design and technology, history and music. Whilst subjects are

taught separately, many pertinent links are made with other subjects, for instance, between history and art and design, and science, mathematics and design and technology.

26. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage follows the recommended six areas of learning. It is rich and varied, with a broad range of relevant, practical activities, presented in ways appropriate for young children, including purposeful play. The curriculum covers a variety of topics, for example 'the senses', 'colour', and 'traditional tales'. It builds on what the children already know and can do and is informed by effective assessment of their progress.
27. Pupils in the main school with special educational needs receive a good, enriched, curriculum that provides them with a range of well-planned learning experiences to develop social and academic skills in a stimulating environment. They are fully included in all that is on offer, receiving the same curriculum as other pupils, but the school identifies and recognises their different needs and provides an extensive range of extra, focused support to enable all to build on their prior learning. For example, the most able writers in Year 4 work as one group to develop skills in writing in different styles, such as persuasive and descriptive. Similarly, younger pupils receive out-of-class support to increase basic reading skills by following a recognised reading recovery programme. The school has good arrangements to ensure that those pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for additional support do not miss out on the curriculum experiences provided for other pupils. Specific, focused provision is also made for pupils identified as gifted or talented and this is very effective in improving their standards. The curriculum for the pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory, but monitoring of the work provided for these pupils could be more rigorous.
28. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and has approved a sex education and drug education policy that is taught sensitively through science, and a very good personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils are currently working with the Local Education Authority to achieve recognition for their work through the Healthy Schools initiative. The school provides a wide range of additional activities to develop pupils' interests and increase their commitment to and motivation for school. For example, it offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, art, chess and dance. Lunchtime and after-school clubs enrich their experiences and contribute to the positive ethos of the school. For example, pupils of all abilities were observed in an after-school art club; they were spellbound and totally absorbed as they produced work of very high quality.
29. Links with the community are good and effectively support learning. For example, links with a local newspaper, The Crosby Herald, resulted in pupils making a visit to see how a newspaper is produced. Subsequently, pupils produced their own newspaper, which is now circulated termly. Similarly, a link established with Liverpool Football Club has enabled pupils to develop skills and teamwork. Links with the Philharmonic Hall resulted in the school benefiting from a composer in residence, which supported learning in music. A very good range of visits and visitors are provided for all year groups that enrich the curriculum, making learning more meaningful. These have included visits to Chester to study the Roman influences, Martin Mere Wildfowl Trust and Formby Pinewoods. Good relationships with Chesterfield High School include regular visits by teachers from the high school to work with pupils, for example, to improve pupils' mathematical skills.
30. The curriculum is enriched by very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and good provision for spiritual development. The strengths identified by the last inspection have been maintained and provision for cultural development has improved.
31. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through carefully planned assemblies, religious education lessons, and other subjects such as art and design, science and music. Within daily acts of collective worship, either in assembly or in the classroom, a quiet reflective atmosphere is created, for instance through the playing of appropriate music and thought-provoking stories and themes. Visitors, for example from Dr Barnardo's, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the local clergy, regularly attend assemblies to widen the pupils' spiritual experience. In science, pupils learn to appreciate the beauty of the natural world, whilst in history

they have opportunities to reflect poignantly on human feeling. For example when studying the Second World War they read with emotion about the tragic, brave life of Anne Frank. Stemming from their reading of the story *Goodnight Mr. Tom*, pupils write sad letters home from the perspective of an evacuee. They develop an appreciation of the creative work of others in music and art and they are encouraged to express and explore their feelings through drama, dance and art.

An air of spirituality pervades the school; music plays constantly in the main corridor and pupils marvel at the interesting items, such as water features and moving puzzles on display. Pupils are constantly met with inspiring and stimulating questions and quotations on doors and walls. Throughout the school there is a strong sense of community, which actively supports regular reflection on issues that impinge upon the pupils' lives.

32. The good role models provided by staff, together with the school's very effective procedures to promote good behaviour underpin provision for moral development. In religious education pupils learn about moral codes such as the Ten Commandments and how these are linked to the rules of modern society. Collectively, pupils and staff discuss and devise Golden Rules for the classroom to benefit all; pupils also serve on the Working Party that is currently reviewing the school's behaviour policy. Discussions about moral issues are included in assemblies, lessons and Circle Time⁵. For example in history, pupils consider racial prejudice when learning about the fate of the Jewish people during the Second World War. All these experiences promote pupils' understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others.
33. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to feel concern for others less fortunate than themselves and willingly support charitable collections for causes such as *Save the Children* or *Shoe Boxes for Bosnia*. Some pupils show particular initiative by consulting the headteacher about organising their own charitable events. For example, four pupils raised 100 pounds for Help the Aged. The school provides ample opportunities for pupils to develop socially. For instance, some have completed training to act as play leaders, which involves them organising lunchtime games and ensuring that everyone has a friend to play with. The reading club also operates at lunchtime, when the older pupils read to the younger ones. The school council gives the pupils a taste of democracy, when each class elects two pupils to represent them. The council has successfully suggested more extra-curricular activities such as gymnastics and cheer leading. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 have opportunities to attend a residential visit, which allows them to live independently of their parents for a short while.
34. Pupils' cultural development is effectively promoted in many ways and through many subjects. For instance, known artists and authors visit the school. Up to 70 pupils have music tuition for brass, woodwind and strings and no one is excluded on grounds of cost; the school's fifty-strong orchestra give recitals and the school's choir regularly takes part in many events. Visitors have included the Sefton Music Service Ensemble, the Police Brass Band and a jazz education workshop, all of whom have provided pupils with exciting experiences of listening to live music. In art and design lessons, pupils are required to study the works of famous artists such as Cezanne, Picasso, and Kandinsky then create their own works in the artists' particular styles. Pupils visit places of cultural interest such as the Walker Art gallery and the Liverpool Museum. Their understanding of the multicultural nature of society is well promoted and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Recently, a visit from The Black Unfolesi group provided pupils with memorable experiences of art, music and dance from the African culture. Similarly, a day focused on Indian culture included a visit from a parent and involved pupils in investigating artefacts, learning Indian dances and eating Indian food for lunch. The Chinese New Year is marked and other major festivals that are observed by people from various religious cultures are celebrated, such as the Hindu festival of Divali. The school's art club is currently studying Malaysian art, with pupils creating attractive, colourful masks and pottery in the unique Malaysian style. A group of pupils are going to perform Malaysian dancing at a forthcoming 'Wealth of Nations' event organised by the Local Education Authority to celebrate the Commonwealth Games. High quality, stimulating displays around the school also enhance cultural development. These include beautiful paintings depicting African and Indian art, an

⁵ Where pupils sit in a circle and discuss issues.

attractive display of Chinese artefacts, an interesting display about the Jewish Shabbat with its special meal, and another about Islam, with fine photographs and drawings together with a copy of the Qu'ran. The pupils are, therefore, well aware of the diversity of cultures and traditions in society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The procedures for child protection, welfare and safety are outstanding. What makes this provision so good is that it is properly structured, organised and resourced and is staffed by sincere, informed, and totally dedicated staff. Most importantly, it works because it breathes life into the concept of care. The school's nurture base offers exceptional care and support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and does much to break down the barriers to learning experienced by these pupils. Moreover, other pupils from the school have the advantage of being able to use the base's unique facilities to 'chill out' or calm down if needed. The high standard of care is by no means limited to the nurture base or to pupils with behavioural difficulties; the ethos of care reaches out to the whole school.
36. Teachers are very aware of pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing, family circumstances and intellectual capacity and keep detailed records of their progress. Compliance with local authority child protection procedures is very well established. The member of staff with responsibility for this aspect and the overall welfare of pupils is dedicated and conducts the role exceptionally well. Staff awareness of child protection procedures is very good. The school has a significant number of pupils who are cared for by the local authority and works very hard to fill the gaps in these pupils' particular personal development with schemes such as the Adventure Service Challenge⁶.
37. There is a very good health and safety policy, with a designated member of staff holding responsibility for this aspect. The daily practice of health and safety in the school is in the capable hands of the site manager and caretaker, who also carry out an annual risk assessment. Safe working practices are monitored and reviewed regularly. Arrangements for dealing with accidents are clearly set out, and many members of staff are qualified to give first aid. This very good provision follows the trend in the previous inspection.
38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and have improved since the last inspection. The school complies with the statutory recording and reporting of attendance and has procedures for following up unauthorised absences on the first day of non-attendance. Improving attendance is a very high priority; typically, the school offers pupils rewards for various periods of continuous attendance and local businesses have been approached with a view to sponsoring these. The school has a very good working relationship with the education welfare officer. There are also highly effective procedures for promoting and monitoring pupils' behaviour. A comprehensive behaviour policy that also includes information on anti-bullying is firmly established, together with equally comprehensive strategies for putting these policies into practice. The consistent implementation of these procedures, within a climate designed to promote good behaviour through self-discipline, is highly effective. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour and anger management are very effective. Anti-bullying strategies are very well established and the school maintains very good records of any incidents and the action taken. Vigilant staff pick up any instances of this type of behaviour so quickly that they rarely develop into significant incidents. However, if trouble does arise, it is firmly dealt with by the school.
39. The arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. All have a personal educational profile that allows staff to record and track progress. The principle of acknowledging and celebrating the achievements of pupils is well established. Pupils with clearly identified emotional and behavioural difficulties have individual education plans and their progress toward the targets in these is regularly monitored. The school also makes very good use of the expertise and daily practices of all staff in the nurture base attached to the school, which enables individual pupils to make very good progress in aspects associated with their personal development, such as improving their self-esteem. The school liaises well with many outside agencies and year group teachers meet weekly to evaluate their work; informal meetings with parents occur frequently.

⁶ Young Duke of Edinburgh award scheme

40. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. In addition to the statutory assessments on entry and at the end of key stages, other, regular, assessments are made, recorded and communicated for each year group. The senior management team effectively uses information technology to carry out a thorough analysis of assessment information and use this to allocate staff and resources to meet the needs of identified groups of pupils. Teachers use assessment information very well to help them plan learning experiences that suit pupils' needs. Pupils are made aware of their targets for personal development as well as those to help them improve academically. Indeed, they often have their targets for improvement pasted into their books and evaluate their own progress. For example, one child aims to *'Take part fully in class discussions'* whilst another will *'Share games sensibly in the playground.'* There are regular reviews of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. All statements and reviews are up to date.
41. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is regularly monitored through a six-monthly review of their individual education plans and informal daily discussions between teachers and support staff. Whilst effective, this process does not enable the rate of progress against each priority target to be accurately measured over time, because progress against targets is often completed at the end of the six-month period. The school recognises this and has made a start on more frequent recording of progress in pupils' individual education plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The overall view of the school by parents is that it is very good. The school works very hard to promote effective and productive links with parents. Parents are regularly consulted and informed about curriculum matters and their views are sought on many issues, such as the school's homework policy. Parents are also involved in the regular reviews of the school's behaviour policy and are often consulted and informed about major school budget decisions.
43. The quality of information provided for parents has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. The prospectus and governors' report to parents both comply with statutory requirements. Annual reports on pupils' progress are comprehensive and show teachers' very good knowledge of each child. They include very detailed targets to inform parents and pupils about how they can improve and provide opportunity for both parents and pupils to comment. Teachers are available daily for informal conversations and each term to discuss children's progress with parents. The school works very hard to ensure that all the parents know and understand what is being taught at school. For example, in English, every year group has a specific and extremely detailed information leaflet about every aspect of the curriculum. Reading and homework diaries are used very well and make a positive contribution to pupils' progress. The home-school agreement works well as a means of establishing a partnership between the school, parents and pupils.
44. Parents' involvement has a very considerable impact on the work of the school and, as at the last inspection, continues to be a strength. A large number of parents regularly help out in school, offering valuable assistance in many areas. The SENCO is involved in training parent volunteers in important areas of classroom support like listening to pupils read. Parents also help with sports and extra-curricular activities. Parental involvement across a variety of subjects has a direct, positive impact on raising standards across the school for all pupils. It also is a contributory factor in developing very good relationship between staff, parents, and pupils. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to regular reviews of their children's learning and play an active part in formal reviews of their children's progress. The school has a supportive Parents' Association that raises large funds to purchase resources and enhance the learning environment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and management. All of the areas for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed very successfully and significant improvements have also been made in many other areas.
46. Behind the headteacher's approach to management is a deep-rooted conviction that all members of staff play an essential role in the school's work. People matter at Waterloo. All staff feel valued and are consequently willing to commit much hard work, which is helping the school go from strength to strength. Governors bring expertise, experience and quality to their role of critical friend, asking the right questions at the right time. At the centre of all this are the pupils. They are rightly seen as the most important people in the school and their interests are put first. The headteacher is passionate in her belief that pupils deserve the very best educational experiences available and all that is done is channelled into making things better for them. Whilst the school is committed to pupils achieving their academic potential, the human dimension to management puts great value on the all-round development of pupils, and inspection evidence shows that this pays off, with numerous strengths evident in the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of pupils. Providing additional strength to the management structure is a very competent deputy and three assistant headteachers, all of whom support the headteacher very well. These individuals carry out the duties and responsibilities delegated to them effectively and play a central role in managing different aspects of the school's work.
47. Subject and other co-ordinators are all highly committed and hardworking. Most are very successful managers who are knowledgeable about their subjects, pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning in the areas for which they are responsible. The majority make a significant contribution to supporting the raising of standards and improving pupils' achievement. Co-ordinators provide good support for colleagues, both formally and informally. This includes demonstrating and observing teaching, analysing pupils' work, providing training and giving advice through general day-to-day discussion. They are effective in managing a budget for their subjects and ensure that there are sufficient, good quality resources to support teaching and learning. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision throughout the school is good, with many very good features. Although there are many different facets to the existing provision, each senior manager with a designated area of responsibility for meeting the additional needs of pupils shares the same vision and is committed to improving practice, which makes this area a strength.
48. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is very good. This has been pivotal in supporting the very good improvement in this aspect since the last inspection. The headteacher regularly monitors teaching. She does this rigorously, but sensitively, and staff view the process as a crucial part of their professional development. The headteacher has a sharp and perceptive insight of the teaching quality at the school and of what constitutes effective teaching. She knows what works well and what does not and is, therefore, able to offer individual teachers very good advice about how to improve. This process links very well with the school's strategy for teacher appraisal and performance management. This school has excellent potential for training new teachers.
49. The very good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning, together with the detailed analyses and interpretation of performance data, support the school in identifying and prioritising areas for improvement. These are clearly set out in the school's development plan, with very good detail about how they will be achieved and how success will be measured. The priorities that have been identified are the correct ones for the school at this time. Since the last inspection, the school commissioned an independent audit of its special educational needs provision that identified key areas for development, including developing the role of the SENCO to monitor aspects of teaching and raise the quality of individual education plans. This has resulted in the school constructing a very comprehensive and appropriate, detailed, long-term action plan to develop several aspects of existing practice.

50. Governors are a committed and effective team and provide considerable support for the school. They too strive for excellence. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities, attend regular training and fulfil all their legal obligations. They are well informed about the school's work, clearly articulating its strengths and demonstrating an informed insight about where provision and/or standards could be improved. Governors are effectively involved in shaping the school's direction and receive comprehensive and accurate information from the headteacher and co-ordinators to support them in this.

They constantly question and challenge the school's management to ensure all pupils receive the best possible opportunities to learn. The governor responsible for special educational needs is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of existing provision and recognises the need to be more formally involved in the evaluation of effective teaching and learning practices across the curriculum. She is committed, as are the other governors, to the close monitoring of support intervention to ensure that pupils continue to receive an inclusive curriculum.

51. Day-to-day administration and financial control are efficient and support the smooth running of the school. Administrative staff provide a warm and welcoming first contact for parents and visitors. The school's finances are very carefully monitored and controlled; procedures for financial management are very good. The excellent work of the school bursar offers considerable expertise in helping the school monitor the budget and make informed decisions about spending. These are very closely linked to the priorities in the school's development plan and their impact on pupils' progress. The school makes very good use of specific grants and the use of all monies from these sources is appropriately delegated and rigorously monitored. Pupils' opinions are sought as to how funding can be used to improve aspects of the building and premises. For example, they submit designs to improve the school's Bell Tower and consider how outdoor play provision can be improved. The school makes good use of ICT to provide accurate information for governors and staff in areas such as assessment and attendance. Good improvements have been made in this area since the last inspection.
52. The accommodation is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection with extensive refurbishments in many areas, including significant upgrading of the large hall, a new computer suite and a food technology room. The old derelict wing of the infant block has been made into attractive skills' bases. The library is large and is at present being restocked with new books. Whilst there are no playing fields adjacent to the school, sports pitches within walking distance are used. The surfaces of the playgrounds are in good condition and plans are in hand to landscape them. Similarly, whilst there is no specific outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage, there are plans to address this. The school is well decorated with many high quality displays that stimulate pupils' interest and celebrate their work. The whole school is kept meticulously clean. The toilets are large, well ventilated and recently decorated. They are cleaned after morning break, after lunch and in the evening; standards of hygiene are high.
53. The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced teachers whose areas of expertise are well matched to the needs of teaching the National Curriculum, religious education and the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. Teachers are well supported in their work by a large number of teaching assistants. These staff are committed to the pupils in their care and feel valued as part of the teaching team. Their contributions and suggestions are welcomed by the school's management. The school has very good induction procedures to support newly qualified teachers and has very good potential to train student teachers. Every subject has plenty of high quality resources that are used very well. However, the ICT facilities for linking to the Internet and supporting e-mail activities are unreliable. In relation to spending decisions and in all aspects of its work, the school applies the principles of best value effectively. The school provides good value for the money it spends.
54. Overall, the strong and effective leadership and management noted by the last inspection have improved even further. The result is seen in the improved standards of teaching and learning and the school's very good provision across the board. This includes a team of staff and governors that have very clear insights into the school's strengths and weaknesses and a collective determination to make things even better and go for all out excellence. There are effective

strategies and systems to support this and, as such, the school's capacity to improve is very good.

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS LEARNING RESOURCE BASES

55. Overall, pupils in the bases develop English and mathematical skills in lessons that closely adhere to the guidance provided in the National Numeracy and Literacy strategies. Although there is a wide range of abilities in all bases, pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress in developing basic reading, writing and number skills. For example, higher attaining pupils in the Key Stage 1 base match four different sounds that animals make to the correct animal picture. Lower attainers learn the names of primary colours, such as red, blue and yellow, which help them when completing sorting activities to develop basic numeracy skills. Higher attainers in the upper junior base solve simple mental problems. For example, they correctly identify a number between 51 and 100 and are beginning to understand that multiplication is a form of repeated addition, writing 5×2 as five lots of 2. Lower attainers play number games to develop mathematical vocabulary and to recognise numbers to ten, both as words and digits. In science, junior pupils make very good progress in learning about the properties of liquids and the changes that occur to some solids when they are added to water. This is because much of the work is practical and adults work intensively with small groups, getting pupils to describe what they see and promoting skills of prediction and measuring as well as discussing how to make the tests fair.
56. Most pupils in the bases listen attentively during lessons and persevere with tasks, even when they find them difficult. The very good relationships between pupils and staff, including the constant encouragement and praise pupils receive, play a major part in this, enabling pupils to make very good progress in social, emotional and personal development. Higher attainers often work independently with minimal supervision for fairly long periods. Occasionally, when introductions by teachers are lengthy, a minority lose concentration and interest for short periods.
57. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the bases is good. During the inspection, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, which represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching that was good or better was characterised by thorough planning and lesson preparation. A significant factor in this was that the intended learning outcomes for different pupils were clearly identified and shared with the pupils so that they knew what the teacher expected them to know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Where this high standard of lesson planning was present it was clear that teachers had evaluated the effectiveness of previous lessons and made good use of assessment information to match the work to the wide range of needs and attainment within the classes. Weaker aspects of teaching occur when the learning objectives for pupils of different attainment are not clearly identified and teachers do not regularly reinforce the key objectives of the lesson, resulting in pupils being unclear about what they are expected to learn. Some planning does not make clear the role of the learning support assistant and on occasions this is underdeveloped. Occasionally, teachers' introductions go on for too long.
58. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. Staff work hard to ensure that literacy and numeracy planning is closely linked to national guidelines. All teachers have a good understanding of what an inclusive curriculum means and modify their daily teaching plans to meet individual and group needs. Teachers provide pupils with interesting activities that sustain their interest. There are many good examples of social inclusion in all bases. In the early years/Key Stage 1 base, pupils have the opportunity to work with pupils from the main school, for example, to support their learning in areas such as knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils are fully included in residential and other visits that their year group take part in. Similarly, although many pupils in the bases are brought to school by taxi, they have full access to the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, such as dance club, breakfast club, drama, football and netball. Whilst curriculum planning for subjects other than English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, the school is currently reviewing the content and teaching methods for other subjects to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is continuous

and progressive. The curriculum for pupils with complex learning needs is well supported by a range of adults, including nursery nurses and teaching assistants who offer good quality individual and group support.

59. Some teachers are developing very thorough procedures to predict and monitor pupils' progress over time. They use procedures that enable them to accurately assess pupils in priority areas of learning such as English, mathematics and personal and social development. Statutory requirements for completing an annual review of the progress of pupils with statements are being carried out effectively. The school's procedures for annual review involve parents in the assessment of their children's progress.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. There are no key issues for the school to address. However, in the context of its many strengths, the following minor points for improvement have been made and will form the basis of the governors' action plan:

- raise standards in swimming by Improving current provision (Paragraphs 7 and 133);
- monitor more closely the provision and work of pupils with English as an additional language (Paragraph 27);
- improve the reliability of ICT equipment to ensure better access to the Internet and e-mailing facilities (Paragraphs 53 and 120);
- ensure that the quality of planning by teachers in the resource bases is consistent and matches the very high standard of planning seen elsewhere in the school (Paragraph 57); and
- improve the leadership role of the ICT co-ordinator (Paragraph 127).

Numbers in parentheses refer to paragraphs

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	109
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	25	56	24	0	0	0
Percentage	4	23	51	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	551
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	25
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	163

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	52
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	29	36	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	25
	Girls	30	31	34
	Total	49	49	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (67)	75 (72)	91 (78)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	22
	Girls	29	30	30
	Total	47	52	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (67)	80 (78)	80 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	53	43	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	41	46
	Girls	35	28	34
	Total	74	69	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (76)	72 (75)	83 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	41	41
	Girls	30	29	29
	Total	66	70	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (65)	73 (67)	73 (59)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	485
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	29.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	536.75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	1,345,535
Total expenditure	1,410,000
Expenditure per pupil	2,465
Balance brought forward from previous year	142,561
Balance carried forward to next year	78,096

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 21.5%

Number of questionnaires sent out	551
Number of questionnaires returned	119

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	39	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	36	18	2	1
The teaching is good.	61	34	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	41	13	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	37	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	39	5	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	35	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	29	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	32	8	0	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. Children begin school in the September of the academic year in which they turn five. At the time of the inspection, there were 75 children in the Foundation Stage who were being taught in three classes. By the end of the reception year, most children attain the expected standards in all areas of learning. The quality of teaching is at least good in all areas, which supports children's very good progress. Planning is very good, making full use of the national guidance on the recommended curriculum for children of this age. Moreover, adults support children with special educational needs very effectively and tasks are well matched to their needs. Children are assessed regularly and their progress tracked. The Foundation Stage is led and managed very effectively. All of the strengths identified by the last inspection have been maintained.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Teaching constantly reinforces good behaviour, listening skills, caring for others and respecting people and property. Teachers are good role models, treating the children and each other with courtesy and respect. They really listen to the children and speak clearly and gently to them, making them feel safe and promoting their self-esteem. Songs, stories and rhymes are an integral part of the day and are effective in reinforcing right and wrong behaviour. Children are learning the rules and routines of everyday life at school, such as answering the register, playing out, having their lunch with other pupils and taking part in assemblies. They learn to share and take turns. In many lessons, children show very good concentration and attention both in listening to teachers and whilst working in the wide range of interesting and practical tasks provided. Staff promote children's independence very well, giving them good opportunities to make choices about the work they undertake. Children have learned to cope well with aspects of personal care such as undressing for physical education lessons and washing their hands after visiting the toilet.
63. Teaching staff constantly promote children's good manners and this pays off. For instance, in an assembly, the children were reminded to say 'Good Morning' to the Lollipop Man visitor and spontaneously waved and said 'Goodbye' as he left. Good manners are also given a high profile as children say 'Thank You' for the fruit they eat before playtime. In all, the very good sense of security promoted by staff and the supportive relationships they foster, result in children who are eager to come to school and confident to leave their parents and carers. Teaching and learning experiences in this area are preparing children very well for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Children's skills in this area are developing well because teaching staff are skilled in providing a wide range of learning opportunities that promote them effectively. For example, speaking and listening skills are constantly developed throughout the day as well as in specific activities such as the story of *Lumpty* (a variation of Humpty Dumpty). Children enjoy books and actively participate in shared reading sessions with the class, where colourful and stimulating texts are used to promote good attitudes to reading alongside basic skills. Teachers also give role-play a high profile, which supports learning in all aspects of this area. For instance the development of the very attractive imaginative play area, '*Under the Sea*', has stimulated much imaginative talk and acted as a good stimulus for reading and writing activities.
65. Children are well aware that words have meaning and show awareness of how books work. For instance, they turn the pages carefully and most are aware of the correct direction for print to be read; they know that the pictures help them to understand the story. Some children have already grasped reading quite successfully, recognising common words and familiar character names in

their books. They are learning about the sounds letters make in words and can identify many of these. Most children identify their own name and those of their classmates.

Teachers and nursery nurses actively encourage children to 'write', making marks and symbols, and to draw. These first efforts towards writing are highly valued and the children's emerging skills are developing well. Many write their own names fairly accurately, using the appropriate upper and lower case letters. The children identified as having special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported in their learning. Similarly, a child learning English as an additional language also receives sound support from staff, which promotes his progress.

Mathematical development

66. Children receive good teaching and learning experiences in this area, which supports their good progress. They are learning to count accurately to ten and beyond and have good recognition of the numerals to ten. The motivating practical work and games provided support children's understanding of number and promote their very good attitudes to work. The result is that children correctly match a numeral with a quantity of items and a good many higher and average attainers correctly order numerals to ten and identify where a 'missing number' fits into a sequence. Children enthusiastically join in a game that requires them to pick up a numeral that is 'one more than' a given number supplied by the teacher.
67. Children are gaining a good understanding of the mathematical ideas of shape and pattern through activities such as bead threading and fitting shapes together. They gain experience in solving simple, practical problems that promote mathematical understanding, for instance when they roll out dough to the required size to make shapes and when playing in the water trough, pouring and measuring from different sizes and shapes of containers. During the inspection, there was very good teaching that combined activities to promote children's mathematical development within a physical education. By the end of the lesson children's ability to recognise a range of two and three-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles, cubes and cylinders had been extended very well. Songs and number rhymes constantly reinforce children's learning in this area and teachers seize every opportunity to promote children's understanding of number.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Children make good progress in this area because staff ensure that a varied and balanced programme of activities is provided. Children learn about the environment, visiting the local area and places further afield such as Croxteth Country Park. Early geographical skills are fostered very well as children learn about different people within the community who help them. For instance, during the inspection, children sat transfixed as they learned about the job of the Lollipop Man who helps them cross the road and the uses of the special clothing worn by him. This work followed on from previous sessions that focused on the work of the school secretary, nursery nurses and a police officer. Children's understanding of their place in time is effectively promoted as they explore artefacts, such as toys from the past, and in everyday contexts, such as when celebrating their birthdays. A very good example was seen during the inspection, where the teacher referred to the progress one child had made in the short time he had been in school. This was done by referring to specific incidences of what he could and could not do when he began school compared to what he was able to do now he was five.
69. Within a range of interesting and practical activities, teachers promote early scientific knowledge, for example about materials, alongside key skills of observation and description. For instance, during the inspection, children tested how much water various materials could absorb. Similarly, in a baking session the children's attention was drawn to the changes that occurred to chocolate as it melted and hardened whilst they made 'chocolate crispies'
70. The children's skills in designing their own models, either from commercial construction equipment or recycled materials are very good. They show imagination and ingenuity, which gives them a good basis on which to develop work of this type when they are older. Staff are good at promoting learning of early design and technology skills. For example, they supported

the children in constructing a ladder to save 'Lumpty' from 'falling off the wall', prompting them to consider aspects such as strength and different ways to join materials. Computers are always available for children to use and they are keen to do so. They are developing skills in controlling the mouse to make things happen on the screen.

71. Religious education is taught and children have good opportunities to learn about the different festivals connected to a variety of faiths and beliefs. For example, they have celebrated Chinese New Year and learned about some of the customs related to this. They have also celebrated 'Divali' and created Mendhi patterns, using henna. Collective worship occurs daily. A real air of spirituality is created, with children being required to listen quietly to the music that is played and bow their heads as the prayer is said. The prayers chosen are relevant to the children's stage of development; for example, the prayer at the end of the assembly incorporated the words *'Thank you God for John the Lollipop Man'*.

Physical development

72. Children make good progress in this area because they are taught well by teachers who have good subject knowledge and high expectations. In physical education lessons, children are constantly reminded of the need to use all the hall space and to be careful of others moving around them. They move imaginatively, for example pretending to be underwater creatures. Children have regular opportunities to use large apparatus to develop skills in climbing, balancing and jumping. They learn a variety of ways to travel around the hall and apply these well to move over and through apparatus. Good opportunities also exist for children to use small apparatus such as balls and beanbags, which develop games skills such as throwing, catching and aiming at a target.
73. The children do not have the advantage of a specifically designated outdoor play area that can be used constantly to promote physical skills. However, plans are in place to provide this and staff ensure that children have a varied and balanced programme of activities. For example, the children use the hall to ride bikes and use other large play equipment that supports physical co-ordination. Hand control skills are also well promoted, for instance, in handwriting activities and play with small equipment such as manipulating dough and clay. The wide range of activities provided each day enables children to become more dexterous in using implements such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, and glue spatulas.

Creative development

74. Children's creative skills are being effectively developed within a wide range of interesting experiences. Children engage in a variety of art activities, producing pictures and patterns through painting, printing and collage and using clay to produce three-dimensional work. For instance, all the children have used clay to make very individual representations of faces, using tools to add features such as eyes, noses and create texture for the hair. A wide range of materials is provided for children and they show good independence in selecting what they need. Children's individual pictures and paintings show their good awareness of artistic elements such as shape and form and they make good use of the paper space. However, occasionally, the paper size is rather small, which restricts children's movements and creativity. Skills in mixing paint are developing well, with children showing good awareness of how to create colours, for example, mixing red and blue to make purple.
75. Children have good opportunities to use musical instruments to explore sound. They learn the names of instruments and the different ways in which they can be played. They sing enthusiastically and have learned the words and actions to many songs and rhymes. A very good example was seen in the assembly where children sang tunefully and with gusto three verses of a song about the beauty of colours in the world. Music is frequently played as a background to the children's activities in a number of lessons, which makes them implicitly aware of the power of music to sooth and inspire. Learning in this area is also well promoted in creative dance lessons and in role-play activities where children adopt different personalities.

ENGLISH

76. By ages seven and 11, standards are generally above average. This inspection judgement differs from the results of the national tests taken by seven and 11-year-olds in 2001 because the test data include the results of the large number of pupils with special educational needs and provides a misleading picture of the standards and achievement of the majority. Pupils achieve well and most, including those with special educational needs, have made very good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.
77. Speaking and listening skills are a real strength and are the product of the good opportunities provided by teachers for discussion and drama activities, both in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. Many pupils of all ages talk confidently, answering and asking questions and explaining their work. They also listen carefully to others and make contributions to discussions that take account of others' views. In a Year 1 science lesson, for instance, many pupils offered a range of well thought through reasons for why a magnet would not pick up a spoon such as '*maybe it's because it's wet*' or '*the spoon might be too heavy*'. Teachers promote pupils' use of spoken English well. They are also sensitive in how they respond to pupils' use of language. A good example was seen in a Year 6 class, where in creating a line for a parody on the poem '*If*' by Rudyard Kipling, a pupil used the expression '*threw up*'. After discussion with the teacher, pupils appreciated that the term '*vomited*' was more appropriate. Another example was when Year 6 pupils clearly explained the similarities and differences they noted when comparing two stories for style and content and used the texts well to support their views. One pupil correctly identified that the author had used 'anthropomorphism' and explained this term correctly and concisely, using the story of the *Jungle Book* to support his answer.
78. By age seven, attainment in reading reflects the broad spectrum of ability within Years 1 and 2, but, overall, most seven-year-olds are achieving the expected standards. Whilst there are confident readers in both year groups, a minority are still hesitant. Most make appropriate use of the knowledge they have acquired about letter sounds to help them read unknown words, but some lower attainers continue to struggle applying these skills. Higher and average attainers read accurately, with fluency and expression developing well. They correctly identify common forms of punctuation such as full stops, question, exclamation and speech marks; they know their uses and how to respond to them when reading aloud. Pupils understand the purpose of contents and index pages and can use these to locate stories, poems and information. Pupils have good attitudes to books, but, whilst higher attainers express some preferences in reading material, the range is somewhat narrow and, overall, pupils' knowledge of authors is limited.
79. Most 11-year-olds are competent readers who show a good understanding of texts. Higher and many average attainers are beginning to infer meaning and use information texts successfully to aid research tasks. However, some lower attainers have difficulty skimming and scanning lengthy texts to find specific information. Consequently, in some activities, research tasks were slowed as pupils tried to read all the words once they had located the general information. Pupils have good attitudes to reading and name a range of authors, contrasting their different styles. One pupil said he enjoyed reading because it meant he could become the main character, whilst another said that she did not like books with pictures because she preferred to use her own imagination.
80. Most pupils achieve the expected standards in writing by the time they reach seven and 11. At both key stages, the variety of writing is wide; letters, reports, instructions, poetry and prose all feature in examples of work seen. Some of the creative writing is exceptional, with pupils at 11 using vocabulary and sentence structure very effectively to create tension and interest. The work of higher and average attainers also includes descriptive devices such as simile, metaphor, personification and alliteration successfully. Handwriting is developing well at Key Stage 1 and, by age 11, most pupils' handwriting is joined. However, even in Year 6, a few pupils have difficulty in holding writing tools correctly and this impedes their progress in writing fluently and quickly. By age 11, skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation are satisfactory, overall, although lower attainers still struggle with these elements.

81. Teaching is good, overall. Lesson objectives are clear and, in those lessons judged to be good or better, were shared with pupils and reinforced, both during and at the end of lessons, which gave pupils a good insight into what they were expected to learn and how successful they had been. Teachers are well informed and confident about teaching literacy and their lesson planning is of a consistently high standard. They regularly evaluate how successful their lessons were in terms of how well pupils, including groups and individuals, have learned. This information then influences future lesson plans to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all.

In the best lessons, teachers make good use of a variety of methods, balancing the time allocated for direct teaching to the whole class and that for small group or individual work well. The pace is brisk, which sustains pupils' interest and motivation, as does the good variety in the tasks planned. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were required to listen to a story, read aloud, discuss and then record their understanding in writing and plan and perform in a short drama exercise. The teacher was well supported by a teaching assistant and throughout the lesson all pupils worked without disruption or distraction, concentrating well on their particular task, sometimes without direct supervision. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, the whole class discussion led to paired work in which pupils created their own lines of poetry; a small group worked with the teacher on preparation for a debate on the possibility of a large superstore coming to the area.

82. There is some good and very good teaching of reading, including effective teaching of letter sounds and word-building skills. Examples of effective teaching in this area included a Year 1 lesson in which pupils made good progress in identifying many words that contained the specific sounds being taught, largely because the teacher continuously reinforced the sounds throughout the lesson. Similarly, a small group of Year 3 pupils who were working with a teaching assistant made good progress in recognising vowel sounds. Most teachers make good use of display in their classrooms to support the development of literacy skills. Word banks, and 'washing lines' of common words and phrases help pupils when writing independently. Similarly, in classes where particular aspects of language are being studied, such as story writing, displays include helpful examples of story-starters. Library skills are taught and are satisfactory, overall, but the junior library is not adequately stocked and pupils are not encouraged to use the library during lessons unless they are being taught there in the context of a small withdrawal group. This places some limitations on independent learning. However, improvements to provide greater access are planned. To counteract the current limitations in library provision the school has forged very good links with the local public library and both teachers and pupils benefit considerably from advice and assistance from the librarian.
83. Teachers use resources well, targeting them effectively to pupils' different needs. For example, extension work for higher attainers is different from that provided for the rest of the class and is definitely more challenging. Support staff are well briefed about their roles in lessons and used successfully, especially to give help to lower attainers. Some good use has been made of time in the ICT suite to produce word-processed pieces of writing, supporting drafting skills, but the potential of classroom computers to support literacy skills is not always exploited sufficiently. Teachers make good use of opportunities to promote literacy skills in other subjects.
84. Overall, day-to-day assessment is being used well, with teachers demonstrating skill in modifying their questions to allow pupils of different attainment to answer, thereby providing teachers with useful information on how well pupils are learning. Pupils are enthusiastic and are keen to make progress. Some very good practice was noted in terms of involving pupils in their own learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, in particular, are very aware of their targets for improvement. Marking is good and includes comments that praise pupils as well as advising them about how to improve. The best marking elicits a dialogue between teachers and pupils, involving pupils effectively in the learning process. In some books, there was clear evidence that pupils had responded to marking, with subsequent work showing improvement in relation to the points made by teachers.
85. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. New reading and handwriting schemes have been introduced and the school has provided additional sessions to improve the

content of pupils' writing, which they identified as a priority through analysis of work and test results. These initiatives are proving successful and are supporting improved teaching and learning in literacy. Moreover, extra staffing in Year 6 has created smaller classes and allowed teachers to be more specific in targeting individuals' needs. Booster classes and specific learning programmes such as Additional Literacy Support (ALS) and Early Literacy Support (ELS) are also being used very effectively and improvements in pupils' achievements are being noted as a result.

86. The management of the subject is very good. Although the co-ordinator has not had the role for long she has a clear vision for the future and a thorough approach to the role. She has already been involved in rigorous monitoring and evaluation of colleagues' planning and pupils' work, and has observed teaching. The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, through the many opportunities pupils have to discuss and debate issues, read texts from different cultures and work collaboratively.

MATHEMATICS

87. Inspection evidence shows that by age seven, standards are above average and by age 11, they are average. These findings broadly reflect the test results of seven-year-olds in 2001 and are better than the test results of 11-year-olds in the same year. This is because standards are rising as a result of effective teaching and learning experiences. In particular, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a very positive influence on improving teaching and learning. Younger pupils at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 of Key Stage 2 have been receiving the daily mathematics lesson for longer than those pupils in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, as the impact of the strategy works its way through the school, the inconsistency between the standards being achieved at the end of the two key stages should narrow. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.
88. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are making good use of mental arithmetic strategies. For example, they confidently work with numbers up to 100 and speedily recall a variety of addition and subtraction facts to help them tackle problems. They know that multiplication is repeated addition and, linked to their work on multiplication, pupils recognise many different number patterns and identify missing numbers in given sequences. Pupils' understanding of the mathematical idea of place value is developing well as they work on calculations related to hundreds, tens and units. They name a good number of two and three-dimensional shapes and explain these in terms of their properties. Most pupils have a secure understanding of measure; for example, they use rulers accurately to measure and draw lines to specified lengths.
89. By the end of Year 6, many pupils have gained a range of strategies to manipulate large numbers mentally, working out quite complex calculations in their heads. They have a secure understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. For instance, Year 6 pupils use a variety of strategies to discover the answer to 30 per cent of 75 pounds. Pupils order sets of fractions and recognise when different fractions are equivalent; using this knowledge they are able to reduce a fraction to its simplest term. They handle data well and interpret mathematical graphs, diagrams and charts effectively. Pupils have gained a secure understanding of angles, co-ordinates and know formulae for measuring areas and perimeters of shapes.
90. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. In particular, teaching is now much better at Key Stage 2 where all lessons are taught at least satisfactorily, with good or better teaching in well over half the lessons. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons well, taking account of the range of needs in their classes. In particular, the setting arrangements at Key Stage 2 are proving effective because teachers are able to match work more precisely to pupils' needs. Teachers work hard to provide pupils with interesting and motivating activities. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson the teacher required pupils to perform as a 'mathematical orchestra' demonstrating how they could count forwards and backwards, in multiples of different numbers, from any given number between zero and 100. Pupils really enjoyed the task and responded

enthusiastically to the teacher 'conductor' giving the correct sequence of numbers each time. Teachers identify clear learning objectives in their plans and share these with the pupils, which ensures a strong sense of purpose in lessons. Most lessons are taught at a brisk pace, with teachers promoting mathematical vocabulary well and involving many pupils in answering questions and explaining their work. For instance, Year 1 pupils correctly used words such as 'heavier' and 'lighter' when comparing the mass of everyday objects.

Teachers' good subject knowledge comes through as they use questioning well to drive learning forward and explain how pupils can use various strategies for finding answers. For example, in Year 5, pupils who have to say what fraction must be added to another to make a whole are taught to consider whether the fraction provided is greater or less than a half. Some good use is made of plenary⁷ sessions, with teachers using this part of the lesson to draw together what has been learned, recognise pupils' achievements, and set further challenges or homework.

91. Teachers make good use of classroom support assistants, who make a further effective contribution to teaching and learning, in particular for those pupils with special educational needs. Booster classes and specialised work programmes are provided to promote learning for particular groups of pupils. For instance, some higher attaining Year 6 pupils receive specialist teaching fortnightly by a teacher from a receiving high school. Numeracy skills are developed effectively within subjects other than mathematics for instance, through measuring tasks in design and technology, using co-ordinates in geography, investigating pattern in art and design and when presenting data collected in science. Satisfactory use is made of ICT, with pupils using a range of computer programs to develop their mathematical skills, for example, in data handling.
92. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator regularly evaluates the quality of teaching and examines pupils' work and through this has been able to ensure that there is consistency of approach to teaching and learning throughout the school. The co-ordinator is involved in analysing the results of tests and assessments and this guides the setting of targets for improvement and the action needed to achieve them. There is a good range of quality resources to support teaching and learning, and good use is made of display to stimulate and support learning, for example, by promoting mathematical vocabulary.

SCIENCE

93. Inspection evidence shows that by ages seven and 11, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that are broadly average. This reflects an improved situation to that found by the last inspection. The judgement also differs from the results of the statutory tests and assessments taken by seven and 11-year-olds in 2001, which were, respectively, below and well below average. However, at Key Stage 2, the test results were adversely affected by the inclusion of the results of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Past weaknesses in the provision of learning experiences for investigative and experimental work have also played a part in the lower than average results at both key stages. However, the school had identified this as a key priority for improvement and the impact of the action being taken to address this is evident in pupils' current work.
94. By age seven, pupils have experienced a wide range of science activities, including experimental and investigative work. In relation to their work on electricity, pupils talk confidently about the purpose of batteries, bulbs and switches in circuits. They know, for example, that a bulb will not light if there is a break in the circuit. They are alert to the dangers of electricity. The pupils sort living things into groups, giving reasons for their choices, for example to explain why creatures are birds, mammals or insects. Most pupils know that plants need water, light, air and food to grow and can accurately predict what might happen to a plant if denied any of these.

⁷ The end parts of lessons

95. By age 11, pupils have developed a satisfactory factual knowledge of all areas of science and use scientific vocabulary confidently, especially in Years 5 and 6, to explain their work. For instance, pupils in Year 6 use the words 'transparent', 'translucent', and 'opaque' when describing how light travels through different materials. When conducting experiments, pupils recognise the need to use equipment carefully, make sensible predictions and describe the most important factor in making tests fair. As at Key Stage 1, pupils cover the full range of National Curriculum work for science.

Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them shows for example, that Year 5 pupils are able to name and describe the functions of the major organs of the human body and are aware of the effects of exercise and diet for a healthy lifestyle. Year 4 pupils' knowledge of materials is evident as they sort them into various categories such as solids and liquids then record their results on a pie chart. Indeed, pupils at both key stages, record their work in a variety of ways, including written reports, labelled diagrams, charts and graphs, which, respectively, support the development of skills in literacy and numeracy and ICT.

96. The quality of teaching is good. Planning is detailed and includes good incorporation of experimental and investigative work alongside the development of knowledge in various aspects of science. This aspect has improved and is having a positive impact on raising standards. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which allows them to explain work clearly and ask pertinent questions to assess pupils' understanding. They use a good range of methods and are successful in achieving the right balance between teacher instruction and practical work for pupils. In the best lessons, teachers refer to previous work, encourage pupils to ask questions and to think for themselves. They bring the lesson to an effective conclusion by reinforcing what the pupils have learned. Whilst teachers provide opportunities for pupils to record their work in different ways, some overuse of worksheets was noted at both key stages. Good use is made of classroom support staff, particularly to help pupils with special educational needs.
97. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership of the subject. Comparisons made between the national and school's trend in results has highlighted the need to focus on developing experimental and investigative work and this features as a key priority in the school's improvement plan.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Pupils make very good progress in art and design and, by the ages of seven and 11, standards are well above average. It was possible to see only two lessons during the inspection. Therefore, judgements are supported by analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them and the subject co-ordinator.
99. From Year 1 onwards, sketchbooks are used effectively to support the development of skills, for example, of observational drawing and pattern making. Observational drawing and the use of media, such as chalk, oil pastels and paint, feature in every pupil's experience at school. There is an impressive range of art and design featured in the school's displays that would grace any art gallery.
100. Throughout the school, pupils experience a very comprehensive range of art and design experiences that build progressively on earlier learning. These include work on textiles, ceramics and other three-dimensional work. Indeed, ceramic work provides a permanent record of the school's activities to celebrate the millennium. Working with a visiting ceramicist, each year group produced a very good quality display of ceramic wall tiles. These are well designed and show very good progress in the development of colour, pattern and tone.
101. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to explore the use of paint and other media. One example is a display of Year 1 pupils' work in the style of Jackson Pollock. Pupils worked collaboratively to produce large 'action paintings' that demonstrate their understanding of his work and how he went about producing it. Pupils develop good brushwork skills and are confident users of a wide range of media, such as clay, pastels, print and collage. By age 11, pupils have

studied a range of famous artists and can identify many of their works, giving opinions for their favourites. They develop very good skills of evaluation, both for the work of known artists and designers and of other pupils at the school. One evaluation reads, *'I like (name of child) piece in the style of Delaunay because I think that she has used oil pastels and the smudging method really effectively.'* Very good examples of sculpture, using wire and the modelling material *Modrock*, were on display, as were examples of pupils' use of tie-dye techniques with textiles.

102. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and promote pupils' learning very well. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils demonstrated observational drawing skills of a high standard, using shading techniques very well to emphasise perspective. They have good knowledge of the work of Georges Seurat and of the pointillism technique he used. The teacher provided good opportunities for pupils to use the 'viewfinder' technique to explore composition before beginning their own paintings. Pupils skilfully mixed paint to match, quite accurately, the colours used by the artists they were studying. In Year 6, the teacher's good use of resources, such as fabrics and photographs in the initial introduction to the class, together with the information pupils had found out through homework, really set the scene for some high quality designs by pupils in the style of William Morris. In both lessons, teaching and learning progressed at a good pace. The teachers provided constant interaction with groups and individuals, which kept pupils focused on learning. The use of ICT in art and design is less well represented at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator is aware of this and plans to extend the use of the computer assisted design software that has recently been acquired.
103. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved, as has the leadership of the subject, which is now of a very high standard. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and has provided teachers with a useful structure and guidance to teach the curriculum. The monitoring of pupils' work is conducted regularly through analysis of displays and completed work. The subject is well planned and higher attainers and those identified as particularly talented are challenged very effectively to attain even higher standards.
104. The after-school art club has a very good impact on standards and learning. Here pupils follow specific projects. For instance, during the inspection, pupils were studying Malaysian art, which is being linked to the forthcoming Commonwealth Games. This is but one of the many very strong links made with exploring the art of various cultures. Pupils also study art from different times and traditions, which, again, supports their cultural development. One example of the school's commitment to ensuring that pupils have access to high quality creative arts provision has been its successful bid for 'Arts for All' funding to support plans for an Arts Festival in July 2002. This will include poetry, drama, music, theatre and storytelling as well as opportunities for pupils to engage in art, craft and design activities, including working with professional artists. Visits, such as to the nearby Tate Gallery, also enrich pupils' experiences.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. During the inspection, it was possible to see only two lessons because of the arrangement of the school timetable. Consequently, judgements are also based on examination of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff. By ages seven and 11, standards are above average. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection. In particular, pupils' knowledge and understanding of structures and mechanisms is now much better because learning experiences and the quality of teaching in these areas, and others, have improved.
106. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. This is because all are included in the provision of challenging learning experiences that incorporate the entire design, make and evaluate process. Before making a product, pupils decide what it is going to be used for and then draw a design to determine how they want it to look. They then select suitable materials with which to make it and when the model is completed they evaluate its suitability. For example, in Year 2, pupils made puppets in the form of characters in traditional tales. After deciding upon their chosen puppet character, pupils used their sketchbooks to plan a design, labelling the different parts and materials they wished to use. They made decisions about how they would make and attach the head and what material they would use for the hair. Pupils

practised simple stitching techniques for joining materials and finally evaluated their finished puppets in terms of their appearance and whether or not they were durable and suitable for the intended purpose, which was to use them in the class puppet theatre. This work linked well with that being covered in literacy and supported pupils' speaking skills. Year 1 pupils making flapjacks were aware of the importance of washing their hands before beginning work. Pupils were taught how to design a recipe, selecting appropriate ingredients. They were involved at all stages in mixing the ingredients and putting the mixture into the baking trays. The finished product was evaluated by pupils tasting the cakes, which were deemed to be delicious and, therefore, a success.

107. Year 6 pupils, investigating mechanisms, made thoughtful designs of vehicles that showed how they would be propelled by an electric motor fixed by a pulley to a back wheel. The making task was stimulating and very challenging and pupils evaluated the effectiveness of the finished vehicles well. Good learning experiences are evident throughout the key stage. For example, Year 5 pupils were investigating how to strengthen the joints of structures by fixing a cardboard triangle to the struts; these were then used to support the up and down movement of model boats through a series of cranks and cams on a model sea. Year 4 pupils disassembled pop-up books to determine how levers and pivots worked before making their own books, whilst in Year 3, pupils investigated how to make a photograph frame stand up.
108. Teaching is good. The points for improvement made in the last report relating to providing work that is less prescriptive, overall, and more challenging for higher attainers have been successfully addressed and can be seen in pupils' unique, and often complex, models. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective planning ensure that pupils make good gains in learning. Good classroom organisation and provision of resources, including good use of well-qualified support staff, mean that practical lessons run smoothly, with no time wasted. The warm relationships fostered by teachers and support staff have a positive impact on pupils' good attitudes to the subject and provide added support for learning.
109. Management of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, provides advice for colleagues and checks on pupils' standards by examining their work. Resources are of good quality and the school benefits from having a specially equipped room to teach food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

110. By ages seven and 11, standards are broadly average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This reflects a similar picture to that found by the last inspection. The pupils are taught geographical skills as well as knowledge and become familiar with maps, although the range of maps seen in use was limited.
111. In Year 1, pupils investigate their immediate locality, observing features such as street furniture and different types of houses. They conduct simple surveys, for instance in their work on 'Making the Area Safe' they collect information about the number of cars using the area. Pupils draw simple maps of their route to school and include some of the main features that they pass. The study of the locality continues in Year 2, with pupils comparing this with the fictitious island of Struay. Pupils investigate a map of the island and locate some of the key places mentioned in the story. Pupils also visit the seaside to make comparisons with their own environment. Whilst pupils' maps skills are satisfactory, overall, this element could usefully be given a higher profile, so that pupils have more experience of investigating simple maps and plans of the area near the school.
112. Year 6 pupils have gained a satisfactory knowledge of rivers. For instance they know the term 'flood plain' and understand that because of its flatness it is an easy place on which to build, but at the same time appreciated that this is often an environment for wildlife. Against this background, pupils planned a debate between builders and local people to decide whether house building should be allowed on a flood plain. As well as giving pupils a good insight into human geography, this work was very effective in promoting speaking skills. In discussing geography

with a group of the oldest pupils it is evident that they have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject. They know about famous rivers like the Nile and the Mississippi and of their importance to the countries through which they flow. They talk about the environment and how it is in danger through abuse from humans, but also of how humans can help to safeguard it. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the European Union and are able to correctly identify France, Paris, Spain and Portugal, but not Germany or the English Channel. Year 5 pupils compare Waterloo with Keswick and use road maps to plot the route between the two places. Whilst pupils' map skills improved by completing this activity, use of maps with different scales would have widened their experience. Year 3 pupils, studying the effects of the weather, placed familiar symbols onto a world map and began to realise that the arrangement of the symbols showed the weather patterns of the regions.

113. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and some is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan interesting activities that motivate pupils and ensure they concentrate well. Lessons are taught at a good pace, which also ensures pupils' interest and good behaviour. Classroom support staff are used effectively, particularly to help lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. As well as giving the pupils a sound range of geographical knowledge, teachers ensure that pupils acquire geographical skills through making surveys and using maps, although a more diverse range of maps would improve these skills even further. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning, for instance, when pupils download street maps. However, there was little evidence of pupils using data handling or word processing to present their findings.
114. The management of the subject is good. A comprehensive scheme of work has been introduced and there is an overall plan so that the teachers know what to teach and when. At the end of each topic, results are assessed and strengths and weaknesses are recorded to guide future planning. There are attractive displays of geography topics such as the weather and these contribute to the learning atmosphere in the school. Geography makes a worthwhile contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, for example, when discussing moral issues and when investigating the lifestyles of people from different countries.

HISTORY

115. Due to the arrangement of the timetable it was possible to observe only two lessons and, therefore, judgements are also based on the examination of pupils' work and the discussions with them and staff. By ages seven and 11, standards are above average. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection.
116. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, because key historical skills are developed effectively alongside historical knowledge. For example, enquiry skills are developed as pupils use various sources of evidence to ask questions and find out about people and events in the past. In one Year 2 class, pupils were studying The Great Fire of London and searched for evidence by looking at prints of paintings of the time to see how graphically the fire was depicted. The pupils' awareness of timescales was evident when they explained that it was not possible to obtain photographs of the event because the camera had not been invented. Similarly, skills of empathy were promoted well when, after a discussion following a reading of an account of the fire, as depicted in the diary of Samuel Peppeys, pupils expressed their views about what they would have done had they been involved in the fire. One pupil suggested she would find her parents and run away, whilst another thought of escaping on a boat via the river. To consolidate their knowledge and ideas, pupils then wrote their own diary extracts, which also supported skills in literacy.
117. Good progress continues at Key Stage 2 where, for example, Year 6 pupils' in-depth study of Britain since 1930 has included a focus on the dramatic events of the Second World War. Pupils' understanding of the impact of rationing is enhanced as they measure the actual amounts of tea, sugar and other foods that were allocated to each person during the war and compare these with the amount of food that people eat today. Pupils research evidence about air-raid shelters and write accounts about how uncomfortable it would be to sleep in a damp shelter in the garden or

to spend time in the local community shelter. Skills of empathy are effectively developed as pupils learned about how city children were evacuated during the war. The poignant letters written from the perspective of an evacuee to their parents show the intensity of pupils' understanding. After discussing history with a group of Year 6 pupils, it was clear that they have good knowledge of the different sources of evidence from which to find out about the past. For instance, they suggested photographs, books, newsreels, film footage, actual objects and talking to older people about their real-life experiences. The pupils were also able to explain how the past impacts on our lives today, quoting the Olympic Games as an example. They have good knowledge of various periods in history such as life in Tudor times and in ancient civilisations such as that of the Greeks and Egyptians.

118. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use creatively to set interesting activities that bring history alive. A good example was seen in Year 4, where, after watching a film about how monks used their writing skills to produce holy books, the teacher provided quill pens to pupils to use in a writing task. The task helped pupils to appreciate the skills of the monks in producing work of such high quality with writing implements that are not easy to use when compared to the pens of today. Good use is made of support staff, especially to help pupils with special educational needs. Teaching and learning are also enhanced by the good range of visits that are made to historical places of interest. These include visits to the Walker Art Gallery to look at Tudor clothes and artefacts; the Liverpool Museum to look at an Egyptian exhibition; and visit to Chester linked to the study of the Romans. Experiences such as these give pupils opportunities to observe and handle artefacts and get a real feel for history. Historical artefacts are also borrowed to support pupils' learning. For example, over a two-week period, Year 2 played with a borrowed selection of Victorian toys and compared them with their own toys, which they brought to school.
119. The subject is managed well, with teachers' plans and pupils' work being regularly checked to ensure that learning for all is progressing well and the standards being achieved are sufficiently high. There is a wide range of attractive and up-to-date books to support teaching and learning and classrooms and corridors boast very good quality displays to stimulate pupils and celebrate their work. History makes a particularly valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 1 and, by age seven, standards are above average. By age 11, standards are average, overall, but the unreliability of the school's current Internet provision means that experiences, using the Internet and e-mail, are limited. The disparity between standards of seven and 11-year-olds does not indicate slower progress at Key Stage 2, merely that the impact of the new scheme of work has not yet worked its way through the school.
121. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection and this reflects the great deal of work that has gone into improving this subject. Standards have risen and the quality of teaching and learning is much better, with most pupils making very good progress; this includes those pupils with special educational needs. There has been significant investment in ICT and the suite now allows all pupils to experience a designated weekly lesson, which has done much to support the raising of standards.
122. By age seven, pupils log on and off the computers, load programs from the network and search to find specific information. For example, Year 1 pupils successfully use CD-ROM to find out about musical instruments. Pupils have growing confidence in using ICT, both within the suite and in their classroom, for example where they use recorded tapes and headphones to listen to stories. In Year 2, pupils design and make simple flow charts and use a word processor to write instructions. They navigate through a CD-ROM dictionary, making use of different menus, hyperlinks and the 'back-page' facility. Pupils make effective use of a clip art program to design

pictures to produce attractive book covers for their ICT books. They understand that computers can store a great deal of information and talk about its uses both at home and at school. They are aware of real-life applications of ICT and of how their environment is affected it. For instance, they talk knowledgeably about the use of video recorders, televisions, washing machines and microwaves.

123. During Key Stage 2, pupils build well on earlier skills. They use computers confidently and have well developed keyboard skills to support them in writing tasks. They have gained appropriate skills in using word processing facilities to manipulate text; for example they use drop-down menus and tool bar buttons to alter the shape, size and colour of text and to move it around the page. Pupils save, retrieve and print their work. Word processing skills have also been supported well through pupils' production of a school newspaper. Pupils understand how to access information from CD-ROM encyclopaedia and can transfer this into a word processing program for inclusion in a report. They do this very effectively and produce reports of a high standard.

For instance, Year 5 pupils used the 'Encarta' encyclopaedia to find out information about the heart for their science lesson. They used the 'multi-tasking' process very well to combine pictures and text from the CD-ROM into their own documents.

124. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils worked on a control technology program providing instructions to plot the movement of a screen spider. Some good links were made with mathematics as pupils estimated angles, but the work was at a level below that expected in Year 6. However, by the time the pupils leave school they are expected to attain the required standards, because they will have experienced considerably more work in this area, for example, writing a series of instructions to control traffic lights. Moreover, pupils will be taking part in an ICT-based residential visit in the summer term where control technology will be a major element. Pupils will also revise the use of sensors for light and sound and will have sustained experience accessing the Internet. In discussions, Year 6 pupils were able to demonstrate their knowledge of the use of spreadsheets when drawing up budget information, using mathematical formulae.

125. Throughout the school, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often good. Most teachers are confident users of ICT, which is an improved situation from the last inspection. All teachers have spent time on improving their own subject knowledge, mainly through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) scheme. The impact of this commitment is clearly evident in the improved standards attained by the pupils. Teachers set pupils challenging work in interesting contexts, which makes them keen to learn. In Year 2, for example, a teacher used the newly acquired interactive whiteboard to demonstrate how to design a flowchart and incorporate text. This resulted in a lesson where key skills were promoted very effectively and pupils were kept busy responding to the demanding task. The pace of learning was very good. Another strong feature of teaching is the promotion of correct technical vocabulary. There are some instances where teachers miss opportunities to use classroom computers to support work in other subjects, such as literacy.

126. There is a good policy and scheme of work for ICT. The school has invested heavily in providing a good range of computers and other equipment, which ensures that the subject is well resourced. Funding available through the National Grid for Learning scheme has been used effectively. The provision of the ICT suite has been a major factor in bringing about improvements and the subject has a much higher status than at the last inspection. There are computers in all classrooms for pupils to use in other subjects and provision is made to support pupils with special educational needs by, for example, providing an alternative control for a pupil whose lack of physical control means he cannot use a conventional keyboard or mouse. There is an effective policy to ensure that pupils are protected from offensive materials on the Internet, with pupils and their parents being asked to sign an undertaking to follow the school's guidelines.

127. Despite the progress that has been made, there are weaknesses in the way the subject is led and managed. The co-ordinator has not monitored standards, teaching and learning and is insufficiently informed about these aspects and some areas of provision. Similarly, there is no

consistent plan for assessment. However, the school has identified these aspects as areas for improvement in the school development plan and some monitoring of standards and learning has been undertaken by the headteacher.

MUSIC

128. By ages seven and 11, standards are above average. This reflects a similar picture to the last inspection. Improvement has been made, however, to the quality of teaching and learning, which was found to be variable in 1997. All teaching is now at least satisfactory; for many pupils achievement is good and it is never less than satisfactory; this includes pupils with special educational needs.

129. By age seven, pupils are confident to use musical instruments to create their own accompaniments to singing. They maintain a beat when clapping to music and show good awareness of the pulse and rhythm in songs as they tap their knees or snap their fingers in time.

They are conscious of each other as performers, for example, by timing singing or playing to take account of the contributions of others. Pupils are developing a good technical vocabulary to talk about music. For instance, most correctly remember the names of many instruments, including those from various cultures such as the Guiro and the Agogo. During Years 1 and 2 pupils have good opportunities to sing a wide range of songs and have learned how to perform a song in two parts. They perform correctly, singing in time and at the correct pitch.

130. Whilst it was possible to see only one Year 6 lesson, a strong feature of provision that makes a significant contribution to the above average standards being achieved by age 11 is the additional activities available to pupils through extra-curricular clubs and specialist teaching. For example, pupils can become involved in choir and orchestra, both of which are well attended. Pupils are also able to choose to learn to play a musical instrument, making choices from a wide range such as the flute, guitar, recorder, tenor horn, trumpet, saxophone, woodwind and percussion. By age 11, pupils' singing is of good quality. They respond well to teaching, improving aspects such as pitch, diction, expression and dynamics. During the inspection, Calypso music sung by the choir was performed energetically, with life and vitality. The orchestra is very good and a significant number of pupils are involved. Teaching in both the orchestra and choir is of a very high standard and provides pupils with very good levels of challenge to which they rise and produce performances of high quality that are exciting and moving.

131. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and is often good or better. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and maintain a brisk pace, which keeps pupils attentive. Some particularly effective teaching was seen in Year 4 where pupils were given good opportunities to use instruments creatively to provide sound effects for a poem and gained a good appreciation of how music can be used to create moods and images. Similarly, in Year 3, good teaching helped pupils identify and create different rhythm patterns and record these, using symbols. Whilst much of the teaching is good or better, weaknesses in lessons that are satisfactory, overall, relate to a lack of pace. However, all lessons are carefully and clearly planned and cover the progressive development of musical skills, performance and the theory and practice of music. For example, teachers use musical terminology correctly and give clear explanations, for instance that *piano* and *forte* are the musical terms for 'soft' and 'loud'. Classroom management is firm and expectations are generally high, especially when teachers have musical expertise and thus feel confident and secure teaching the subject. Nevertheless, all staff show enthusiasm and this is effectively conveyed to pupils, which supports their good attitudes to the subject. Classroom teaching assistants are also keen to be involved and are active participants in lessons and in the choir.

132. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has significant expertise and has already identified areas for development, including more use of ICT to support learning. Music lessons and activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils are also encouraged to share their skills with the rest of the school. For example, on the first day of the inspection one pupil played the tenor horn in assembly and performed very well.

Pupils who are particularly gifted or talented are identified and specific learning experiences are planned to challenge them and enrich their learning. The school is very active in performing, for example at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, and provides an interesting range of musical experiences for pupils, such as listening to the Merseyside Police Band. Music lessons and activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. It was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education programme during the inspection. Inclement weather forced the cancellation of outdoor games lessons and no swimming lessons took place on the days of inspection. By ages seven and 11, standards in gymnastics are at least average and in dance they are above. However, standards in swimming are below average, with too many 11-year-olds being unable to swim the required 25 metres. This is because the school is experiencing significant problems acquiring sufficient access to the local swimming baths.
134. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. They work enthusiastically, making good use of the hall space and showing awareness of others, particularly in respect of working safely. Pupils are aware of the need to warm up before exercise and understand that their hearts beat faster when they are active; they know that exercise is vital to a healthy lifestyle. Pupils can build a continuous sequence of movements showing contrasts, such as curled and stretched shapes, and they creatively practise travelling on different parts of their bodies at different speeds and levels. In dance, they work hard, showing control over their movements and responding creatively to music. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson based on the Fire of London, pupils worked co-operatively in small groups to depict the flames of the fire moving through buildings.
135. At Key Stage 2, the good progress is maintained. Pupils' work in gymnastics shows further development. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils practised producing different symmetrical and asymmetrical balances, using large body parts. They then worked in pairs and small groups, combining these to create a sequence, which they later transferred onto large apparatus. The teacher provided good opportunities for pupils to evaluate and discuss each other's performances and suggest ways of improving. One girl commented *'I like the way she moved, it was really graceful.'* In dance, pupils' attainment is above average. In Year 6, pupils work very well together to produce exciting 'Ghost Dances' in response to a musical stimulus. They work hard and achieve movement sequences that show, precision control, fluency and creativity. Throughout the school, pupils behave very well in lessons and have very good attitudes to the subject. They show respect for others' efforts and respond sensitively when evaluating. Often, there is spontaneous applause from the class as they watch their friends perform.
136. Teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. Tasks are challenging, but suitably matched to pupils' needs. There is a good balance between the time allocated to teacher explanation and pupil activity and demonstration. The lessons observed were taught at a good pace, which ensured that pupils were kept involved and motivated. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate and refine their work, which leads to improved performance. Teachers dress appropriately for lessons, acting as good role models for pupils.
137. There is a very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. These include dance, netball, football, hockey, rounders, cricket, cross-country running and gymnastics. These popular clubs have a good impact on the standards attained by pupils and some offer opportunities to interact with pupils from other schools. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and progress at the same rate as their classmates.
138. Leadership is effective. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the role and has developed a sound scheme of work that ensures pupils' skills are developed progressively as they get older. Regular opportunities are made available for teachers to improve and extend their subject knowledge through courses and contacts with the neighbouring Specialist Sports College. This is having a positive impact on the standards attained by the children. Assessment during

lessons is mostly informal, with teachers identifying how well pupils are learning and responding to them as necessary. The co-ordinator is currently working on a formal system for recording individuals' attainment and tracking progress. However, pupils who are particularly gifted or talented have been identified and some specialist provision has been acquired to ensure that these pupils are challenged and supported in making the progress of which they are capable.

139. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils' evaluating skills have improved and they are much more aware of health issues. The quality of resources has improved and is now very good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. By ages seven and 11, all pupils have made satisfactory progress. Most achieve standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The previous inspection highlighted that the teaching of faiths other than Christianity was an area that needed developing; this has now been successfully addressed. At both key stages, pupils learn about Christianity and other major world religions, including Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism and, in Year 6, Sikhism. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and behave very well in lessons.
141. By age seven, pupils discuss aspects of Judaism. For instance, they know about the Shabbat and the special clothing worn by men of the Jewish faith. They know that people from the Jewish faith worship in a Synagogue. Pupils are developing an understanding of how different faiths celebrate special occasions and can talk simply about the festivals of Hannukah and Divali as well as Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. Year 3 pupils have good knowledge of Christianity and are able to recall many facts associated with the life of Jesus. They recall some of the parables told by Jesus and have gained a good understanding of the Easter story, explaining, for example, how Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. Year 4 pupils have developed an understanding of the significance of baptism in Christianity. By age 11, pupils confidently recall the work they have recently studied on Islam. They know, for example, that Muhammad was the founder of the religion, that Mecca and Jerusalem are the holy sites and that the Qur'an is the Holy Scripture.
142. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and much is good. Teachers work hard at planning interesting lessons and use different methods, such as role-play, to maintain pupils' attention and enthusiasm. In one such lesson for Year 3 pupils, the teacher became a member of the crowd on Palm Sunday and pupils were required to ask *'Josiah'* questions about his experiences on that day. This method was successful in that it provided pupils with knowledge about the events of Palm Sunday in a lively and novel way, encouraging them to reflect upon and extend their learning. In another Year 3 lesson, pupils had constructed a storyboard to support their own involvement in acting out the events of Palm Sunday; this, too, was successful in making the content of work accessible to pupils and the preparation activity also promoted literacy skills very well.
143. A particularly effective element of teaching is the very good opportunities for discussion and for pupils to ask questions, which also supports skills in speaking and listening. For example, after studying the idea of creation, one infant child asked, *'Who made God?'* In another, a junior pupil asked, *'Why do we have to learn about religions we don't believe in?'* And during a Year 3 lesson about Palm Sunday one pupil wanted to know why the crowd, who had liked Jesus so much in the past, did not stop the 'Leaders' from killing him. The answers teachers give are sensitive and honest. For example, in answering the question about why it is important to study different religions, the teacher explained that it helps pupils to understand others and appreciate why their beliefs and traditions may be different from pupils' own experiences. Other examples of teachers' good use of discussion were seen in Year 4 where teachers talked about their own baptismal

experiences. They answered pupils' questions and, without imposing their own beliefs, explained why baptism had been important to them and their parents. Teachers' anecdotes, together with the photographs and baptismal certificates they showed to pupils, brought the content alive and enhanced learning. Moreover, this method encouraged pupils to share their experiences and prompted them to bring in their own baptismal artefacts such as christening presents and robes and a video recording of one child's baptism.

144. Whilst there is some good exploitation of opportunities to promote literacy skills and independent thinking, in some classes worksheets are overused, which limits progress in both aspects. Moreover, all pupils often have the same worksheets, which sometimes put a ceiling on what higher attainers can record, given the perceptive understanding they show in discussions. Weaknesses in lessons that were satisfactory, overall, relate to some limitations in teachers' subject knowledge, which reduced the depth in which they were able to respond to pupils' often very demanding questions. Some good use of homework was noted in a few classes, with pupils completing extended pieces of writing about what they had learned.
145. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The recently appointed co-ordinator expects some significant changes to result from the imminent subject review, such as the elimination of some current repetition of topics in different year groups. The review will also include work on improving assessment in the subject. To this end, the co-ordinator is currently collating examples of work that show the different levels of achievement required by the syllabus.