

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **DOVECOT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Dovecot, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 130296

Headteacher: Mrs G Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr B G Bowen  
21066

Dates of inspection: 8 - 11 October 2001

Inspection number: 196393

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant and Junior
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grant Road Dovecot Liverpool
Postcode:	L14 0LH
Telephone number:	0151 220 8680
Fax number:	0151 228 4768
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J. Holmes
Date of previous inspection:	8th - 9th November 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21066	Mr B G Bowen	Registered inspector	Music Physical education Religious education	What sort of school is it?  How high are standards?  How much has the school improved since the last inspection?
9970	Mr J Acaster	Lay inspector		How high are standards; pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development?  How does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work with parents?
1951	Ms Y Crizzle	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
2270	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	English Geography History The Foundation Stage	How well are the pupils' taught?
22482	Mr B Potter	Team inspector	Provision for Special educational needs  Equal opportunities Mathematics Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
 <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
 <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the Dovecot district of Liverpool city, an area of mixed housing close to the border with Knowsley. It has significant social deprivation and well over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are seven classes catering for 185 pupils aged four to 11 years old, along with a Nursery which has 49 children on a full or part time basis. Their attainments are below average when they enter the school. Sixty-eight per cent of pupils are entered on the school's register of special educational needs, as a result of their learning or behavioural difficulties. This is very high when compared to the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is above the average for primary schools. Almost all pupils are white and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

In July 1997, following an inspection of the school, it was placed in the category of 'special measures' as it was failing to provide an acceptable quality of education. Subsequently, the numbers of pupils in school fell, and many of those remaining had poor attainments. However, a further inspection in November 1999 by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools found that the school had made sufficient progress for it no longer to require special measures. The school is part of the 'Excite' Mini Education Action Zone (EAZ) where a group of local schools are given extra funding in areas where low performance has been identified over a number of years. It has also recently become part of a Private Funding Initiative (PFI) in which a private organisation has taken responsibility for many aspects of support services, for example the maintenance and school meals services. The project also includes a new school building which is due to begin shortly.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of all-round education for its pupils. Standards have been rising in the main subjects from a very low level four years ago, but they remain below the national averages for pupils aged 11, and they should be higher. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all classes and around four lessons in ten are judged to be good or better. The school successfully includes all pupils in a wide range of activities and works well with parents. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has promoted teamwork and commitment from all the staff. In this, she is supported by members of an active and determined governing body. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support.
- There is good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- All staff work very hard to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils.
- The headteacher has set up good management systems, helping to move the school forward.

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

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills, and their standards of presentation, are poor.
- Although improving, the low levels of attendance are a drawback to learning for some pupils.
- Some lessons lack pace, pupils are not always told clearly enough what is expected of them and, on occasions, teachers have low expectations of the quality of their completed work.
- In art and design, design and technology, music and physical education the planned curriculum is not covered in sufficient depth and standards have declined as a result.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in July 1999. The many areas of improvement identified then have been continued and there is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in the school. The headteacher has shown good determination in building a management structure based on delegation and teamwork. Members of the governing body have become more active and involved in all areas of the school's work. The quality of teaching in all classes has been monitored, leading to a greater proportion of good teaching. Despite very good efforts to promote attendance, this remains low with about one pupil in every ten being absent from school on most days. In information and communication technology (ICT), the school has worked well to improve its facilities and standards have risen to be around the national expectation for pupils aged 11.

## 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				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	E*	E	C	
Science	D	E*	D	A	

*E\* means that pupils' attainments have been very low; within the bottom five per cent of schools nationally.*

The test results for 11 year old pupils in 2001 show significant rises in mathematics and science, although they have stayed at about the same level for English. When compared to similar schools, pupils attained average standards in English and mathematics, and they were well above average in science. From a very low base four years ago, overall standards have been rising at a faster rate than that seen nationally. (The higher figures for 1999 were the outcome of a very able class moving through the school. In 1997 test results were very low; generally E\*.) Pupils taking the national tests at the age of seven in 2001 reached overall standards that were below the national average, but which were above the average found in similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, mainly as a result of the good level of support they receive.

The majority of pupils in the school have below average skills in speaking and listening. In all subjects, their standards of presentation are poor. These, together with low levels of attendance, are major factors in the low standards achieved by older pupils. More able pupils work satisfactorily, although on occasions, they do not complete their written tasks and this inhibits their progress to higher levels. The school has begun a programme of activities designed to extend the experiences and skills of gifted pupils. The school has set challenging targets for improvements in test results, and has been close to meeting them over the last two years. Although there is room for further improvements in overall standards, currently pupils in school are achieving satisfactorily when account is taken of their previous learning.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Generally satisfactory; most pupils are keen to learn but some easily lose commitment to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; most pupils stick to the expected standards of behaviour. On occasions, some pupils behave in an immature manner.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; most pupils are open, friendly and polite. They co-operate with one another well in the classroom.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory; although improving, attendance is well below average. Some pupils regularly arrive at school after the start of lessons.

The improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour noted in the last inspection report has been maintained, with most pupils responding well to the school's expected codes of behaviour. There are some pupils whose level of maturity is low and they find it difficult to get on with their work and this has a detrimental effect on those around them. However, the school has worked well towards eliminating bullying and pupils feel secure and respected in school. Although the school is working very well to promote improvements, low levels of attendance mean that some pupils regularly miss out on important stages in learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*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.*

During the inspection, about four lessons in ten were judged to contain good or very good teaching with a good pace with varied and interesting activities. In other lessons, although satisfactory overall, teachers showed low expectations of pupils' work and their classroom organisation made it difficult for them to see whether the pupils had understood or completed their tasks. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching art and design, and design and technology. However, all teachers plan well and have effective methods of demonstrating skills. The school has implemented satisfactorily the recent strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Teachers plan a range of activities which are designed to include the spread of abilities within the class.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; in the nursery and reception classes a good range of learning opportunities is provided. Elsewhere, although most subjects are covered appropriately, pupils do not complete enough work in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; the pupils are well supported in class by learning assistants and the special needs co-ordinator carefully assesses their needs and progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; the school has worked hard to provide opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of themselves and their responsibilities towards others. A good range of out of school visits and of interesting visitors into school has helped them towards an understanding of the variety of beliefs and lifestyles in the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; a concern for the safety and welfare of the child is evident throughout all school activities.

The school works well with parents and enjoys their strong support. Parents are welcome in school, and there is good provision for them to talk to teachers about their children's progress. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities. Of particular note, are the daily breakfast club, and the weekly youth club which is organised by both parents and teachers and is very popular with the pupils. The school provides a good programme for pupils' personal, social and health education. It has good procedures for eliminating bullying and for promoting good behaviour. In the main subjects, good procedures have been set in place for assessing pupils' progress and identifying their future learning needs.

### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher has been successful in creating a school where all staff work as a team. Management responsibilities are clearly identified and monitored.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; members of the governing body carry out their responsibilities well and have become involved in many aspects of school life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; the school has taken very good action to meet its targets for pupils to improve. The teachers are given good support in gaining new skills, and they are given satisfactory appraisal of their work in the classroom.
The strategic use of resources	Good; financial planning is clear and related to the priorities of the comprehensive school improvement plan.

Since her appointment, the headteacher has provided strong leadership. She has been successful in lifting the morale of the staff and improving the quality of teaching. She has set up a management structure which gives appropriate responsibility to subject co-ordinators. Members of the governing body are very active; they are supportive of the school and understand their roles in helping to move the school forward constructively.

The school has a generally good range of learning resources. The staff are appropriately qualified and show a good balance of experience and enthusiasm. The present accommodation is old, but will be replaced with a more suitable building in the course of the current school year. The PFI has brought a number of benefits to the school, allowing the management to concentrate on educational matters. The EAZ has helped to fund a number of projects such as the breakfast club and a technician for the computers in school. A learning mentor has been appointed using the Excellence in Cities fund. These initiatives are helping to raise standards, but it is too soon to see them reflected in test results.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like coming to school and they make good progress.</li><li>• Teaching is good with high expectations of hard work.</li><li>• Parents are welcome in school and complaints are dealt with properly.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information about their children's progress.</li><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

Inspectors generally agree with the positive views of parents, although in some lessons, the teachers have insufficiently high expectations of the quality and amount of work that the pupils should complete. The school provides many opportunities for parents to find out how their children are progressing, including holding three open evenings a year. The end of year reports, however, do not give sufficient practical guidance to parents about how they can help their child to progress. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons, including residential visits for Year 1 and Year 5 pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 In Year 2000, the tests for pupils aged 11 showed that standards were well below average in English compared to the national average, but around the average for pupils from similar schools. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainments were very low and among the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. They were also well below the average attainment found in similar schools. In the end of year National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics, although well below the national averages, were more in line with those found in similar schools. Although from a very low base, standards over the past four years have been rising at a higher rate than the improvement seen nationally.
- 2 In the 2001 tests, which is the first year when measures introduced by the new headteacher could have been expected to have had an effect on standards, attainment was significantly higher in most areas. In the tests for seven year olds, 82 per cent of pupils reached the national expectations for reading and writing. This was an improvement of six per cent over the previous year. In mathematics, however, 76 per cent of pupils achieved the basic expectation which represented a fall of five per cent from the previous year. These results remained below the national average, but they were above the average for similar schools. There was further improvement in the 2001 test results for pupils aged 11 in mathematics and science. In mathematics, 55 per cent of pupils reached the national expectation, compared to 43 per cent last year, and in science, this level was achieved by 88 per cent, compared to 67 per cent. Attainment in English remained around the same with 61 per cent achieving the expected level. Overall attainment in both English and mathematics remained well below the national averages, although the performance in science was higher, being only slightly below the average. In comparison with pupils from similar schools, standards were around the average for English and mathematics, but were well above average in science. In this year's tests, there was also a general increase in the proportion of pupils achieving higher than the expected levels of attainment.
- 3 For both Infants and Juniors,<sup>1</sup> these figures represent a major step forward over the past four years. In mathematics, for example, the figure of 55 per cent achieving the expected level for pupils aged 11 should be compared with that of 28 per cent in 1998. Although standards are not consistently as high as they should be, there is ample evidence from the school's assessment procedures that most pupils leaving the school in July 2001 had made more than the expected gains in learning compared to their achievements in the tests taken four years earlier.
- 4 In the lessons seen during the course of the inspection, standards of work in most subjects were judged to remain below the national expectations, with the exception of religious education and ICT throughout the school, and of science and music for the infant pupils, where they were judged to be meeting the expectation. For 11 year old pupils, standards in art and design and design technology, are well below expectations. In these two subjects, and in music and physical education, standards

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<sup>1</sup> Children in the Foundation Stage are 5 years and under. These are in the school's nursery and reception classes. Infant pupils in Years 1 and 2 form Key Stage 1. Junior pupils in Years 3 to 6 form Key Stage 2.

have declined since the last inspection, mainly as a result of planned programmes of study not being carried out in sufficient breadth and depth over the course of the school year. In these subjects pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and their progress is slow, especially in the Junior classes. In spite of these weaknesses, however, pupils' achievement in both key stages is satisfactory overall, as significant progress is being made in most other subjects of the curriculum.

- 5 Pupils are acquiring the skills of literacy and numeracy satisfactorily, although their standards of presentation in all subjects are poor and have a significantly detrimental effect on learning. In English, many pupils' handwriting skills are poor with letters being badly formed and the joined handwriting style that they practise is not generally used elsewhere. In mathematics, the untidy setting out of calculations means that it is difficult for pupils to understand the importance of place value or to check back through their work to see where mistakes have been made. Skills in speaking and listening are generally underdeveloped with pupils having little experience of speaking in an extended form. Their poor vocabulary has a significant impact on standards. Often the pupils' spoken contributions are paid insufficient attention by the rest of the class. The pace of many lessons also slows when pupils are unable to get on with their written work because they have paid insufficient attention to the teacher's instructions. The school has identified these issues as areas for improvement and there are plans to address them in the current school year. The emphasis on developing pupils' articulation through 'role-play' activities is a good example of this.
- 6 The large number of pupils with special educational needs is given particular attention in the school. Their needs are quickly assessed and teachers plan lessons to provide appropriate activities for them. Specialist teaching and learning assistants provide in most classes, the close support that the pupils need and they progress well towards their identified learning targets. As a result, in the national tests in 2001, one out of five pupils on the special needs register reached the expected levels of attainment. The remaining pupils made good progress to attain standards just below the expectation. The attainments of boys and girls has varied considerably from year to year, but this has often been the result of the year group being heavily weighted one way or another in number. In English, mathematics and science, the present system of tracking pupils' attainments from year to year, together with the setting of individual targets for learning is helping to make these variations less significant. The school has identified a small number of gifted or talented pupils in each class, although provision for them in class is normally found in the teachers' planning for the generally higher attaining pupils. They make satisfactory progress.
- 7 The governing body has considered the targets for attainment laid down by the Local Education Authority (LEA) and has increased them to provide an appropriate challenge for the school. Attainment in last year's tests for 11 year old pupils generally show that the LEA's targets have been well met and that suitable progress towards the more aspirational targets of the governing body has been made.
- 8 In the Foundation Stage for pupils aged five years or below, sound, and often good, progress is made in all the areas of learning. In physical and social development, the pupils reach the expected levels of learning, although in language and literacy, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative skills, their development is below average when they transfer to the next class.
- 9 Since the last inspection, although improvements have been made in English, mathematics and science, standards are mostly below the average of those found in schools nationally. Much attention has been given to providing sufficient

opportunities for pupils to use ICT and in this subject standards for seven and eleven year olds are now around the national expectation. In most other subjects, standards remain below the national expectation, in part because there is insufficient coverage in depth of the expected curriculum. However, considering the attainments of the pupils on entry into the school alongside the progress being made in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the inspection team has reached the overall judgement that pupils are achieving satisfactorily throughout the school and there has been satisfactory progress in standards since the last inspection.

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

- 10 Pupils have satisfactory attitudes towards their school. They enjoy the activities provided, which are generally interesting. They value the companionship of their school friends. They find the teachers to be very friendly and encouraging. Social activities, such as the breakfast club and youth club, are very popular, but other, more structured activities outside lessons, including sport, are only moderately supported. There is little reluctance to come to school, even amongst the minority who frequently arrive slightly late. The special needs co-ordinator works hard with parents to improve the attendance of pupils on her register.
- 11 Pupils' behaviour varies widely, but is generally satisfactory overall. Most pupils are confident and open in their attitudes and expression. They enjoy practical, hands-on activities, and often show much interest in these. Most listen and apply themselves well when lessons are presented in a stimulating and relevant way, but they quickly tend to lose concentration when pace and challenge is lacking. This affects learning throughout the school but is not so noticeable among children under the age of six. A significant minority of pupils do have difficulties in listening and doing what is expected of them even when teaching is good. Behavioural problems, usually connected with fidgeting and inattention, disturb the general flow of learning in some lessons.
- 12 Behaviour around the school is generally orderly and pleasant. Some pupils are very polite and respectful; many are used to holding doors open for others, for example. Other pupils, mostly boys, are inclined to be rather truculent, and to show off if the opportunity arises, for instance by being insincerely polite. Pupils generally behave sensibly when queueing, as at lunchtime. Behaviour in the playground is light-hearted, often demonstrative, sometimes boisterous, but is always good-natured.
- 13 The school's exclusion record is good, and documents show that few pupils have been given fixed periods of exclusion in the past year. No instances of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection period. Bullying is not reported to be an issue, being treated firmly when it occurs.
- 14 Relationships between pupils are satisfactory. They generally enjoy one another's company. Boys mix pleasantly with girls. Lunchtimes are sociable occasions with a fully inclusive, if rather noisy, spirit. The staff provide much co-operation and support to pupils. The very visible caretaker-governor also provides a good male role model respected by pupils. Personal development, led by these examples, is satisfactory. Pupils generally enjoy undertaking the responsibilities offered. They are tolerant of other people's opinions, although occasionally their impulsive behaviour shows a lack of awareness of their actions on others.
- 15 Attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, though it has improved consistently since the time of the previous inspection. It is currently about four percentage points below the national average. Pupils who have poor attendance records regularly miss out

on important stages in learning and this further depresses overall standards. In common with other schools in this area of the LEA, the measurement of attendance includes those pupils below the compulsory school age. It is therefore not readily possible to make a comparison consistent with the national guidelines. Unauthorised absence and punctuality have also shown marked improvement through the school's effective targeting of the problem. Lessons at the start of the day do sometimes still suffer from the disruption caused by latecomers. Parental attitudes are a determining factor in the problem. For instance, rain just before the start of one school day during the inspection week caused the number of latenesses (usually averaging about eight) to rise fourfold.

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

- 16 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with teachers planning to meet the needs of all pupils. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. In four out of ten lessons good or very good teaching was identified. The school has been successful in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection when one out of six lessons was unsatisfactory and there was no very good teaching. Weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and understanding in teaching early writing skills and music have now been addressed satisfactorily. There remains, however, some lack of confidence and expertise in teaching art and design, and design and technology, which is having a negative effect on standards. The last inspection identified a weakness in the lack of direct teaching of skills in ICT. This has now been resolved as all classes make good use of the computer suite. The ICT skills they have learned are being used satisfactorily in most other subjects of the curriculum, such as using encyclopaedia programs for research in religious education, and spreadsheets in mathematics.
- 17 Teaching for children under the age of six in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory overall with many good features. The quality of teaching enables the children to achieve at least satisfactorily in all areas of learning. Teaching in the area of personal, social and emotional development is good and children make good progress in these skills. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory and in 45 per cent of lessons teaching was good. The teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young pupils to plan clearly focused activities based on the early learning goals for children of this stage. Close liaison between the nursery and reception teachers ensures a consistency of approach. Great care is taken to provide a secure and stimulating environment where children feel valued. Relationships are good and teachers manage children positively with praise and encouragement and through clearly established routines.
- 18 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both the infant and the junior departments, with the best teaching in Year 2 and Year 6. In lessons where the quality of teaching was very good, the pupils responded very positively to the teachers' lively and enthusiastic approach. For instance, in a music lesson in Year 2, learning was fun and pupils were well motivated to learn. In mathematics in Year 6, challenging ideas on probability were effectively taught through practical tasks where pupils were active in investigating and thinking for themselves and working things out visually. On occasions, where teaching is less than good, pupils are not inspired by the lesson and they quickly lose interest.
- 19 The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in all classes. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the national strategies and plan all elements in the long and short term in detail. Plenary sessions are variable. In the best

lessons, they are used well to consolidate learning and prepare for the next steps. In other lessons, their effectiveness is muted when they are used as 'show and tell' sessions. Additional short literacy sessions outside the Literacy Hour each day are well focused and concentrate specifically on teaching the basic skills of handwriting spelling and reading. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in linking letters to their sounds but these sessions are not successful in improving standards of handwriting across the curriculum. Pupils are taught to practise handwriting neatly in their handwriting books but do not transfer these skills to their other work. As a consequence, presentation of work is often unsatisfactory.

- 20 Planning for lessons is good. Teachers plan to clear relevant objectives which in the best lessons are shared with pupils so that they know how to succeed. Planning usually takes account of what pupils already know and group work is planned to meet the needs of the range of attainment in each class. New schemes of work in geography and in history are supporting teachers' planning effectively in promoting skills and knowledge. Particular care is taken to plan suitable tasks for pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to become interested in their work and make good progress. Their general classwork is monitored by the special needs co-ordinator and this assists with improved target-setting. While gifted and talented pupils are identified in each class, planning does not always identify specific learning opportunities for them.
- 21 In the best lessons teachers have high expectations which inspire pupils to give of their best. In other lessons, however, expectations are too low. For instance, in a design and technology lesson for younger pupils, the teacher did not set a clear lead and high standards of challenge in her manner and approach. Tasks are sometimes too easy, as in a history lesson for younger junior pupils when the teacher prepared prompts for answers to the worksheets in such a fashion that they did not have to think for themselves. Opportunities for independent learning, for instance, in using the library are not well developed. These shortcomings are offset by the good collection of resources and the clear identification of learning objectives that are a feature of all lessons. The great majority of them are well structured with an appropriate emphasis on whole class introductions and active investigations.
- 22 In a small number of lessons observed during the inspection, the transition from one phase of the lesson to another was not managed well. Pupils were unclear in their tasks and, when working in groups not directly supervised by the teacher, produced very little written work. This meant that higher attaining pupils rarely moved on to the extension work that was planned for them. This was evident in a mathematics lesson on perimeters for younger junior pupils which otherwise was well taught. A science lesson for the same age group looking at how snails move and feed was organised so that the pupils knew clearly what they were to look for and how to record their findings.
- 23 In the best lessons, teachers use questions well to further pupils' thinking and extend their ideas. In mathematics in Year 6 pupils are not only expected to give answers but also to explain their working. 'Yes' or 'no' is rarely accepted without the next question being 'why?'. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate. For instance, in a Year 4 physical education lesson, the teacher asks pupils to look for specific criteria when evaluating each other's sequences of movement.
- 24 All teachers manage pupils positively with praise and encouragement. Clear routines are established in most classes in line with the school's behaviour policy. In some classes, however, management strategies are slow to work, and teachers have to spend an undue amount of time managing a few pupils who do not get on with their



work. The inattention of this small but significant minority sometimes disrupts the concentration of the whole class.

- 25 The close teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is a strength of the school and has a considerable beneficial effect on the pupils' progress. In all classes, teaching assistants have clearly defined roles and give very good support to staff and pupils alike. By giving close support to individual pupils or small groups, they make a considerable contribution to the good progress of pupils with special educational needs. Lessons are almost always well prepared and an appropriate range of interesting resources is accessible. In a religious education lesson on Islam, for example, a good collection of artefacts and reference books enhance pupils' knowledge effectively. These strengths are sufficient to outweigh other shortcomings.
- 26 In the better lessons, teachers' day-to-day assessments in English and mathematics are generally used well to plan future work. In some lessons, however, teachers working with targeted groups do not monitor sufficiently to evaluate what the rest of the class are doing. This sometimes results in some pupils not getting on as quickly as they might and occasionally in pupils making uncorrected mistakes where their errors are not explained. There are examples of high quality marking in Year 6. In most classes, however, marking is encouraging but does not tell pupils how to improve.
- 27 The school has a clear homework policy which teachers are just beginning to implement. It is too early as yet to judge the effectiveness of this. In most classes, pupils conscientiously take their reading books and spellings home to practise and this in some classes leads to productive dialogue between home and school in reading diaries. During the inspection, however, little evidence was seen of pupils bringing their own research from home into school.

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

- 28 At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum was reported as being generally broad and balanced. While this remains the case, there is room for improvement. The quality of the curriculum is overall satisfactory. All pupils experience a satisfactory range of worthwhile, stimulating learning opportunities. All statutory requirements are appropriately met. With some exceptions, the allocation of time for the subjects is appropriate with suitable good emphasis upon literacy, numeracy and science, and good opportunities to work with ICT.

Areas of particular strength in the curriculum provided for pupils are:

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection);
- Provision for extra-curricular activities;
- Equality of opportunity provided for all pupils;
- Provision for personal, social and health education;
- Contribution of the community to pupils' learning;
- Constructiveness of relationships with partner institutions (other schools, the PFI, 'Excite');
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (a further improvement of the findings of the previous inspection).

Although the overall arrangement of the school's curricular opportunities are satisfactory, there is room for improvement in:

- The breadth and depth of studies in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.
- 29 The planned curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum together, with religious education which complies with the agreed framework for all local schools. The school has recently developed a Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) scheme that incorporates good provision for health education. Drugs awareness is incorporated in these lessons and the school has ensured that a member of staff has received appropriate training. Sex education is, at present, confined to Year 6 but the school intends to review this situation with a view to its inclusion in other years. Lessons in PSHE are timetabled and this ensures its regular inclusion for all pupils in the school week. The school follows the national guidelines for literacy and numeracy and continues to give high priority to promoting them. The skills and strategies which pupils must learn in literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily, and often well, promoted by teachers.
- 30 Provision to enable all pupils to have equality of access to the curriculum and opportunity is good. Staff take care to see that all pupils, irrespective of gender, race, age or attainment, study the full curriculum. Plans for art and design, design and technology, music and physical education cover all the statutory elements, but in practice, pupils do not study topics in sufficient depth. As a result, their output of work is low in these subjects. The school aims to link equality of opportunity to every area of school life and they are explicitly developed through PSHE, multi-cultural education, religious education and collective worship. The school takes the inclusion of all pupils in what it has to offer very seriously. There are cases where the inclusion of pupils who have significant problems disrupt the learning opportunities for the rest of the class, especially when they are in the lesson for too long a time. The school should consider its procedures in these circumstances.
- 31 Provision for special educational needs (SEN) is good and the contribution the SEN co-ordinator makes to this provision is very good. These pupils are provided with a range of learning activities that effectively meet their interests and aptitudes and, in these activities they are very well supported by special needs assistants, by the class teacher and by the co-ordinator herself. Teachers and the co-ordinator write good individual education plans for pupils and use them well to plan suitable tasks, resources and support. Plans are of good quality with clear achievable targets and are reviewed regularly to ensure they are still appropriate to the pupils' current need. The records kept of individual pupil progress are of a very high quality. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress when compared with their prior attainment.
- 32 The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in subjects is effective in many of the lessons seen. The teachers try hard to find programs which support the general lesson objective. The school still needs to extend its provision of computer programs for the teachers to use.
- 33 The extra-curricular activities provided by the school are good. The school works hard to provide a range of experiences and opportunities to benefit all pupils by supporting their personal development and care while enhancing their work in the curriculum. For example, the school provides a breakfast club, supervised by helpers and parents, which is appreciated especially by parents who have to leave

home early. The youth club offers a wide range of activities and is run mainly by parents with good school staff support. It is very well attended by pupils. A varying number of pupils enjoy other clubs such as various sporting and music opportunities. Experiences beyond the basic curriculum also come through a good programme of visits and visitors to the school, including residential visits to Colomendy in North Wales for Year 1 and 5 pupils. The school has provided a wide range of extra activities for gifted or talented pupils. In mathematics, pupils have attended workshops and a presentation by the famous celebrity, Johnny Ball. Good footballers attend coaching sessions. In music, pupils are being given increasing opportunities to learn instruments. Pupils have attended drama workshops following a play put on by a touring company. Good singers have been chosen to sing in a choir.

- 34 There are good links between the school and the wider community and partner institutions. It works in a Beacon School Partnership with a nearby primary school, leading to the sharing of good practice. It plans to shortly embark upon another primary school link where the emphasis will be on learning for the youngest children. The involvement of the wider community is seen in visits to the school by a police officer to support the school's anti-bullying day. Pupils also took action regarding the bad sign-posting to their school which, as a result of their actions, the local council are to address.
- 35 The provision for spiritual development is good. Some indication of spiritual quality comes from the pupils' reactions to the World Trade Centre tragedy in New York. Pupils looked at pictures of the terrible event and tried to image the terror of the people involved and how they were feeling. They wrote short sentences, in which they tried to express their sorrow and amazement at such an event, and tried to understand why it happened and what would be the outcome. The headteacher reports that the attitude the pupils showed in the three minutes' silence, a very long time for young children to remain quiet and focused, was remarkable. This was an out-of-the-ordinary event, but normally pupils are given time for quiet reflection in classes and at times of collective worship when a candle is lit as a focus for individual thought and contemplation. Collective worship and religious education make an appropriate contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- 36 The provision made for social and moral development is good. This is a very caring school and one that provides, through the adults working there, good role models. The behaviour policy is new and most teachers are applying it consistently. Pupils are learning the rewards and sanctions, which are the consequence of their actions. The school appreciates that good behaviour must be taught, and skills learnt, just as in any other aspect of learning. It is trying hard to do this and is successful with most pupils. Some pupils have a low level of maturity and are unaware of the impact of their actions on the orderliness of lessons. They do not react well to the code of behaviour and the school should consider how to best adapt this for these pupils' specific needs. Most pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are learning to respect the person, property and views of other people. Importantly, the school places emphasis upon the raising of self-esteem and worth. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility. Examples of this are the prefect system and the school council comprising of two children from each junior class. Opportunities for pupil initiative are less well developed, although pupils do embark upon issues beyond the scope of the school and its normal curriculum. Through talking with pupils, it is clear that they like school, respect their teachers and want to learn.
- 37 The provision for cultural development is good in all its aspects including multi-cultural issues. Pupils worked alongside others from different areas of the city on a

joint project on the history of immigration to Liverpool. This helped them towards an understanding of the origins of the city's multi-cultural society. The 'Greenhouse Project' enabled the pupils from Dovecot to work alongside pupils from a mixed ethnic school in Liverpool towards a performance of music and art at the Albert Dock. Further enhancement to pupils' cultural development comes through first hand experience of a poet working with them on the anti-bullying day. There have been visits to the school of a Chinese artist, an African drummer, and a speaker about Judaism and pupils have had the opportunity to visit a mosque.

- 38 The school is able to show through its documentation, that it is systematically and continually reviewing, revising and extending its practice, working towards delivery of the curriculum with more creativity. Although there is a need to improve provision for some subjects, overall, it is successful in providing the climate, opportunity and learning environment for pupils to develop as well rounded individuals. They contribute to, and benefit from, their local community, while becoming increasingly aware of the wider world around them.

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

- 39 The school provides a good standard of care overall for its pupils. The attention given to monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality is a particularly good feature. Attendance has shown consistent improvement since the previous inspection though the rate is still well below the national average. The school provides good personal support and guidance.
- 40 The school has a very caring and supportive atmosphere. Pupils like the way in which they are respected, and remark on the friendliness of teachers. Staff in the school know pupils well, and set very good examples of orderliness and concern. This ethos provides a very effective base from which to encourage and guide pupils' learning and personal development. In the Foundation Stage, among the youngest children, for instance, pupils are led very carefully into habits of good social behaviour, and obtain a real sense of enjoyment from their classroom activities by responding in an orderly and respectful way. Teachers and care assistants dealing with older pupils do so very conscientiously but are not always able to maintain such consistency. Pupils with special educational needs are given very effective, well directed support. There is a regular system for reviewing their provision, ensuring that the pupils are suitably included in all school activities.
- 41 The problems of attendance are addressed very effectively. There is a clear policy. Registration is computerised. A learning mentor, funded by the Excellence in Cities project, is assigned to chase up unexplained absences on the day in which they occur, as well as to keep a keen eye on lateness. She liaises closely with both parents and the Education Welfare Officer, paying home visits when necessary. A high awareness of the importance of attendance is fostered by weekly competition among classes. Certificates are awarded to pupils with good attendance records. The Education Welfare Officer is particularly involved in advice and assistance through being on the school's governing body. The co-ordinator for special educational needs keeps a close eye on the attendance records of her pupils, giving encouragement and advice when it is needed.
- 42 Good behaviour and work is generally promoted satisfactorily. Rules of conduct have been negotiated with pupils, and are displayed in each classroom. Much use is made of praise and a wide variety of rewards, such as stickers, team points and graded certificates. Although pupils are aware of the graduated system of rewards

and sanctions, in practice many are inclined to be indifferent. Some of these have difficulties in maintaining concentration, even when assisted, as is often the case, by good support. Lively and well organised teaching is often necessary to capture the pupils' consistent attention. The rare incidents of serious misbehaviour are recorded and monitored carefully, with parents being involved when necessary. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good, and have included a special day devoted to the topic, involving parents. No concerns regarding bullying have been voiced during the inspection by parents or pupils.

- 43 The school provides well for the safety and welfare of its pupils. It has good systems to maintain this. Child protection awareness is well established among all staff, and the co-ordinator ensures that the local guidelines are followed. Health and safety awareness is well communicated to pupils through the curriculum, for instance in physical education and the personal, social and health education programme. Risk assessments are appropriately carried out. The governing body is well informed and monitors these aspects of school life carefully.
- 44 The school monitors pupils' academic progress well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, both on an individual and group basis. Regular assessments of reading, writing and mathematical performance are made and the information is used to set individual targets for learning and to check that year groups as a whole are moving forward well. In addition, pupils are asked to complete similar tests to the national ones given at the ages of seven and 11. This provides the school with the necessary evidence to ensure that pupils are making progress as fast as expected and to intervene, if necessary, with extra learning opportunities. The assessment programme also identifies particular areas of weakness for specific groups of pupils and 'booster' activities are provided as a result. In addition, pupils with special educational needs are well supported through a regular programme of reviews. In other subjects, class teachers keep records of the pupils' experiences but their work is not closely monitored with a view to ensuring that standards are rising from year to year, both on an individual or year group basis. This is a factor in the lower standards identified in art and design, design and technology, as well as in music and physical education. However, the school has rightly concentrated on the core subjects in recent years, and has plans to develop assessment in other subjects further within the school improvement plan.

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

- 45 Parents and carers have a good opinion of the school. They strongly believe the school expects their children to work hard. Almost all say their children enjoy coming to school. Teaching is generally regarded as good. Most parents and carers think their children are making good progress and are becoming more mature. They are pleased with what the school is achieving. The great majority approve of the school's approachable attitude, but about one in five of those responding to the questionnaire were not completely satisfied that the school works well with them, or that they are sufficiently well informed about how their child is getting on. A similar proportion of parents would like to see improvements to the range of activities outside lessons.
- 46 The inspection team agrees in general terms with the favourable opinions which parents express. It does not agree with the adverse opinions indicated. There is extensive evidence of the school seeking to provide parents with appropriate information and to be responsive to parents' wishes. The range of extra-curricular activities also compares well with that seen in similar schools.

- 47 The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and carers is good. Parental links were not mentioned in the previous inspection report but improvements have been made since that time, for instance by a clearer format and focus in the annual reporting of pupils' attainments to parents. Much appropriate information is well displayed. The nursery entrance, for instance, is very welcoming. It provides a wide range of material explaining the first steps in learning as well as indicating social and other support available. Similarly, within the main school, the entrance hall and corridors provide pictures of the staff, the work of the governors and their committees is explained, the latest school newsletter is displayed, and the full range of school policies is on view. Examples of pupils' work, and pictures of their activities outside school, are shown near each classroom. The school's prospectus and governing body report is helpfully combined into one document.
- 48 Communication is good. The staff set a friendly tone. Parents and carers are welcome to call at any time, preferably by appointment. They are invited in to the Friday assemblies and other events. Because of appropriate security considerations, open entry to the school has had to be curtailed during the past year, but parents are always welcome to consult with teachers at the end of the school day. Newsletters are frequent. Parents are consulted both informally and by questionnaire. They are not, as yet, routinely supplied with information as to what their children are to learn each term.
- 49 Pupils' progress is reported at regular parents' meetings, and the annual written report is presented and explained individually to those parents and carers attending in the summer term. They have the opportunity to make a written comment, though few do. The quality of pupils' reports is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Teachers concentrate on attainment, and in the better cases indicate in English, mathematics and science methods by which each pupil's performance could be improved. Specific targets are not, however, clearly defined, except for those pupils on the school's register of special educational need with individual education plans. In these instances parents and carers are kept carefully consulted and informed about the targeted progress of their children.
- 50 The school has run a number of courses for parents to assist them to help their children's progress. The take-up on these has been sadly variable. Several parents have, however, been sufficiently motivated to qualify as classroom assistants, with benefits to themselves, their children and the school.
- 51 Parents and carers overall make a satisfactory impact on the work of the school. Several provide voluntary help in classrooms, assist in visits, and valuably run activities outside the school day. Both the breakfast club and youth club, for instance, convey a warm atmosphere of variety and social enjoyment, and are well run and well attended. Requests for help in supporting social and charitable activities are always well responded to by parents and carers. Some have helped with decorations. The amount of encouragement and support that pupils receive at home varies widely. While most parents ensure that their children attend school promptly and consistently, a small but significant minority do not.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 52 The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are of good quality. The headteacher continues to lead and manage effectively by developing and strengthening the roles of key staff to support teachers and the

literacy and numeracy initiatives. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is evaluated regularly and teachers' planning is developed further as a result. However, other subjects do not similarly benefit. The school has developed its own monitoring system for literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. Its implementation this term means that it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. The school intends to do this after a few terms of its operation.

- 53 The headteacher is ably assisted by an acting deputy headteacher who brings to the role qualities of reliability and thoroughness. Other staff are encouraged to assume increased leadership roles and are supported through in-service training and work with consultants and advisors. However, subject leaders who are responsible for some foundation subjects have not sufficiently developed their roles since the previous inspection, particularly in monitoring and raising standards. It is clear that the morale of staff and governors has been raised, and pupils' attainment is increasing in the core subjects.
- 54 The school has a clear educational direction for improvement and has identified its priorities for action. A strong feature of the school lies in the care of pupils which is at the heart of the school's mission statement. The action taken by the school to meet its targets, both from the last inspection and those set for increasing standards in English and mathematics, has been very good. This is especially evident in the measures taken to raise attainment in mathematics and science for older pupils, to develop the roles of governors, to provide increased resources for ICT and to promote high levels of attendance. Senior members of staff have increased their effectiveness within the structure of the school improvement plan. However, in some lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils' completed work are low. This indicates that training courses may have not sufficiently challenged their views on what the pupils should achieve.
- 55 The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. They are an interested group who have successfully appointed a headteacher in whom they have the utmost confidence. Governors regularly visit the school. Meetings are held half-termly and committees meet regularly. The governors are working to raise their awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Many have particular areas of expertise, for instance in finance and educational inclusion. The headteacher encourages them to work as critical friends by making sure they have information about the school. Subject leaders take part in this too by informing the governing body of their work.
- 56 The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led by the co-ordinator who ensures that the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is followed and meets statutory requirements. The school works well to provide support for all pupils and include everyone in activities such as the Christmas concerts. There is effective co-ordination of activities to promote the further development of pupils with specific gifts beyond the day-to-day classroom organisation.
- 57 Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and taking effective action is good overall. The headteacher has introduced good procedures for monitoring the work of teachers and links these effectively with their appraisal and performance management. In consultation with the subject leaders and the governing body, the headteacher has produced an effective school improvement plan which sets out the priorities for future development. It identifies both the persons responsible for the different areas to be covered over the next three years and those who are to monitor the progress against the stated success criteria. Provision is made within the

improvement plan for the curriculum plans for all subjects to be reviewed in a long-term rolling programme. This needs to be revised to address more speedily the identified weaknesses in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. The school has successfully re-introduced provision for trainee teachers to develop their skills on teaching practice. It has good procedures for the induction of new staff to its ways of working, although care needs to be taken to provide effective support for teachers who are not used to managing pupils who have very limited attention spans.

- 58 The strategic use of resources, specific grants and other school funds is good. Financial planning is good and is linked firmly to the priorities of the school improvement plan. The school accounts have recently been audited and were judged to be satisfactory. The headteacher and governing body are careful to ensure that best value is obtained and staff who are responsible for budgets follow these principles. These include putting plans for large expenditure out to tender, and to ensure that spending in other areas is scrutinised carefully to find the most competitive cost. As a result, the school's budget is maintained within its limits and an appropriate sum is planned to be carried forward into the next financial year. The budget for pupils with special educational needs is spent appropriately to provide additional resources and a high level of classroom support. The school makes good use of new technologies for administration and teaching. Where the school receives grants for specific educational initiatives, such as for consultant teachers to promote language development through role-play, these are well used. The EAZ has brought vitality and innovation to the school through, for example, the breakfast club and the deployment of technicians who support in the computer suite. Many non-educational aspects of the school are managed by the PFI and this gives the headteacher more time to manage the educational aspects of the school.
- 59 The administration officer provides work of good quality with very high standards of neatness and orderliness. Other non-teaching staff provide significant support on a daily basis as they fulfil their responsibilities reliably and cheerfully. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Resources for learning are very good in ICT and good to adequate in most other subjects. However, shortcomings are evident in resources for physical education.
- 60 The school is not only large but in poor repair and this makes it expensive to maintain, although it will shortly have new premises. The unit costs per pupil are high. Since the school came out of 'special measures' in 1999, it has successfully striven to provide an improving quality of education. Although standards are rising in a number of subjects, most notably mathematics and science for older pupils, in others standards have levelled out or fallen. Attendance is improving but it remains well below the national average. There is, therefore, still much for the school to do. However, as a result of good systems of school management together with a very committed staff the school is fundamentally in a good position to achieve success and, in this context, it provides satisfactory value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 In order to build upon the progress made by the school in the last two years, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) raise standards further by:
  - a) the provision of more planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills;
  - b) developing the pupils' standards of presentation in all curriculum areas; (paragraphs 5, 19, 78, 79, 81, 87)
- (2) continue to work to improve the levels of attendance and punctuality; (paragraphs 10, 15, 41)
- (3) increase the proportion of good and very good teaching by:
  - a) improving the pace and liveliness of lessons in order to engage and inspire the pupils;
  - b) organising lessons to ensure that pupils know clearly what is expected of them and in which teachers make sufficient opportunities to check that their work is completed and basic mistakes are corrected;
  - c) effectively supporting teachers whose classes contain pupils who find it difficult to concentrate on their work or to respond to the expected guidelines for behaviour; (paragraphs 11, 18, 21, 22, 24, 30, 36, 78, 83, 91)
- (4) develop the pupils' studies across the full curriculum by:
  - a) ensuring that the work planned for art and design, design and technology, music and physical education is covered in sufficient breadth and depth throughout the school year;
  - b) assessing the pupils' completed work in all subjects to ensure that standards are rising from year to year;
  - c) providing effective training opportunities for teachers who are not confident in particular subject areas. (paragraphs 4, 16, 28, 30, 42, 44, 54, 57, 99, 103, 121, 125, 128)

The following minor issues should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improving resources for physical education. (paragraphs 59, 129)
- Organising the junior library facilities to make it more accessible for individual and group research projects. (paragraphs 21, 80)
- Drawing up a policy for the organisation of studies in the Foundation Stage. (paragraph 74)
- Improving the quality of end of year reports by identifying specific future learning targets in a way that provides practical guidance for parents. (paragraph 49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	15	32	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	28	59	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	189
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	126

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	48

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	91.1
National comparative data	94.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	8	9	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	6
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	14	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (76)	82 (76)	76(81)
	National	84 (84)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	6
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	14	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (76)	76 (84)	76 (67)
	National	85 (84)	89 (84)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	22	9	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	20
	Girls	5	4	7
	Total	19	17	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (62)	55 (43)	87 (67)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	20
	Girls	5	3	6
	Total	19	16	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (52)	52 (38)	84 (62)
	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	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	149
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2:1
Average class size	22.4

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	165

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	579,712
Total expenditure	570,895
Expenditure per pupil	2,584
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3,645
Balance carried forward to next year	5,172

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	206
Number of questionnaires returned	47

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	38	0	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	38	9	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	45	9	2	11
The teaching is good.	68	23	2	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	23	19	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	26	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	51	32	15	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	43	2	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	32	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	28	15	2	13

## **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**

- 62 The school has responded positively to national initiatives to co-ordinate provision for children from three to five in the nursery and reception class into the Foundation Stage of education.
- 63 There are forty-seven pupils in the nursery of whom seventeen attend on a full time basis. Children start nursery soon after their third birthday and transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. There are twenty-three full time pupils in the reception class.
- 64 Although attainment varies widely, most children start nursery with skills which are below those of most three-year-olds. Standards in communication skills especially speaking and listening and in mathematical development are particularly weak. This is confirmed by the careful assessments made of these young children soon after they join nursery, and again on entry to the reception class.
- 65 Throughout the Foundation Stage, staff create a calm yet stimulating environment where children are valued and feel welcomed and secure. Joint planning between nursery and reception teachers ensures a common approach. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is particularly strong and effective. Consequently, the children achieve as well as they can. Nevertheless, pupils are unlikely to reach the expected early learning goals in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the time they start Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development, where their progress is good, and in physical development, where standards are slightly higher on entry, children are likely to reach the early learning goals. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, while the children make satisfactory overall progress, standards are likely to remain below those expected nationally when they start in Year 1. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and are supported well, both in the suitability of the curriculum provided, and in the quality of adult help given. This enables these children to make good progress and achieve well.
- 66 The quality of teaching in lessons observed is satisfactory overall, with many good features both in the nursery and the reception class. Teaching was satisfactory in 55 per cent of lessons and it was good in 45 per cent.
- 67 The teachers use their good knowledge and understanding to plan a rich curriculum, which meets the children's needs. Particular emphasis is appropriately given to the development of personal, social and emotional skills, to communication, language and literacy, and to mathematical development. All staff work closely together to provide a good range of practical, first-hand experiences, which engage the children's interest.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

- 68 Teaching is good throughout the Foundation Stage and reflects the school's determination to build relationships and increase the children's often low levels of self-esteem. All staff lead by example and provide good role models of enthusiasm, care and consideration for others. Daily routines, which encourage children to take

responsibility as when children find their own name card/picture to register, are established from the outset. Children respond positively to the supportive atmosphere and leave their carers happily. Some nursery children, at the beginning of the year, are anxious. With adult help, they are becoming confident to select and join in activities, although some prefer to stand and watch. Many concentrate for only a short time before they move on. In the reception class, most children are confident in choosing and carrying out tasks, and are learning to follow instructions. They respond well to praise, for instance, the teacher's remark, 'Rebecca is tidying up beautifully', encourages others to help. They sustain concentration in practical activities such as tasting fruit and with help from staff, they are learning to wait turns and share. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are enthusiastic, curious and eager to learn. When looking closely at the insides of a fig and a kiwifruit the reception children express wonder at the patterns they see. Frequent opportunities are provided for children to communicate with each other in role-play in the home corner, shop or doctor's surgery. Whilst most younger children play alongside each other, as they get older they learn to co-operate and develop play together.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

- 69 Teaching is satisfactory. Particular attention is rightly given to developing the children's speaking and listening skills. Classroom displays provide an interesting environment, which stimulates discussion as well as providing exemplars of written language. Purposeful intervention by adults in imaginative role-play encourages children to extend and express their ideas with increasing confidence. Teachers and their classroom assistants alike choose words carefully to promote understanding and listen hard to appreciate what the children have to say. In the reception class, appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy are incorporated into lessons. Sometimes, however, children spend too long listening to the teacher and lose concentration. Group tasks are not always matched closely to the children's stage of development and the pace of learning slows. For instance, when children attempt to match words to a sentence, without support, they mix up the order and even place some words upside down and back to front. In the nursery, many children speak indistinctly and respond in single words and phrases or gesture. Not all are confident in answering their name in registration. While children become more assured, as they get older, their vocabulary and ability to express themselves clearly remain limited. Their response to adults often indicates that they have not understood what is said. All children are learning to handle books carefully and enjoy listening to stories, although many have short concentration spans. They are increasingly able to join in repeated refrains and a few higher attainers in the reception class are beginning to hear the way some words rhyme, for example, *van/man*, and *frog/dog*. Many are confused, however, between letters and numbers. Practical activities such as sorting large plastic letters in the nursery water tray, and matching letters to pictures in the reception class support the teaching of early reading skills. Children are learning over time to associate letters with their sounds, and higher attainers are starting to hear and identify the first sound in a word. A few children make letter shapes indiscriminately to write their own messages, for instance, in the doctor's surgery. While older children recognise their own name and can trace over it, few can write their name independently using appropriate upper and lower case letters.

### **Mathematical development**

- 70 Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in the nursery. Teachers plan tasks with clear objectives, which enable children to build up skills in small steps, systematically over time. A good range of attractive equipment is used effectively to give children interesting practical experience of sorting, matching and

counting. Teachers choose stories like *The Three Bears*, together with a wealth of action rhymes to reinforce children's learning. In the nursery, in particular, well-focused activities in the sand and water trays extend children's ideas of shape, capacity and weight. Informal play activities, like shopping are used to promote skills successfully. Occasionally, when there is insufficient adult intervention in these activities, children lose concentration and the pace of learning slows. Numeracy lessons in the reception class appropriately incorporate elements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Most children count objects to five, but not all are accurate in matching one to one or in associating the objects counted with the correct numeral. With help, higher attainers count and match objects to ten and are becoming confident in adding one more. Almost all reception children recognise two-dimensional shapes such as square, triangle and circle, and copy simple repeated patterns with beads. Tasks are not always matched closely to the needs of children with differing attainment. For instance, a group of lower attainers were asked to match numerals and pictures to 20 when they could not accurately recognise and count to five. On these occasions, children do not learn as well as they can.

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

- 71 Teaching overall is satisfactory with good elements particularly in the reception class. Teachers plan interesting activities, which are clearly focused to challenge pupils to use their senses to explore the world around them. Resources are well chosen and carefully organised so that children benefit from being practically involved in high quality first-hand experiences. All adults use questions skilfully to extend the children's ideas, and increase their sense of wonder. Children in nursery and reception use the computer, with increasing control of the mouse, to reinforce their learning. Through stories like *The Hungry Caterpillar*, nursery children learn about the natural world. In the reception class, children use their sense of touch to identify unseen objects in a 'feely bag'. Through this direct experience, they become aware of contrasts like rough and smooth, hard and soft. When tasting, they group 'bitter' tastes like grapefruit and lemon together and contrast them with the 'sweet' flavours of sugar and jam.

### **Physical development**

- 72 Teaching is satisfactory overall. All staff manage the children successfully with praise and encouragement. Teachers use individual children to demonstrate good practice and clearly show others how to improve. Opportunities are missed, however, in the nursery to use the outdoor facilities to their full potential, and ensure physical skills are regularly developed through structured activities. Due to the arrangement of the accommodation, reception children do not have access to an outside play area or large equipment on a daily basis. This will be resolved next year when the new school is opened with appropriate space and equipment. A range of opportunities are provided in nursery and reception for children to develop increased control using tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes as well as manipulating construction toys and jigsaws. Most nursery children use the outdoor area with a growing awareness of space and of the needs of others. A small number of them, however, race about without consideration and with little control over their bodies. By the time they start in reception, they show appropriate control in moving independently and changing directions without collisions when using the large hall for physical education. They co-operate in pairs to balance, and throw beanbags and quoits.



## **Creative development**

- 73 Teaching is satisfactory. Role-play areas are carefully organised to promote imaginative play. When adults are involved, their intervention is particularly effective in extending and improving the quality of the play. For instance, when children spontaneously arrange chairs in line for a bus trip the teaching assistant develops the role of the bus driver to check where all the passengers want to go. This leads the play into another dimension. Children are encouraged to explore colour and texture through painting and printing and are beginning to develop their own ideas as well as learning simple skills. All children enjoy rhymes and jingles and become increasingly confident at joining in songs, especially repeated refrains as they get older.
- 74 Careful procedures for gradual admission to the nursery help children settle in quickly. Parents are well informed through the attractive nursery brochure. Assessment procedures are carried out efficiently. Data collected is used effectively to set targets, to plan work and to monitor progress. The curriculum co-ordinator is knowledgeable and monitors planning regularly to ensure good liaison between the nursery and reception classes. There is, however, no written policy for the Foundation Stage to ensure that new members of staff are fully conversant with the school's expectations and to raise the profile of the Foundation Stage within the school.

## **ENGLISH**

- 75 Standards of attainment for pupils aged seven and eleven seen during the inspection are below those found in most schools nationally.
- 76 In statutory tests in reading and writing in 2001, the proportion of seven-year-olds who reached the expected level and above was below that of most schools. Standards in writing were better than those seen at the time of the last inspection. When compared to similar schools the performance was above average in reading but around the average in writing. Standards, have improved steadily between 1998 and 2001, albeit from an extremely low base. The standards reached by seven-year-olds currently reflect the particular nature of the present Year 2 class and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs within it. This is confirmed by the school's careful assessment procedures as well as through first-hand inspection evidence.
- 77 In statutory tests in 2001, the proportion of eleven-year-olds who reached the expected level and above in English, was well below that of most schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, the school's performance was around the average. In 1999, overall standards in English improved dramatically from a very low level but have remained static since then. Standards in writing, however, have improved from less than a third of pupils attaining the expected level at the time of the last inspection, to almost a half in 2001.
- 78 Many children start nursery with very limited communication skills. Careful tracking of the pupils' attainment from year to year indicates that almost all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading and writing. Progress in speaking and listening however, is too slow and the school has identified this as an area for further development. The overall rate of learning in almost all lessons observed was satisfactory. However, in lessons where teaching is uninspiring, groupwork is not well matched to pupils' attainment or when too much of the teachers' time is taken up in managing challenging behaviour, the pace of learning slows. Teachers take care to provide

appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs and this together with the high quality support from teaching assistants, enables them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress. While they are provided with challenging work along with the other higher attainers in the class, teachers' planning does not always indicate how they will be extended further. There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

- 79 Standards of speaking and listening are below expectations throughout the school. Many pupils are not confident and have limited vocabulary to express their point of view. Opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills by taking part in whole class and group discussion. In the infant department, role-play, both in informal play and in whole class sessions, is developed well and is used extensively to support speaking and listening skills. A visiting teacher makes a very good contribution to raising standards by engaging pupils in drama to develop their speech. Many pupils lack confidence but they respond to the teacher's enthusiasm and with encouragement join in. They take on specific roles in the 'Vet's Surgery'. They speak gently to reassure a sick animal, and consider the suitable ways of addressing an anxious pet owner. They are becoming aware of the need for a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice for certain occasions. Many pupils have difficulty in concentrating for long and often show by their response that they have not fully understood what is said. In the juniors, pupils become more confident but many even in Year 6 are reluctant to join in class discussion and tend to leave a small group to respond to the teacher. They are expanding their vocabularies however, in particular in the development of specific subject language, for instance, in mathematics and science. In English also, pupils use specific vocabulary such as *headline* and *by-line* when discussing newspaper reports. Higher attainers are beginning to express opinions clearly, for instance, in geography when discussing the pros and cons of quarrying. Few, however, are able to question another's ideas or join confidently in debate. While most pupils listen reasonably well to the teacher, they are not good at listening to each other.
- 80 In the infants, the systematic teaching of letters and their sounds supports pupils' progress in learning to read. Most pupils enjoy looking at books and take their readers home each day to practise. By the time they reach Year 2, most pupils use sound clues and pictures successfully to read unfamiliar words. They recognise an increasing number of common words by sight. Higher attainers read fluently from class readers and reading scheme books and talk with understanding about the plot. Lower attainers recognise a few common words, including the names of characters in the first readers. They use picture clues to tell the story in their books. While they recognise some letters by shape and sound, they do not use this knowledge effectively in their reading. Few children are able to retrieve information from simple reference books. In the junior department, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Daily quiet reading sessions increase their confidence. They are developing an enjoyment of books and stories and pupils in Year 6 look forward with enthusiasm to the next episode of the class serial, *Black Beauty*. They are aware of a range of genre and express their preference, for instance, for horror stories. They use the blurb on the back of the book when choosing what to read. Their knowledge of famous children's writers is not strong. When prompted they recall the works of authors like Roald Dahl and R L Stein. They are aware of the importance of Shakespeare, remembering a visit from a drama group with pleasure. Higher attainers read fluently with good understanding. They are beginning to make inference and deduction from the text. While they are able to find specific information from reference books, they have not yet perfected skimming and scanning techniques to do this efficiently and quickly. Lower attainers are not confident. They

use few consistent strategies. They have insufficient reading skills to carry out their own research and this slows down their progress in English and across the curriculum. Pupils' library skills are not well developed. The school has two spacious libraries, with adequate fiction and reference sections. The infant library is particularly well stocked and attractive. The junior library is less appealing and not well organised. For example, fiction books are not ordered alphabetically by author, and reference books are colour-coded rather than arranged by the Dewey decimal system. Neither library was seen to be used for independent learning during the inspection. The school does not have a policy for the use and development of the library. Insufficient attention is paid to this area, and this is reflected in the pupils' attainment.

- 81 Since the last inspection, the school has begun to put special emphasis on the development of writing skills. Considerable effort has been put into forging links with other subjects to support writing. For example, in science in Year 5, pupils practise instructional writing on the theme of how to keep healthy. In history, Year 4 pupils write descriptively to draw a pen portrait of Henry VIII. Evidence of work on display indicates that this is having a beneficial effect on achievement. Pupils are appropriately encouraged to talk through their ideas and develop their vocabulary in speech before committing themselves to paper. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to appreciate the structure of narrative writing by sequencing pictures to tell a story. By the end of Year 2, work in books indicates that pupils are starting to develop their ideas in sentences. They are aware of capital letters and full stops although most pupils do not use them reliably. Vocabulary is limited and reflects the pupils' speech. Spelling shows their knowledge of letters and sounds as in '*My mets akse me to play*'. Higher attainers write short stories with a recognisable beginning middle and end. They extend their vocabulary to include adjectives in their writing as describing a hollow tree or a little lake. They spell common words like '*with*' and '*father*' correctly and longer words like '*crokidilas*' and '*dianesours*' are phonetically recognisable. Lower attainers compose their own sentence but are unable to write down their ideas without help. They copy under the teachers' writing. Pupils in Year 6 are currently studying the genre of newspaper reports. Most, with varying degrees of help from the teacher plan their work with knowledge of format and layout. They consider ways of making a headline more effective and improve on their original ideas by choice of more sensational words and shorter text. By the end of Year 6, work in books indicates that most pupils have an understanding of different genre and reflect this in their work. Much spelling is still phonetic although higher attainers are beginning to use spelling and punctuation rules with some accuracy. They choose words for particular effect as in '*billowing smoke*' and '*completely still*' and are extending their vocabulary considerably. Lower attainers have difficulty in developing ideas imaginatively, and write mainly from their own experience. While pupils practise grammar and punctuation skills in exercises, they do not always transfer them to their everyday work. Standards of handwriting and presentation throughout the school are poor. Teachers' expectations of the pupils' presentation of their work are too low. Skills learnt in handwriting lessons are not used in other areas. Seven-year-olds do not join up their writing and some lower attainers are still printing in pencil at eleven years. While work on display is usually of a high standard, work in books is often messy and untidy and does not reflect the pupils' best efforts.
- 82 The quality of teaching in lessons seen is satisfactory overall. Teaching was satisfactory in almost six out of ten lessons. In over four out of ten, it was good or better including one very good lesson taken by a visiting specialist. When teaching is very good, the teacher uses knowledge and understanding of the subject and of how children learn to plan interesting, imaginative and dynamic experiences which fully involve all pupils. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and motivates pupils to give

of their best. All teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy to plan clearly focused lessons, which gradually build up skills over time. In the good lessons, objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson, and checked at the end so that pupils are aware of their own progress. Resources are well prepared and are accessible so that little time is wasted in settling to group tasks. When teaching is less than good, the whole class activity at the beginning of the lesson is uninspiring and goes on too long. Consequently, pupils lose interest and their concentration wanes. Independent group work is not always managed efficiently and teachers do not intervene enough to ensure that all pupils are on task and doing as well as they can. Management strategies are slow to work, and too much of the teachers' time is taken up by a small but significant proportion of pupils who do not get on with their work. However, in all classes, teaching assistants (when available) are well deployed. They provide very good support for staff and pupils and are especially effective in enabling pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Teachers establish positive relationships and raise pupils' self-esteem effectively through sincere praise and encouragement. While there are some examples of very good marking in Year 6, marking in most classes does not clearly indicate to pupils how to improve their work.

- 83 There are good systems to assess the pupils' attainment and track progress as they move through the school. Information gained is used effectively to develop the curriculum, to set targets and thus raise standards.
- 84 Leadership of the subject is good. The curriculum co-ordinator has a clear overview of the school's performance and monitors standards through analysing assessment data, sampling pupils' work and teachers' plans, and evaluating teaching and learning in class. Leadership is committed to continuous review and improvement which is raising standards.
- 85 The school's initiative in developing the use of English skills across all curricular areas is promoting learning effectively. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular, through the range of literature studied pupils learn to express feelings and to empathise with others. Pupils in Year 6 wrote with especial sensitivity about the tragedy of September 11 2001. Information and communication technology is used regularly to reinforce learning for individuals, for example, by using spelling programs. Pupils are becoming proficient in word processing. This area could usefully be developed further to engage pupils more enthusiastically in presenting their work well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 86 In the National Curriculum tests for 2001, the standards of attainment were below those found in most schools nationally for both seven and eleven year olds. In comparison with similar schools, pupils aged seven attained standards that were above the average while those aged eleven achieved around the average. The results show that, while there have been fluctuations over time, standards have increased overall for both infants and juniors over the past four years. This is seen most markedly for eleven year olds where in 2001, 55 per cent of pupils attained the expected levels compared to 28 per cent in 1998. Although they vary from year to year, overall there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The evidence of inspecting standards in the work completed in classes this year indicates that they are being maintained at about the same level.
- 87 For the younger children, much of the learning involves oral, mental and practical work accompanied by discussion. The tasks are appropriate for the age and ability of

the children but although most of the Year 2 children are able to count forward in twos, very few of them are confidently able to count backwards. Activities are planned which interest the children and tasks concerning buying things from a toyshop are well suited to the range of abilities. Lower ability only work with 10 pence while the more able are able to combine two figures and say what change they would get from 50 pence. A significant number of pupils, including children with special educational needs, are working at the lower level but the work is very appropriate for them and they are well supported, ensuring their good progress. All pupils appear to enjoy mathematics and are keen to take part but the ability to record what they have learnt is very underdeveloped and the majority do not take sufficient pride and care in their presentation of their work. This is a significant drawback in the pupils' ability to review their work and see how to correct mistakes.

- 88 The attainment of the present Year 2 children shows that an insufficient number of them have thoroughly learnt and remembered the objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy for Year 1.
- 89 Throughout the junior department there is some evidence of average attainment within lessons, but pupils' attainment usually remains below expected national standards. Their dependence upon the teacher to lead their thinking prevents them from being able to transfer knowledge and skills from one situation to another. With this reservation, progress is overall satisfactory for the higher attaining pupils and most of the average attaining pupils. The provision of work which matches the ability groups of the class is a strong feature of teaching throughout the school, although the gifted and talented pupils the school that has identified do not usually have special planning beyond the provision of extension activities. The good and specific planning for those pupils with special educational needs, together with the good support they receive in class is helping them to make good progress in their learning.
- 90 The teaching of mathematics follows very closely the National Numeracy Strategy, providing the opportunity to experience an appropriate wide range of mathematical concepts and knowledge. By Year 6, they have experience of various strategies and ways of calculation. The more able can put these to good use, enabling them to work quickly. All pupils have worked with different two dimensional and three dimensional shapes and have learnt to handle data effectively when making graphs, at times working on the computer. A lesson observed in Year 3 showed some satisfactory ability to solve problems associated with time and money, an indication of the school curriculum providing practice in what is often a difficult concept for pupils, namely to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in problematic situations. They experience and learn about various forms of measurement, for example Year 4 gain understanding of perimeter, although many struggle with complex shapes. In Year 5 they learn about equivalent fractions and are clear that a half is the same as two quarters is the same as four eighths. The importance of specialist mathematical vocabulary is stressed throughout the school and Year 6 pupils are seen to extend this knowledge further when they learn the words associated with probability. By Year 6 pupils present their work very much better in response to their teacher's high expectation. They have a very good attitude to learning and the majority of pupils show a mature approach. There are many positive aspects of pupils' attainment and learning but insufficient numbers of pupils are likely to have overcome earlier difficulties in order to reach the expected standards by the time they leave the school at eleven.
- 91 Teaching in both the infant and the junior departments is satisfactory, with almost half of lessons being good. One lesson observed was very good. Planning is good throughout the school but would be improved even further through increasing the

planned opportunity for all groups of pupils to carry out investigations. The mental and oral sessions are consistently good. In good and very good lessons, teachers vary their questions well to include all pupils of the class. The methods and organisation of teachers is sound and support staff contribute well to the management of pupils. Only in the better lessons are teachers' expectations high enough and the pace of some lessons is too slow. The rate at which pupils work does not always ensure that tasks are completed to satisfactorily high enough standards. In the good lessons the final phase is used to provide opportunities to assess that learning objectives have been achieved and for pupils to share their work with the class. However, pupils need more practice in explaining how they arrived at their answer. Through doing this, their own learning is re-enforced and there is opportunity for other less secure pupils to gain knowledge and understanding. Good assessment procedures for mathematics are used well by teachers to plan effectively for all groups of pupils.

- 92 The subject is very carefully co-ordinated and resourced. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been very effective. The attention given to mental mathematics and the practical activity for number is usually good throughout the whole school. The co-ordinator analyses data and results of testing and from this information forms action plans to address the issue of raising standards. Targets for improvement are set and these are usually shared with pupils, a Year 2 class even has them written out in front of them on their desk. Booster classes for Year 6 are held after school, closely focused upon areas in which the school needs to improve. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to increase the use of mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum. Some use is seen in subjects such as science and geography, but not sufficient. When pupils are working on the computer, better use of mathematics is seen in the use of data, charts and spreadsheets.
- 93 At the time of the previous inspection, the school was fortunate in having a significant proportion of very capable pupils whose attainment led the inspection team to report that "standards have risen at a rapid rate". Since then standards have risen at only a steady rate for the older pupils. Nevertheless, the school has worked hard to achieve this improvement and continues, through its analysis of data and improved teaching, to implement further strategies to achieve its goals.

## SCIENCE

- 94 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show pupils' attainment in science by the end of Year 6 was below the national average. However, the analysis of pupils' work for last year shows a significant improvement in standards by the end of both Years 2 and 6. The test results for 2001 show a dramatic increase with 88 per cent of pupils achieving the expected levels. Pupils aged 11 attained standards that were below the national average, but were well above those reached in similar schools. Standards for the current year show that achievement is broadly satisfactory across the school. From lessons observed at this early stage of the school year, standards of attainment are broadly in line in Year 2 and below the national expectations in Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well by the class teachers and this helps them to achieve well. The school has monitored its assessment procedures to provide for any pupils with particular talent in the subject, although none have been identified at this time. There is no significant difference in attainment between girls and boys.
- 95 Young pupils learn about electrical circuits. They make the circuits swiftly, and use tools well. They know the names of the components used. They develop an early understanding of materials, such as, which are good or bad conductors. Pupils have

some knowledge of fair testing, predicting outcomes and recording. However, it is clear from talking to them about their work, that pupils do not have sufficient experience to support independence in their learning. Older pupils learn about skeletons and develop appropriate vocabulary reasonably well. They also make good use of close observation as they look, for example, at snails. There is evidence that pupils' draw labelled diagrams neatly although presentation of written work is often unsatisfactory. Pupils continue to develop their knowledge of planning an investigation, but it is evident that these skills are not developed sufficiently well over time. This means that pupils do not always ask questions or use scientific enquiry to develop their literacy skills and independence. Some effective use is made of modern technological equipment, but this is not yet structured within teachers' general planning.

- 96 Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There has been an increase in the time allocated to scientific investigations. The curriculum is broadly satisfactory and the school has plans to review the yearly programme of work. Weak writing and presentational skills continue to hamper attainment.
- 97 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. One lesson was observed in the infants and three lessons in the juniors. Some good and very good teaching occurred in the junior classes. However, from looking at pupils' work it is clear that often it is not marked well enough, worksheets are used inappropriately and pupils do not take sufficient care in presenting their work well. Teaching is better when questioning encourages pupils to explain what they know, or think they know, and to develop their ideas through discussion. Teaching ensures that guidance is sufficient to allow pupils to develop their scientific skills and independence in a structured and well-organised way. It ensures that there is an appropriate balance between whole class work and small group work. Pupils benefit well from this approach, particularly those who have difficulty in sustaining concentration. In general, pupils respond well to the work. In Year 6, a significant minority appear initially reluctant to become involved but cannot help themselves because of the interesting opportunity to develop their skills of close observation. However, all lessons are well resourced and activities are generally planned appropriately for pupils. The investigations usually challenge all abilities well. Weaknesses occur when the level of challenge is not sufficient and explanations are too long, pupils lose interest and their response is unsatisfactory. Judging from the samples of pupils' completed work, there is a need for teaching to have higher expectations of what pupils can do. However, the school monitors well the progress of pupils through the levels identified within the National Curriculum programmes of study.
- 98 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is committed to ensuring that the subject moves forward and that standards rise. The headteacher is aware that, in this subject, there is a need for more guidance. Plans are well advanced for a staff training day on the development of investigational work and the use of ICT to support this. Resources for the subject are sufficient and maintained well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 99 Due to timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any lessons. However, a judgement on standards of attainment can be made from a range of evidence including the analysis of pupils' work and displays. Standards of art and design for pupils by the end of Year 2 are below national expectations. By the end of Year 6 standards are well below national expectations. Accordingly, achievement throughout is unsatisfactory. This is largely due to previous weaknesses in the school's curriculum. However, recent work clearly shows that essential skills are still

not developed systematically to help pupils achieve well and suggests a lack of some teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

- 100 Pupils have experience of a reasonable range of media, such as paint, pastels and chalk. Sketches and diagrams to support science work develop satisfactorily, particularly when pupils have opportunity to draw from close observation, for example, electrical components. Pupils learn about stitch-craft, mirror work and printing through whole school themes and visiting artists. These are worthwhile and quality experiences. This broadens their understanding of art work to some extent but they do not get as much out of the experiences because of their unsatisfactorily developed art skills. Some younger pupils have experience of design at a very basic level but this does not develop satisfactorily as they move through the school. In the infant classes, pupils have many experiences of colouring and achieve well in this work. However, too many low-level colouring activities in the juniors do not enable pupils to develop their artistic skills satisfactorily. An artistically gifted pupil has been able to visit a local art gallery in order to gain a wider appreciation of artistic styles. There is good evidence that the school is using ICT to assist the pupils' artistic development with programs such as 'paintbox'. Pupils have also experienced a 'Chinese Art' day where they studied the artistic techniques of that culture.
- 101 Since the previous inspection, the allocation of time to art has improved and is in line within recommendations. Evidence continues to suggest that pupils do not receive a full experience of artistic techniques or learn about a wide range of famous artists and their work.
- 102 From speaking with the co-ordinator and looking at pupils' work it is also evident that pupils' abilities are underestimated. Work displayed is largely teachers' work, rather than pupil's own work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 103 Due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe more than one lesson. Judgements on standards of attainment are based on a range of evidence including the analysis of pupils' work and displays. Standards of design and technology for pupils by the end of Year 2 are below the national expectation and for pupils by the end of Year 6 they are well below national expectations. All pupils achieve unsatisfactorily. This is largely due to weaknesses in the school's breadth of studies. Recent work clearly shows that essential skills in both design and construction are not developed systematically to help pupils achieve well, and indicates a lack of teachers' confidence in teaching the subject.
- 104 Pupils have some experience of the design process. They use planning sheets on which they identify the materials they intend to use. Sometimes they sketch an outline of their model. They have few useful experiences of evaluating their work. Pupils' making skills, such as, cutting and sticking, as well as their understanding of the design process, are limited. Examples of work displayed show that pupils have worked with card and brass fasteners to make articulated models. Older pupils continue with this work and also have experience of designing and making pop-up cards. There is no evidence that the school is using ICT in this subject.
- 105 No overall judgement on teaching can be made but in the one infant lesson observed on movement and levers, teaching was satisfactory. The teacher made insufficient an impression on the pupils to hold their concentration during the discussion stage, but a good collection of teaching resources, together with the effective deployment of support staff meant that most pupils were able to create moving drawings or models



using split pins and glue. Gifted and talented pupils have not been identified in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

- 106 Standards in history and geography at seven and eleven years are currently below those found in most schools. This is confirmed by the below average quality of recorded work in books from last year, by discussions with pupils and by the standards attained in lessons in the junior department during the inspection. No lessons were seen in the infant classes. The school is presently implementing comprehensive schemes of work to promote the development of skills and knowledge year on year. These are already having a positive effect on the coverage of the subjects in the lessons seen, and, although often untidy, in the work completed in books this term. The school is now well placed to move forward and raise standards.
- 107 In all lessons seen during the inspection and in recently completed work, pupils achieved satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. All pupils are fully included in lessons and educational visits.
- 108 In geography lessons this term, pupils in Year 1 list the physical features seen on their journey to school. In Year 2, pupils are beginning to appreciate some of the aspects of life on the Isle of Struay. In Year 3, pupils build successfully on a stimulating visit to Albert Dock. They know some ways in which the area has changed and are beginning to consider tourism in relation to the city. They are not competent at asking their own relevant questions and their knowledge and use of maps even at a very basic level is not well developed. In Year 4, pupils are still not sufficiently focused when asking questions. They do not have appropriate geographical vocabulary and need much help from the teacher to formulate a list of what they want to find out about Paris. Even when questions are established, only the higher attainers focus specifically on what they need to find out. Some pupils use evidence indiscriminately and draw unsound conclusions, for instance, that blue sky on a picture indicates that weather in Paris is always 'blisteringly hot'. Most pupils do not have a realistic concept of how they might travel to Paris. By the end of the lesson they know that Paris is in France and recognise some monuments such as the Eiffel tower and the Arc de Triomphe. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 show good understanding of recent work on man's effect on the environment. They suggest ways in which quarrying has both positive and negative effects. Their recollection of earlier work is hazy and their knowledge of the map of the world is poor. Their use of co-ordinates to find locations on a map is unreliable.
- 109 In history lessons this term, pupils in Year 1 compare past and present clothes. In Year 2, they compare farming methods and machinery to appreciate change over time. In Year 4, pupils are beginning to understand something of the power and importance of the Tudor monarch through considering the possible duties and hobbies of Henry VIII. Their ability to find information in books is limited by their reading skills. Two pupils use CD Rom, but are not sufficiently focused on the specific task to find relevant information. In Year 6, pupils talk with enthusiasm about their recent work on Britain from the 1930's and show some insights into the period. They are able to draw relevant conclusions from photographs. Their knowledge of the comparative integrity of different forms of evidence is weak. Their understanding and factual knowledge of earlier periods studied is patchy.

- 110 There is insufficient evidence to judge teaching in the infants. The quality of all lessons observed in the juniors was satisfactory with some strengths. Teachers are using the new schemes of work to plan lessons with clear objectives and with appropriate emphasis on the acquisition of skills as well as knowledge. They ask questions skilfully to extend the pupils' ideas. Relationships are good. Teachers are positive and encouraging so that most pupils are confident to demonstrate and to take part in discussion. Pupils in Year 3 are particularly keen to learn following the visit to Albert Dock, but older pupils are sometimes less enthusiastic. Lessons are less inspiring when some pupils work at a slow pace and easily lose concentration in group work. When management strategies are slow to take effect the misbehaviour of one or two pupils in the class slows the pace of learning for all. The teachers' expectations of the way pupils present their work is often too low and this results in pupils work which is untidy and careless. However, plenary sessions are used effectively to check on whether objectives have been achieved, and are successful in making pupils more aware of their learning.
- 111 Residential visits to Colomendy in Year 1 and Year 5 support learning in geography well. The curriculum co-ordinators have relevant action plans including implementation of the new schemes of work and the development of cross-curricular links especially to support the development of writing skills. Although there is some use of ICT for research purposes, there is little development of the use of computer programs to assist pupils to learn about co-ordinates or use simulations for historical understanding. Due to the school's priorities, the curriculum co-ordinators' roles in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum have not been developed.
- 112 The current annual assessment procedures against National Curriculum levels do not help teachers in planning the small steps necessary for effective development of skills. As the new schemes of work are implemented, geography and history are beginning to make a significant contribution to pupils' progress in literacy. Links with mathematics are less well developed. The subjects make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they consider their own heritage. The awareness of man's effect on the landscape and on the world through pollution is raised.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 113 Standards of work for pupils at both the ages of seven and eleven years old are as would be expected for pupils of these ages. The skills of pupils are consistently and progressively developed across the school and this is brought about by an improved quantity and quality of direct teaching, made possible by the better facilities provided by the computer suite. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when it was reported that pupils' skills are not consistently developed across the school and there was insufficient direct teaching of skills.
- 114 By the time they are seven pupils, who have come from a low base of experience, are familiar with the language of ICT. They have developed the basic skills of keyboard and mouse, can save and retrieve work with help, can use the computer to present information and have some understanding of its wider use in the world. The pupils become familiar with the function of various icons. They experiment with various paint and image icons for effect. Through this they learn the function of various tools such as spray gun and paint brush. This is a stimulating activity and ensures their enthusiasm and interest. This activity allows children to work at their own level and the higher attainers are not held back in their discovery of the capabilities of the computer while the less able children, including those with special

educational needs, are given good support to make their investigations. At this stage attainment is a little below expectations but they gain sufficient experience and knowledge to make good progress. In Year 2, pupils develop skills such as 'drag' and 'highlight', which they use to discover the range of fonts the computer can produce before using these skills to change a prepared text. Learning opportunities are very much enhanced by the teachers' very effective use of the interactive whiteboard, which allows all pupils to see clearly what is required of them and reinforces necessary skills. This is one example of the very good resources that the school is providing.

- 115 A good curriculum, together with effective teaching and a high level of support by classroom assistants ensures that pupils begin their work in the junior department working at acceptable standards.
- 116 The satisfactory progress they continue to make ensures appropriate attainment by the time they are 11 years old. Year 3 pupils are able to use graphics to enhance their work and many work confidently with a CD Rom. However, some are unsure of basic skills such as the proper use of the delete key. A task they are given to write a play-script (a good use of the computer to support literacy) is hard for most to achieve since they do not possess sufficient word processing skills to produce the correct format. In Year 5, pupils continue to refine and extend knowledge of word processing and there is evidence that such skills as cut and paste and the use of spreadsheets is part of their experiences. Year 6 pupils develop further skills with spreadsheets. Many pupils need a lot of support but are able to achieve the objective of using a formula to create a table of results, providing a useful link with numeracy.
- 117 Teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally, very good. Although teachers have not yet completed specified training, their subject knowledge and confidence is at least satisfactory and often better. There are, however, instances when some teachers do not ensure that their pupils have sufficient basic skills to carry out the tasks they are set. Very good teaching is achieved through good planning, use of resources and a high level of support. This is crucial for the pupils who lack confidence. It is instrumental in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory and often good progress. Management of pupils is good and there is always a timely reminder of the behaviour that is expected in the computer suite. Pupils usually respond well to this. Each classroom has its own computer and appropriate use of this was made during the period of inspection although, at times, better software would have made its use more effective. Teaching is planned to give all pupils equality of opportunity whatever their experience of computers at home. Teachers know their pupils well and are usually clear about how much they know and what they, as teachers need to do in order that the pupils make further progress.
- 118 The overall scheme of work is designed to cover all the major aspects of the National Curriculum and the school has targeted control technology as an area for improvement. This will be supported by the provision of appropriate software. The school possesses a very wide range of additional resources, such as a digital camera, and is connected to the Internet, which unfortunately was not working during the period of inspection. Under normal circumstances this is used to extend pupils' research skills, independent learning and the use of e mail to make links with other school and organisations. The co-ordinator is well informed and committed to improvement. She tries to ensure that pupils throughout the school learn progressively and she is keen to extend the use of the computer in cross-curricular opportunities. Equipment is kept in good order and a technician is able to support teachers who are less confident and also to support children on a part-time basis.

This assistance enables the school to make very good use of its resources and is a major factor in the rise of standards.

## MUSIC

- 119 Due to the constraints of the inspection timetable, only three lessons were able to be seen during the inspection, together with a brief visit to a guitar instrument tuition group. Two of the lessons were taken by the headteacher, who has specialist expertise in the subject and one by a class teacher in Key Stage 2. The observation of these lessons, together with discussions with pupils about their experiences and enjoyment of the subject, indicates that pupils achieve around the expectation at the age of seven, but that attainment is below the expectation for pupils aged 11.
- 120 By the age of seven pupils learn to sing tunefully. They can recognise that music can be sung and played by varying the pitch of notes. The majority can clap in time to the music and respond correctly to simple notation charts by playing a high or low note on pitched percussion instruments. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in this key stage.
- 121 By the age of eleven, the pupils have built slowly upon their musical knowledge. They have a rudimentary awareness of some musical styles, such as rock 'n' roll, classical or rap. In discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils, none could give the name of a famous composer or recall the name of Sir Paul McCartney as a famous Liverpudlian musician. Very few have any experience in playing the recorder or other solo instrument. The group of four guitar players observed were able to play a restricted number of chords. Year 4 pupils learn that music can create different moods, but their singing, although cheerful, is not very tuneful and does not improve with practice. In Year 5, they learn that there are a set number of beats to the bar in music, but they become confused when the idea is introduced that more than one note can be played within the same beat. Their singing improves in volume and tunefulness as a result of the high expectations of the teacher. However, achievement on the whole in the subject is unsatisfactory for all pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs.
- 122 In the two lessons taken by the headteacher, the quality of teaching was judged to be very good in one and good in the other. The other lesson, taken by the class teacher, was satisfactory. It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, but overall in Key Stage 2 it was satisfactory. Very good teaching in a lesson for younger pupils was characterised by good subject knowledge allied to a lively pace and a sense of humour which readily communicated itself to the pupils. This led to very good learning within the lesson. One pupil learning for the first time about musical changes in steps, jumps or slides, showed good invention in describing a slide as 'scraping down the steps.' In the lesson that was graded satisfactory, while it provided opportunity for pupils to experiment with making music, there was insufficient concentration on pupils' improving their performance or learning the specific language skills to support their musical awareness. It was also clear from the lesson that the pupils had insufficient prior practical experience with the instruments for them to complete the exercise effectively. Most pupils enjoy their music, although there is some restlessness when the lessons start to lose pace when, for instance, not all are involved in playing instruments. Older pupils are not generally alive to the possibilities of making and enjoying music.
- 123 The headteacher works well as the co-ordinator for music within the management structure of the school. In the past two years, the stock of instruments has been

renewed with a good range of pitched and non-pitched instruments reflecting a variety of cultures. Modern keyboards enhance the resources, enabling pupils to see the capabilities of up-to-date technology, but ICT programs are insufficiently used to enhance the pupils' understanding of, for example, notation. A choir has been formed which has been chosen to sing in area concerts. A music scheme of work has been written to support new teaching materials for non-specialists. However, this has yet to show its effectiveness in raising attainment. Discussions with pupils show that they have had insufficient experience of making music or learning about the work of famous composers. A well arranged music room has been established. The school's Christmas celebrations and concerts for parents have featured musical performances. Guitar tuition has been organised, and flute and violin instruction will start in the near future. A band has visited the school to perform to pupils, as has an African drummer. The headteacher has embarked upon a programme of demonstration lessons to provide in-service training to non-specialist class teachers. As a result, the school is well placed to develop the pupils' musical abilities further. As yet, however, there is no assessment system in place to ensure that pupils learn a progressive range of skills or that musically talented pupils are given the support needed for them to progress to a high level of performance.

- 124 At the time of the last inspection, attainment was found to be generally satisfactory at the end of both key stages, but with weaknesses in some teachers' knowledge of understanding of the subject. The school has worked well to provide a wide range of musical resources for pupils, to provide some specialist teaching and assistance for class teachers. However, as these measures have not yet achieved higher standards for pupils generally, there has been insufficient progress in the subject since that time.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 125 Constraints in the inspection timetable meant that it was not possible to observe any lessons in this subject in Key Stage 1. As a result it is not possible to arrive at judgements on the attainments of pupils or on the quality of teaching they receive. In Key Stage 2, two lessons in gymnastics were observed, one covering Years 3 and 4 pupils and one for Year 6. While the younger pupils developed suitable sequences showing a variety of movements, the attainment of pupils aged 11 in gymnastics was observed to be below the expectations for their age. As a result, the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress in physical development.
- 126 Year 4 pupils are able to create sequences showing stretching and jumping movements with crabs, star jumps, spins and rolls. They give appropriate attention to safe landing when jumping from apparatus and return to their starting position with rolls and cartwheels. They include working at different levels of movement in their sequences. They are aware of the need to maintain a proper gymnastic exercise through to the end of their exercise. In Year 6, pupils add a third element to their sequences such as rotation. Most of the pupils can attempt a headstand and can climb the ropes securely, letting themselves down again with good control. A small number of pupils show impressive agility and suppleness in their movements. However, most pupils climb on and off the apparatus in a slapdash fashion and fail to finish their sequences with a proper flourish. Their gymnastic exercises lack finesse and, although they are tasked to consider how to improve their sequences, many of the pupils approach them as if they are just going through the motions.
- 127 In the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The pupils were organised in a calm, disciplined manner. There was a suitable concern to

assure the safety of the pupils while giving them the opportunity of experimenting with different ways of using the apparatus. In both the lessons observed, the pupils' attitudes were satisfactory. Too much time was spent inactive while waiting for their turn and this led to some restlessness and inattention, although behaviour was maintained at an acceptable level. The younger pupils were tasked to look at the other pupils while waiting for their turn and most did so, being able to point out whenever pupils landed safely or not. Both lessons contained exercises that were appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupils. However, the older pupils were not shown how to build up the quality of their movements, such as by going into a crab position with straight legs. Neither lesson took advantage of the space available in the school hall to use floor work as a lead-in to apparatus work nor included a suitable cool down exercise to end the lesson. However, these weaknesses are balanced by both teachers' good control over their pupils and the clarity of their explanations of the tasks. These were relevant to the planned programmes of study and to the ages of the pupils. Both teachers placed a high priority on stressing pupils' self-evaluation of their sequence work.

- 128 The co-ordinator for the subject has developed a curriculum map which shows how the main strands of the physical education curriculum are to be covered throughout the course of the year. This indicates that the school plans a balanced programme, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, participate in athletics and gymnastics and respond to music through dance. Pupils in Year 5 also have experience of outdoor adventurous activities in their visit to the Colomendy Centre. In Years 5 and 6, pupils receive fortnightly swimming lessons at a local pool, and around two-thirds of the pupils aged 11 leave the school able to swim the basic standard of 25 metres distance. However, there is insufficient time given in the week by week allocation of lessons to this wide ranging subject for it to be covered in sufficient breadth and depth.
- 129 The co-ordinator has attended local in-service training courses and attends neighbourhood group meetings with the local physical education adviser. The curriculum plan is being up-dated to take account of new national guidelines for the subject. Resources to support the teaching of competitive sports are being developed and all teachers have received training in their use. The teachers' planning documents are being monitored to ensure that the curriculum is fully covered, but as yet there is no individual assessment system which can be used to follow the pupil's abilities and identify future learning targets. As a result, pupils with special talents are not making the progress that they should. However, pupils who show promise in football are given the opportunity to have extra practice in the weekly extra-curriculum club, which is well-attended and taken by a specialist coach. The school also provides well for pupils to develop their skills in athletics through a weekly club, although this is less well supported. The school youth club also contains opportunities for pupils to practise other sports such as table tennis. Some of the agility mats are showing signs of considerable wear. They will not be suitable for use in the new building as they are not of a consistent model. The school has not yet taken advantage of the use of ICT in this subject by, for example, using spreadsheets to measure improvements in performance. At the time of the last inspection, standards were found to be generally satisfactory across the school, with some lack of pace and organisation in junior classes. As these standards have not been maintained, there has been insufficient progress in this subject in the intervening period.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 130 Pupils' attainments generally meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the ages of seven and eleven years. This represents a maintenance of the standards identified at the time of the last inspection, although the scrutiny of pupils' completed work indicates that there are classes where written work is completed to a variable standard. However, pupils' achievements throughout both key stages are satisfactory in learning about the major world religions and faith communities.
- 131 By the age of seven, most pupils are able to recount some of the stories of the Christian tradition. They know some of the main Christian festivals, such as Harvest Festival and Christmas, and begin to learn about some of the Gods of the Hindu faith community. However, their written work is often completed in an untidy fashion.
- 132 By the age of 11, the pupils have extended their awareness of the Christian religion. They know about churches, their purpose and the artefacts found in them. They understand that parables are stories that have meaning for the way that believers live their lives. They study the ten commandments and can express them in their own words. In successive years, they are introduced to other major world faiths such as Islam and Buddhism. These, however, are studied in isolation and there is little written evidence of pupils' learning about the similarities in beliefs and practices. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils' written work is kept in an untidy file which makes it difficult for the pupils to take any pride in the presentation of their work.
- 133 In both key stages, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the two lessons observed in infant classrooms, one was taught very well and in the other teaching was satisfactory. Pupils show good attitudes to their work. Resources are well used to excite the pupils' curiosity and exploration. In a lesson on the Hindu Festival of Diwali, the pupils showed very good interest and respect for the traditions being studied, and they responded to the teacher's questions with a range of suggestions for the meanings behind them. The very well taught lesson contained a good use of resources, together with a lively pace and an interest in the subject which inspired the pupils with new learning. An appropriately respectful mood was captured through the use of candles. Tasks were given effectively to assist pupils with special educational needs. In the other lesson, a good use of resources helped to maintain the pupils' interest, but the lesson was hampered by the need to spend time caring for the needs of one or two pupils who did not have the maturity to pay attention for more than a few seconds.
- 134 In the junior classes, teaching was satisfactory in three out of five lessons. In a further two lessons, teaching was judged to be good. In a well taught lesson on Islam, artefacts that were aids to prayer were closely studied. The pupils used a good range of research materials, including a CD Rom to find out their purposes. This lesson lost a little pace as the pupils' research skills were not sufficiently developed. However, the teacher skilfully guided the pupils through the process by reminding them of how investigations in science are carried out. In satisfactory lessons, although the teachers organise interesting activities, the pupils' are not given sufficient help in how to set out their written work in a sufficiently clear form. As a result, pupils often do not finish their tasks and are not able to review their previous learning. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. The majority treat artefacts with suitable reverence and they show an interest in learning about beliefs of differing faith communities. In a number of classes, there are pupils who find it difficult to listen to extended introductions or to take part in verbal question and answer sessions. They easily lose interest when the pace of the lesson slows as a result. They are better when they have a practical written task to get on with.

- 135 The co-ordinator for the subject was not in school during the course of the inspection, but information from the headteacher indicated that resources have been steadily increased and that an increased number of visits outside school to places of worship have been organised. These include the local church, the two Liverpool cathedrals and a local Mosque. The current policy and scheme of work are due to be reviewed during the present school year. The religious education programme supports pupils' spiritual development by providing time for reflection. They consider the ethical nature of issues such as conservation and the school has set aside a special 'quiet room' where discussions on such matters can take place in a suitable atmosphere.