

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **DOVEDALE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104533

Headteacher: Mr S Flynn

Reporting inspector: Mr D S Roberts  
1743

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 196643

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Herondale Road Mossley Hill Liverpool
Postcode:	L18 1JX
Telephone number:	0151 733 2713
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Henley
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D S Roberts	Registered inspector	Science	How well are pupils taught?
		Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Physical education	
Mrs F Kennedy	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr B Frost	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information technology	
		Art	
Mrs A Waters	Team inspector	English	
		Geography	
		History	
		English as an additional language	
Mr A Watson	Team inspector	Music	
		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Dovedale is a larger than average size junior school with 383 pupils on roll. Most pupils come from the surrounding residential areas which include owner occupied and rented accommodation. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is currently 18 per cent, which is broadly in line with that found nationally. The current intake comprises of an almost identical number of boys and girls. Over 14 per cent of pupils are from families belonging to ethnic minority groups, and nearly six per cent are from homes where English is an additional language, which is above the national average. Over 10 per cent of pupils are included on the register for special educational needs. Twelve are at stages three to five, most of whom have difficulties such as dyslexia, and some require support for autism and speech difficulties. Currently, six pupils have statements of specific needs. The great majority of pupils transfer to the school from the associated infant school, and attainment levels on entry are in line with those found nationally.

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

This is a good school. It makes good provision for its pupils who achieve particularly high standards in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching is generally good and often very good. The headteacher, governors and staff work together successfully to promote the pupils' academic and wider development. The school's income is about average and it provides good value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve particularly high standards in English and mathematics
- The quality of teaching is generally good and regularly of high quality in English and mathematics.
- The school is well led and managed.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special education needs, most of whom make good progress.
- The pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is of a very good standard.
- The school is highly successful in promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

- The consistent use of information technology in other areas of the curriculum to extend further pupils' capabilities in the subject.
- The emphasis placed on the experimental and investigative aspects of science.
- The effectiveness of procedures for assessing pupils' progress by building on the many good features which already exist, in order to achieve a more consistent approach.

*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 good improvement since the last inspection. This is reflected in the improving National Curriculum test results in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. Seventy seven per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better at the time of the last inspection. This has increased to 100 per cent and the large majority of lessons seen during this inspection were good or better. Improvements in curriculum planning and in the expectations which teachers have of their pupils, together with the successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have had a positive effect on pupils' learning and progress. Standards in information technology and religious education have improved significantly and now meet the levels set by the National Curriculum and the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus. In addition, the work in music is of a better quality than during the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. Although some improvements have been made to the arrangements for assessing pupils' progress, more remains to be done in this area. Significant improvements to school development and financial planning procedures and the closer involvement of governors in the work of the school have all contributed towards the progress made since the last inspection. The school is well placed to consolidate and build on these improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	A	A	A	well above average    A above average        B average                C below average        D well below average   E
mathematics	B	A	A	A	
science	C	C	C	D	

The table shows that in 1999 the school's test results for English and mathematics were well above the average for all schools and schools with similar characteristics. Results in science were in line with all schools but below the average for similar schools.

National test results for the last three years show the school's rate of improvement to be in line with that found nationally. The governors set appropriately challenging targets for improvements in literacy and numeracy and the school is on course to achieve those set for the year 2000.

Inspection findings are consistent with national test results. They indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and in line with the average for science. Standards in information technology and religious education are broadly in line with levels set by the National Curriculum and the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus. Many pupils produce work of high quality in history, geography and music; in physical education the great majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres or more unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive; respond well to challenging tasks. Very interested in taking part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally of a high standard; pupils work constructively in groups and productively as individuals. They play together sensibly and move about the school without fuss.
Personal development and relationships	Good; show respect for other pupils' feelings, values and beliefs and show confidence and a mature sense of responsibility when asked to express views about issues such as those raised at School Council meetings.
Attendance	Good; at least in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	n/a	n/a	Good, often very good.

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of lessons, good or better in 88 per cent and very good or excellent in 38 per cent.

The teaching of English is very good. Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn and this enables pupils to make rapid progress in developing literacy skills. In mathematics, the teaching is consistently good and often of high quality. High expectations promote good progress and high standards. Teaching is generally good in other subjects, and teachers and support staff work effectively to meet the needs of all pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, relevant and generally of good quality; the development of literacy and numeracy skills is strongly emphasised and a good range of extra-curricular opportunities is offered. Insufficient emphasis on investigative and experimental work in science, and not enough use is made of information technology in other subjects. The school successfully ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision; class teachers provide work which is appropriately challenging, and support staff provide valuable additional attention.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision made by class teachers. External support provided when needed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision in all elements. Effective use of well planned assembly themes is a strong feature. Very good adult role models promote good moral values. Strong emphasis on social development through formal and extra-curricular activities. Awareness of pupils' own and other cultures consistently promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' welfare, health and safety and for child protection. Also good arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. School's approach to assessing pupils' progress lacks clarity and coherence.

The school has developed a good partnership with parents, most of whom feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They successfully create a purposeful but supportive climate. Co-ordinators provide good subject leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body works effectively with the headteacher to provide clear direction for the work of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The existing governing body has only been in place for one term. Despite this, good progress has been made in establishing procedures for securing best value when purchasing resources. Effective arrangements are also in place to monitor the effect of spending on standards and quality of education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of National Curriculum test results and those from other tests to evaluate progress and set targets for further improvement
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan is used effectively to identify needs. Good use is made of all resources, including funding for specific purposes. School is adequately resourced and has sufficient staff. Accommodation adequate but water leakage through the roof causes some disruption during wet weather.

## 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>• The children like school.</li><li>• The children make good progress.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li><li>• The school expects their child/ren to work hard and achieve his/her best.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The school is helping their child/ren to become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A significant minority feel that their child/ren do not get the right amount of work to do at home, and that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities.</li></ul>

The inspectors endorse parents' positive views. They also found the use of homework to support learning to be good, particularly in English and mathematics. However, the school is currently reviewing its approach to homework and has taken into account the views expressed by parents during the recent survey. The inspectors found that the school provides interesting extra-curricular activities for the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 Comparative information, based on the 1999 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 is well above that of pupils in all schools in English and mathematics. More significantly, their performance is also well above average when compared with that of pupils in schools with similar characteristics. National test results for science indicate that the pupils' performance is in line with that of all schools, but below that of pupils in similar schools. The school's overall performance is above that of all and similar schools.
- 2 The same test results indicate that the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level and reaching Level 5 is well above the national average in English and mathematics, and in line with the national average in science.
- 3 National test results for the three years up to 1999 show the school's overall rate of improvement in the core subjects to be broadly in line with the national trend. During the same period, boys outperformed girls, with a significant variation in English. The school is aware of variations in pupils' performance in terms of gender and is monitoring carefully to ensure that there are no factors within the school's control which may contribute towards variation in performance.
- 4 The inspection findings are consistent with the National Curriculum test results. They indicate that standards are well above average in English and mathematics and in line with those found nationally in science. Pupils' achievement in relation to their prior attainment is very good in English and mathematics, reflecting the teachers' high expectations of them.
- 5 In English, speaking and listening standards are well above average. All pupils make good progress because the teachers listen carefully to what they have to say and give them good opportunities to air their views. Standards in reading are high and pupils at all levels of ability make good progress in developing confidence and fluency in reading from a wide range of texts. Standards are above average in writing, and pupils generally produce a good range of written work. There are many examples of good writing across the curriculum, for example in history and geography, which encourages the development of literacy skills.
- 6 In mathematics, high standards in mental work are particularly apparent during the introductory activities to numeracy lessons. The pupils' good grasp of tables and number bonds form the basis for the generally high standards in the subject. In successive year groups, the pupils make increasing progress in problem solving work, and, by Year 6, most are confident in using a wide range of strategies to reach their answers. In science, pupils' very good knowledge of the topics they study is a strong feature in the learning as is their appropriate use of vocabulary relating to their studies. Skills and levels of understanding associated with investigative and experimental work are more variable, reflecting the inconsistent emphasis placed on these elements of science.

- 7 Standards in information technology at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with the levels set by the National Curriculum, and many pupils achieve particularly good standards in aspects of communicating information. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards in the subject were judged to be below national expectations. Although overall standards are satisfactory, some inconsistencies remain in the way the subject is taught throughout the school. The use of information technology in other subjects to extend pupils' capabilities is not sufficiently systematic.
- 8 In religious education, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 meet those set out in the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus.
- 9 Throughout the school, the great majority of pupils, at all levels of ability, make particularly good progress in English and mathematics, and generally good progress in science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. The good progress made by higher attaining pupils reflects the relatively high proportions exceeding the standards set by the National Curriculum in English, mathematics and science. Pupils for whom English is a second language make good progress and have reached the stage where additional external support is no longer required.
- 10 Progress is generally good in all other subjects, and many pupils make very good progress and produce good quality work in aspects of history, geography and music. In swimming, the great majority of pupils make consistent progress and are able to swim 25 metres or more unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 11 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are of a high standard. They are promoted very effectively in numeracy and literacy lessons and consistently supported as part of the work in other subjects. The successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy is having a positive effect on standards.
- 12 Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils reaching the level set by the National Curriculum has increased from 76 per cent to 83 per cent in English, and from 72 per cent to 83 per cent in mathematics. In addition, standards in information technology and religious education now meet those set by the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus.
- 13 The governors set appropriately challenging targets for improvement in English and mathematics, which take account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school is well on course to achieve the targets set for the Year 2000.

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

- 14 The pupils are proud of their school. They work hard and are keen to succeed. Their enthusiasm for all aspects of school life is evident in their punctuality, their very good behaviour and their sustained interest in the wide range of extra-curricular activities which the school offers.

- 15 Behaviour throughout the school is of a high standard. The pupils show consideration for one another in lessons and in their movement around the school. They are extremely courteous to staff and to visitors. They treat their own and other people's property with respect, handling books and resources sensibly and taking care not to damage the many items which go to make up the very high standard of display in classrooms and other areas of the school. Incidents of serious misconduct are rare. There were three such incidents during the last academic year when fixed period exclusions were imposed.
- 16 The pupils' very good attitudes contribute very positively to their learning and to the standards which they achieve. They settle down quickly at the beginning of each lesson and sustain good concentration, responding enthusiastically to questions and joining confidently in class discussion. The many opportunities they are given to work with a partner or as part of a group help to promote their social development and enable them to learn from one another.
- 17 Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils respect and value other peoples' cultures and beliefs. For example, during a Year 5 religious education lesson the pupils gave their undivided attention to an account of an Eid celebration given by two Year 6 pupils. The follow-up written work and discussion were of a high quality and gave a clear indication that the pupils understand the importance of Eid in the Muslim calendar and how the celebration can be related to Christian principles of giving and sharing.
- 18 The pupils enjoy taking responsibility and willingly help their teachers by giving out books, collecting in resources at the end of the lesson and returning registers to the school office. Pupils in Year 6 are given appropriate additional responsibilities such as distributing class registers, answering the telephone at lunch time and operating the overhead projector for school assemblies. A Pupils' Council was established in September 1999. This is well organised and provides a useful forum for pupils to express their ideas and opinions through their class representatives. In ways such as these the school is successfully promoting the pupils' personal development by helping them to develop reliability, a sense of responsibility and an appreciation of the importance of their contribution to the school community.
- 19 The pupils' record of attendance is consistently good and in line with the national average. Weekly attendance figures for individual classes are often in the high nineties. Illness and holidays taken during term time account for almost all absence. There are specific reasons for the rate of unauthorised absence being slightly above the average for primary schools, and the school has taken effective action to address the matter.

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

- 20 The quality of teaching is predominately good and often very good. Eighty eight per cent of lessons observed during the inspection were good or better and 38 per cent were in the very good to excellent category.
- 21 The positive impact of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy on teaching throughout the school is very apparent, and teachers have incorporated similar methods of organisation into their teaching of other subjects. All elements of literacy and numeracy lessons are addressed appropriately.

- 22 The teaching of English is of a high standard. Nearly 40 per cent of lessons observed were very good and over 12 per cent were excellent. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning, enabling the majority at all levels of attainment to make good progress. Teachers show a good understanding of how pupils learn, and this enables most pupils to make rapid progress in developing their literacy skills. A strong feature in the teaching is the way in which the purpose of each lesson is explained to pupils so that they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. In addition, homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
- 23 In mathematics, the teaching is consistently good and often of a high standard. Nearly 40 per cent of the lessons observed were very good and eight per cent were excellent. The arrangements to group pupils in separate classes according to their ability for mathematics lessons is having a positive impact and enabling teachers to set work which is appropriately challenging. This is promoting good progress by pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. The teachers' secure knowledge and expertise in the subject is reflected in the good quality planning and the pace and rigour of the work. Teaching and support staff have high expectations of their pupils and the teaching is brisk and lively. Again, good use is made of homework to consolidate learning.
- 24 In science, the quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes of high quality. Over 30 per cent of lessons were in the very good to excellent category. The teaching of scientific knowledge is particularly effective throughout the school. This is apparent in most lessons as pupils are well extended intellectually and demonstrate a good knowledge of the areas which they have studied. The pace of work in most lessons results in high levels of productivity by the majority of pupils. However, teaching is less consistent in developing pupils' skills and understanding in experimental and investigative work. Although some teachers are particularly effective in addressing these elements of the work, others place too little emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in systematic enquiry, such as asking questions, making predictions and carrying out fair tests.
- 25 The teaching of information technology has improved considerably since the last inspection, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in the various elements of the subject. However, some teachers still lack confidence in the subject and create too few opportunities for pupils to extend their capabilities in information technology during work in other subjects.
- 26 The teaching of religious education is generally good and sometimes very good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The work is based appropriately on the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.
- 27 The teaching of pupils with special needs is good. Class teachers and support staff work together very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. The arrangements to set pupils according to ability in mathematics is proving to be beneficial to those with special educational needs. Individual and small group teaching provided by the co-ordinator for special needs and classroom assistants is ensuring that special needs teaching is appropriately focused to meet the needs of the pupils.

- 28 Specialist teaching is provided where necessary for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Currently, those in this category have made such good progress that additional support is not needed. Class teachers and support staff, however, show a good awareness of their needs and take these into account during lessons. Teaching is also successful in meeting the needs of high attainers. Setting arrangements for older pupils in mathematics, and the grouping of pupils according to ability within classes helps to challenge such pupils. A more specific example is the arrangement for the science co-ordinator to take higher attaining pupils for additional lessons in science outside the normal teaching time. The aim of this arrangement is to ensure that pupils in this category are extended intellectually and reach their potential.
- 29 In other subjects, careful preparation enables teachers to be secure in their subject knowledge. Lesson planning is a strong feature and on-going assessment is used effectively to help teachers to adjust the degree of challenge in order to extend pupils appropriately. Pupils respond positively in lessons and are enthusiastic and hard working. Teachers achieve a good balance between direct whole-class teaching and creating opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile activities. In history and geography, for example, valuable opportunities are created for pupils to work on their own projects. Many pupils demonstrate a very good ability to work independently, and show imagination and creativity in completing research connected to their studies in both subjects. Class management is consistently of a high standard, promoting good behaviour by the pupils and creating appropriate conditions for learning. The great majority of pupils work with sustained concentration and show a mature sense of responsibility, a good understanding of what they are doing and an ability to identify areas for improvement.
- 30 Since the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching has improved considerably. This is reflected in the improvement in teaching grades awarded during this inspection. In 1996, over 23 per cent of lessons were less than satisfactory and only two per cent were good or better. During this inspection, all lessons were at least satisfactory, 88 per cent were good or better and 38 per cent were very good or better. Particular improvements have been achieved in the teaching of information technology, religious education and music. Improvements in lesson planning, helped by the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have contributed significantly towards the overall improvement in the quality of teaching.

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

- 31 The school is successful in providing its pupils with a good curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Although the school has concentrated recently on implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, successful planning has meant that the basic curriculum continues to offer pupils a wide range of relevant and interesting opportunities which are well matched to the pupils' needs.



- 32 The school has effective strategies in place for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, providing opportunities for high achievement and offering the pupils interesting and purposeful learning opportunities. In literacy lessons, the investment in classroom assistants is particularly helping the smooth organisation of group and independent work in which the pupils with special educational needs receive valuable support. In numeracy lessons, the arrangements to set pupils according to ability reduces the spread of attainment in each group so that planning is more manageable. Teacher therefore find it easier to establish appropriate learning objectives for their group and to maintain realistic pace and rigour in the work in ways which motivate and stimulate the pupils.
- 33 The statutory curriculum is enhanced by a range of stimulating and interesting extra-curricular activities for girls and boys. The programme is well balanced and offers a good mixture of sporting, aesthetic, creative and intellectual activities. A good feature of this provision is the continuity provided from Year 3 to Year 6. In addition, the school offers its pupils opportunities to take part in organised visits locally and further afield. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed outdoor adventurous activities during a residential week in Boreatton Park in Shropshire, and Year 6 pupils experienced a residential visit to the local authority's field study centre at Colomendy in North Wales. The pupils took part in well organised activities which supported their learning across many aspects of the curriculum.
- 34 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are completed for the pupils who are at Stage 2 and above of the National Code of Practice. The plans are well written and contain precise and measurable targets which are reviewed at regular intervals. In addition, the setting arrangements in mathematics and the close involvement by the classroom assistants during the literacy hour make important contributions towards the provision for the pupils with special educational needs.
- 35 The school curriculum is socially inclusive and is successful in offering equality of access and opportunity for all of the pupils including those for whom English is an additional language. During daily acts of collective worship the themes chosen recognise the achievements of men and women from the pupils' own and other cultures. In classrooms, a good gender balance is achieved during group work and this is also apparent in the range of the questioning where all pupils are treated fairly.

- 36 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many opportunities are provided for the pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum and in daily acts of collective worship. For example, during one assembly, the pupils were able to engage in personal reflection based on the theme of making and keeping a promise. In a Year 3 lesson, in religious education, the pupils reflected on their own feelings towards Moses, when he encountered the 'Burning Bush'. The pupils are provided with many opportunities which enable them to tolerate each others' point of view and to respect opinions which are different from their own. They are helped in many ways, particularly through school assemblies, stories and by the manner in which all the adults in the school provide good role models, to understand the principles which distinguish right from wrong. The curriculum makes an important contribution to the pupils' own cultural traditions and to the diversity and richness of other cultures. This is particularly so in music, religious education and art. For example, the Year 6 pupils were introduced to Islamic patterns and were helped to appreciate the effective use of strong lines and geometric patterns in creating striking designs using well combined colours. The school places great importance on the daily act of collective worship. In meeting statutory requirements in this respect such occasions are very well planned, mainly of a Christian character and provide an important platform for the pupils to explore questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs.
- 37 The school provides a relevant and coherent curriculum which emphasises the development of the pupils' personal and social education. Health education is taught in all classes and includes appropriate attention to drug misuse and sex education; the valuable contribution of the school nurse plays a significant part of this good provision. The pupils are given essential facts and the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to make informed choices now and in the future.
- 38 The school has developed good links with the local community which provide an added dimension to the pupils' learning. For example, the pupils were welcomed into the local synagogue as part of their study of other religions. Another group visited a Muslim temple and were able to broaden their first-hand experiences. Other pupils worked with personnel from Liverpool Football Club as part of the club's commitment to working in the community. In addition, boys and girls take part in a variety of inter-school matches in a range of sports. They also take part in out of school visits as part of their studies. The school places great store on providing opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility including the manning of the school 'phone during lunch breaks. The governing body is very supportive in fostering links with the local community, and has been instrumental in organising visits from local clergy which bring an additional dimension to school assemblies.
- 39 The school maintains good links with the associated infant school and the main schools to which the Year 6 pupils transfer. There are appropriate arrangements in place for pupils to visit prior to transfer, and good procedures are in place for the transfer of relevant records and attainment data. The school has established strong links with the local teacher training institutions. For example, each year about 90 students visit the school to help the pupils develop their musical skills, particularly focusing on composition and performance.

- 40 Since the last inspection the curriculum shows much improvement, particularly in aspects of the planning and in the coverage of the statutory curriculum.

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

- 41 The school takes good care of its pupils and makes good provision for child protection by following the procedures adopted by the local Area Child Protection Committee. The designated member of staff has a thorough knowledge of local procedures and all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The school nurse provides good support for the work of the school and attends all case conferences.
- 42 The school has a well documented policy on health and safety and carries out a risk assessment at regular intervals. In accordance with the school's and the local education authority's policy, the pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and all the adults in the school community. Staff provide very good role models for the pupils and the pupils respond positively and behave well in lessons and in the playground. Class rules are discussed and agreed at the beginning of the school year and these are displayed prominently in all the classrooms. The code of conduct for other areas of the school is understood by the pupils. This is evident in the orderly manner in which they behave in corridors and on the stairs.
- 43 Hard work and positive attitudes are acknowledged with a wide range of rewards including verbal praise, house points, incentive awards and certificates for good behaviour at lunch time. The school is currently reviewing the reward system to try to achieve greater consistency between classes. This is as a result of consultation with parents prior to implementing the home-school agreement in September 1999. Arrangements for monitoring behaviour are good and parents are consulted at an early stage if behaviour is giving cause for concern. Good procedures are in place for supporting the very small minority of pupils who have difficulty in following the code of conduct. For example, the school is taking advantage of the National Mentoring organisation, a government initiative to improve standards of behaviour in schools.
- 44 School assemblies play an important part in promoting the pupils' personal development, with visiting speakers from local churches and well planned themes covering issues such as bullying, homelessness, caring for the environment and keeping healthy. Circle time has been introduced in Year 5 to allow pupils to reflect on issues which affect them. It was used effectively during the inspection week to explore the subject of bullying and to find ways of resolving conflict. The school plans to extend this type of activity to other classes in the near future.
- 45 The pupils' attendance is monitored carefully and the educational welfare officer is consulted on the rare occasions when an individual's record of attendance is poor. Regular attendance and punctuality are strongly encouraged. The pupils enjoy school and take a pride in arriving punctually. Attendance in the school is good and in line with the national average for primary schools.

- 46 Good provision is made for all pupils, including the higher attainers, the pupils on the register of special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Grouping arrangements for the Literacy Hour are very effective in enabling all pupils to work at an appropriate level. Pupils who require extra help receive well planned additional literacy support from classroom assistants or are taken for specialist teaching by the co-ordinator for special educational needs.
- 47 Teachers keep up to date records of the pupils' attainment in English and mathematics including individual portfolios with samples of the pupils' work. The school meets the statutory requirement to assess the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. In other year groups, although a great deal of assessment information is used to produce targets for groups of pupils, there are insufficient opportunities for individuals to be involved in assessing their own work or setting targets for their own improvement. Although there are many good features included in the arrangements for assessment, there is a lack of consistency in the school's approach to collecting and recording assessment information, and assessment is not always used effectively to plan the next stage of work.

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

- 48 The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that almost all parents are in agreement that their children like school. The great majority of parents consider the school to be well led and managed and feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. They are of the view that teaching is good, and feel the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Nearly all are of the opinion that the school expects its pupils to work hard and achieve of their best, and are happy with the progress their children are making and with standards of behaviour achieved by the school. The inspection findings support all these views.
- 49 Although a significant minority of the parents express dissatisfaction with the amount of work their children are expected to do at home, inspection evidence indicates that teachers make good use of homework particularly in English and mathematics. However, the school is currently reviewing its approach to homework and will take into account the views expressed by parents. Some parents are of the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities for its pupils outside of class lessons. The inspection finds that the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which includes residential visits for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6, music tuition, French club, inter-school sporting competition, a chess club and a Christian club.
- 50 As a result of consultation with parents in drawing up the home-school agreement, which was implemented last September, the school has improved home-school communications and now gives parents prior information on curriculum topics planned for each half term and more guidance on homework. The school is planning to extend the current good practice of including tear-off slips on the forms and letters which are sent home so that the headteacher can be sure that all parents have received important information.

- 51 The quality of the information provided for parents by the school is good. The pupils themselves produce an excellent newsletter which helps to keep parents and carers well informed as to what is happening in school. Parents' evenings are arranged at suitable intervals and attendance at these is often almost 100 per cent, reflecting the high level of interest by parents in their children's education. The meetings held to inform parents about the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy were very well attended as was last year's annual governors' meeting for parents when a creche was provided to encourage parents of younger children to attend. The governors' annual report provides a great deal of information and meets all requirements.
- 52 The school prospectus is well written and gives parents and carers extensive information about the aims of the school, the curriculum and school policies and procedures. Pupils' annual reports provide concise and relevant information for parents on their children's attainment and progress but they place too little emphasis on what the pupils can do to improve the quality of their work and how the parents themselves can help their children to overcome difficulties and achieve higher standards. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their children's reports with class teachers at the parents' meeting in July. An interpreter is provided when necessary for those parents for whom English is an additional language.
- 53 Parents are invited to class assemblies and many give generously of their time to assist with swimming and other lessons and to accompany pupils and staff on visits to places of interest. The parents who helped with last year's science day contributed much to its success by supervising the wide variety of interesting experiments which had been set up in classrooms throughout the school.
- 54 The Parent Teacher Association raises considerable additional funds for the school and these are used for the benefit of all the pupils. For example, the association pays for the upkeep of the school minibus and contributes towards the cost of educational visits. Teachers and parents take part in the annual pantomime which is always hugely popular and a very enjoyable social occasion for the pupils and their families.

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

- 55 The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body work together effectively to provide clear direction for the work of the school. Curriculum co-ordinators provide good leadership in promoting and developing their subjects. All of these factors have a very positive effect on the quality of education provided and result in high standards of achievement by the pupils particularly in English and mathematics.
- 56 Clear educational aims are communicated effectively to parents through the prospectus. They include a commitment to develop social skills, and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences they are likely to meet in a multicultural and pluralistic society. These aims are consistently reflected in all of the school's work. The school is aware of the fact that the performance of boys in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 has been better than that of girls, particularly in English. This issue is being monitored carefully to ensure that girls are not disadvantaged in any way.

- 57 The governing body came into existence at the beginning of the current academic year following the separation of the former joint governing body for the infant and junior schools. Many members were formerly on the joint governing body and have served both infant and junior schools for many years. Rapid progress has been made in a relatively brief period in establishing new committee structures and defining clearly their terms of reference. The governing body now works effectively to meet fully all statutory requirements. It meets government requirements for supporting initiatives such as special educational needs and the implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Many of its members are particularly generous with their time and work hard and effectively in the interest of the pupils.
- 58 Effective procedures are in place to monitor teaching and curriculum development. Strong emphasis has recently been placed on evaluating teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons. The headteacher and relevant subject specialists visit classrooms to observe and evaluate lessons at regular intervals. The deputy headteacher, is timetabled to work in support of some classes during each week, and this provides a valuable overview of teaching and the curriculum. In addition, the governing body has introduced a system of designated governors allocated to subject areas. They liaise with relevant subject co-ordinators and visit classrooms. This provides a valuable insight into curriculum matters which is reflected in the governors' good awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- 59 Curriculum co-ordinators monitor effectively the coverage and balance of work in their subjects, and their action plans inform senior management and the governors' school development committee in the preparation of the school development plan. The consultation process includes staff and all of the governors' various committees from an early stage. Increasing emphasis is placed on securing the views of parents and pupils. For example, surveys using questionnaires were conducted in order to find parents' thoughts and ideas when updating the homework policy and producing the draft home-school agreement document.
- 60 The school development planning process is very effective in ensuring that educational targets are identified accurately, and that money is used efficiently to address priorities. The completed plan provides appropriate information about deadlines, cost implications and success criteria. The governors' finance committee combines effectively with the senior management team and the highly efficient school administration to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. Relevant staff are appropriately trained in the use of information technology to support them in their work. Good use is made of grants for specific purposes, including the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs. The high proportion of income carried forward from the last financial year is to meet the cost of developing and resourcing a new computer suite, and to fund the initiative to improve the quality of the external environment.

- 61 The strategic management of resources is good. The school is appropriately staffed with teachers who are suitably qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the curriculum. The very effective use of support staff is a strong feature which has a positive impact on provision for pupils with special educational needs. The recent appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator without class teaching responsibilities is already having a positive effect in bringing coherence and consistency in provision across the school. In addition, the use of specialist staff to teach music contributes significantly towards an improvement in quality in the subject. Good arrangements are in place to support staff development, including those who are newly qualified or new to the school. Although there has been some interruption to the appraisal process recently, annual personal interviews with staff, conducted by the headteacher, contribute effectively towards a common sense of purpose. All subjects are resourced adequately, and there are well advanced plans to produce a new computer suite with more up to date equipment.
- 62 Accommodation is adequate and effectively managed. Very good quality displays enhance considerably the internal learning environment. In some parts of the school, water leakage through the roof often causes interruption and a loss of teaching time during poor weather; the governing body is currently giving this matter urgent attention. Outside, the surface of the playground is poor. The school is currently preparing a project to improve the quality of the external environment.
- 63 The governing body is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of education and academic standards. Effective procedures have been established for securing best value when purchasing resources and equipment and arranging for work to be completed. In addition, governors and senior management work together effectively to monitor value for money in terms of the effect of new resources and initiatives on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the pupils.
- 64 Since the last inspection significant progress has been achieved in developing the role of the governing body. Members now gain a direct insight into the work of the school through their roles as designated governors for subject areas. They play an active part in the school development process and work effectively with senior management to ensure efficient financial planning and control.

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

In order to raise further the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- i) secure more consistent use of information technology across the curriculum in order to extend pupils' capabilities by :
  - a) consistently including provision for information technology in the planning of other subjects, and
  - b) improving the expertise of those teachers who lack confidence in the subject; (paragraph references: 25 and 99)
- ii) place greater emphasis on the experimental and investigative aspects of science by:
  - a) making more precise provision for these elements in the planning for science, and
  - b) developing the expertise of teachers through appropriate professional training; (paragraph reference: 92)
- iii) improve procedures for assessing pupils' progress by:
  - a) involving individual pupils in setting personal targets for improvement, and monitoring closely their progress towards them;
  - b) developing a systematic approach to collecting and recording assessment information; and
  - c) making more consistent use of assessment information to inform planning. (paragraph reference: 47)

Priorities to strengthen aspects of science, information technology and assessment procedures are included in the current school development plan.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	30	50	13	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	383
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	69

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.2	School data	1.0
National comparative data	5.6	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 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	50	39	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	43	39
	Girls	33	31	29
	Total	74	74	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83	83	76
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	39	41
	Girls	28	26	29
	Total	69	65	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78	73	79
	National	69	69	75

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	1
Indian	5
Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	9
White	328
Any other minority ethnic group	23

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	
Other minority ethnic groups		

*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: Y3 – Y6]**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Average class size	

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	601,981.00
Total expenditure	566,556.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,528.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,239.72
Balance carried forward to next year	110,664.40

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	377
Number of questionnaires returned	108

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	0	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	51	17	3	2
The teaching is good.	56	41	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	50	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	39	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	49	14	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	43	6	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	48	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	35	19	4	10

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

### **ENGLISH**

- 66 The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are generally well above those found nationally. The great majority of pupils achieve, and a substantial proportion exceed, the levels set by the National Curriculum. Most pupils make very good progress in all aspects of the subject in relation to their prior attainment. The school successfully teaches a well planned and progressive programme of work linked to the National Literacy Strategy, effectively meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities. The school is aware of the variation in performance in terms of gender in recent years and takes appropriate steps to ensure that no group suffers any disadvantage as a result of the way teaching and the curriculum is organised for English. The additional literacy support which allows for more direct and focused teaching in small groups enables the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make very good progress towards the targets identified for them.
- 67 In speaking and listening, standards are very good throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers. The majority of pupils express their opinions clearly and confidently. They are keen and enthusiastic to talk, make intelligent responses and communicate their ideas effectively. Their comments are always relevant to the task. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 class when, during a discussion of Psyche and Eros, pupils demonstrated advanced skills in using a range of vocabulary. All pupils make good progress because the teachers listen to them and encourage them to think about what they have to say and give them good opportunities to air their views.
- 68 Standards in reading are consistently very good. Pupils of all levels of ability read with enjoyment, confidence and fluency from texts such as *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and the novels of Bell Mooney, Anne Fine and Paul Jennings. They read new words well and can explain their meanings in context. They can make inferences about what they are reading, anticipate what might happen next in the story and offer alternative scenarios. They scan the text to find evidence for their assumptions and explain their views, and show a good understanding of the main ideas linked to the characters and the plot. All pupils read from a range of fiction and non-fiction and make good use of reference books and CD-ROM for researching information. The variety of texts, experienced by the pupils during the literacy hour, has succeeded in widening pupils' horizons in their choice of reading materials. As a result of the focused teaching in these lessons pupils become familiar with terms such as 'genre' which is reflected in their work. Many have a good knowledge of a range of poets, authors and novels including some of the works of Shakespeare. They read a good range of fiction from the books provided in the school library, and many pupils make use of the public library in Allerton.

- 69 Throughout the school, standards in writing are above average. Pupils produce a very good range of written work. They write in various forms, including prose, play-scripts and verse. They modify the style of writing to suit the purpose, such as that found in novels, newspaper articles and reports. Pupils' written language is enriched through developing skills such as the use of simile and the use of imaginative vocabulary. Their writing is well organised and spelling and grammar are most usually accurate. The higher attaining pupils write at good length and use the full range of punctuation including speech marks, paragraphs and the apostrophe appropriately. Pupils of average attainment also write at good length but their use of punctuation is not as sophisticated. Although the writing of the lower attaining pupils and those with special needs is below the national expectations, the staff encourage their use of imagination and pride in their ability to produce a good story. Most pupils can write in a fluent and legible style and the presentation of their work is of a high quality. There are many examples of good extended writing across other areas of the curriculum, for example in history and geography when pupils researched Egypt both ancient and modern. This encourages the development of pupils' literacy skills. They use word processing to present their work but this is not a consistent feature in the curriculum.
- 70 Pupils respond well and behaviour in lessons is of a high standard. They enjoy the shared reading and writing times provided within the literacy hour and in additional English lessons. They listen well, are very attentive and show interest in their work. Pupils at all levels of ability are confident and eager to explain what they have learned or to read out their written work during the plenary sessions. They are very polite and friendly.
- 71 Throughout the school, the majority of pupils including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. Writing skills are systematically developed alongside pupils' growing facility in reading and spoken English. As they progress through the school they develop their competence to organise and structure their writing, drawing on their experience of reading and studying a range of fiction, poetry and reference materials. They use ever more precise language and become increasingly aware of the grammar and vocabulary of standard English. They use spelling, punctuation and grammar with increasing accuracy and their handwriting is fluent, joined and legible.

- 72 The quality of teaching is very good and effectively promotes pupils' learning. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn and this enables pupils to make rapid progress in developing literacy skills. Lessons follow the structure set out in the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers' planning is usually detailed and thorough and sets high expectations. The purpose of each lesson is explained to pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 lesson on adjectives. After a clear introduction, with good examples of interesting vocabulary taken from pupils' suggestions, pupils set out to write a description of a character from the opening text, making good use of carefully selected adjectives. Group work is carefully planned to challenge pupils of different abilities, especially in Year 3 and 5 where precise literacy targets are set for each group and understood by the pupils. Teachers provide an interesting stimulus through well chosen shared reading texts which capture pupils' interest and result in them working productively and putting in a great deal of intellectual and creative effort. This was particularly evident in a guided writing lesson when pupils wrote an advertisement for a super hero after reading about the Birth of Perseus. The teacher made good use of the overhead projector to model writing and introduce the idea of a writing frame. The shared reading sessions are used effectively to focus on improving pupils' intonation and expression. Clear explanations and good use of questioning promotes pupils' awareness of style and develops their interest in the characters. Teachers skilfully grasp opportunities to reinforce pupils' use of punctuation and remind them of spelling patterns and rules. The teaching in the literacy hour proceeds at a brisk pace and the time is well used to ensure that pupils move on quickly. The relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good. Teachers introduce humour into their lessons and have high expectations of their pupils in behaviour and in the standard of work expected. Homework is regularly used to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning. The work in English is successfully fulfilling the school's aim to improve the quality of pupils' writing.
- 73 The very good work of the co-ordinator for English is an important factor in the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. She has carefully planned a well structured programme of work and provided clear and useful guidance for teachers in each year group. The provision for pupils with special education needs is very good with capable and experienced support within the class and the use of the Additional Literacy Support materials. There is ongoing assessment of pupils in the classroom, using both formal and informal methods which enables pupils to make further progress as appropriate. There are formal assessments each year and national assessments at the end of the key stage. The results are analysed and the information used to set targets for future years. However, targets are not set for individual pupils nor are pupils involved in evaluating their own performance and agreeing their own targets. Resources for English are good. Additional books and materials have been purchased to support the teaching of literacy and are of good quality. There is a reasonable range of fiction and non-fiction books available in class libraries and the small school library.

## MATHEMATICS

- 74 Standards in mathematics are well above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2, the great majority of pupils achieve the standard set by the National Curriculum and a substantial proportion exceed this level. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 75 In all year groups the pupils demonstrate good skills in recalling and using basic number facts during the time allocated for rapid oral mental work. The youngest pupils have a good understanding of the number system and can read, write and order whole numbers to 100 and beyond. They have a good basic grasp of place value and understand that the position of a digit signifies its value. By Year 6, the oldest pupils use effectively their increasing knowledge of place value in a range of different applications, including computation using accurately the four number operations. In successive year groups, the pupils make increasing progress in their problem solving work. By Year 6, the pupils are confident in using a range of different strategies to reach answers, and in their explanations they demonstrate accurate use of relevant mathematical vocabulary. For example, in a class of the oldest pupils they were able to explain their strategies for multiplying three digit numbers by two digit numbers. They described partitioning accurately and spoke about factors and their use of brackets with clarity and understanding. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are adept in using accurately extensions of the number system, including negative numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages.
- 76 The pupils use and consolidate their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum including geography, history, design and technology and in their science work. For example, Year 4 pupils were taught how to measure their pulse rate after exerting themselves in different situations. They used a basic formula in completing their calculations which were accurate and meaningful, and helped them to understand how their bodies worked in this respect.
- 77 In each year group, the pupils make good progress in work related to shape, space and measures. They use accurate mathematical vocabulary when describing and sorting three and two dimensional shapes according to their properties. The older pupils understand how to measure angles accurately and are able to use their knowledge of angles of a triangle when completing calculations where only two angles are known. The pupils have a good understanding of reflective and rotational symmetry. The oldest pupils have a good grasp of the orders of symmetry and know how to use negative numbers when translating shapes from the first to the fourth quadrant.
- 78 The pupils make good progress in handling data. They demonstrate increasing skills when they collect, record and interpret information using charts, diagrams, tables and graphs. For example a Year 3 class collected information about the number of bedrooms in their houses. They were able to use a computer programme to construct an appropriate bar chart and were able to interpret their findings with accuracy. By the end of the key stage, the oldest pupils have a good understanding of the concept of probability. The higher attaining pupils understand and use the probability scale from 0 to 1. They can find and justify probabilities, and approximations to these, by selecting and using methods based on equally likely outcomes and experimental evidence.



- 79 Throughout the key stage, the pupils make good progress in using and applying their mathematical skills. The higher and average attaining pupils in Year 6 are particularly skilled in developing their own strategies for solving problems which they use within mathematics and in applying mathematics to practical contexts. They present information in a clear and organised way and can explain clearly the reasoning behind the strategies they use.
- 80 The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work in mathematics. They enjoy the content of lessons and respond enthusiastically to the challenges they are set. The pupils listen carefully to explanations and instructions and settle quickly to their tasks. They co-operate productively when working with others and the presentation of their work is particularly neat and clear. In all lessons the pupils' behaviour is of a high standard.
- 81 The quality of teaching is consistently good and often of a high standard. The teaching demonstrates good knowledge and expertise in the subject. This is reflected in the good quality of the planning, in the pace and rigour in the work and in the high quality of questioning which is used effectively to assess the pupils' level of understanding. In the best teaching, the staff have high expectations, the teaching is brisk and lively and the pupils are set clear targets which are made known to them. At the beginning of each lesson, the pupils are informed of the learning objectives. In all classes a good balance is achieved between direct teaching and the time allocated to the pupils' group or individual tasks. Classes are well managed and organised promoting high standards of behaviour. Good use is made of homework to consolidate the pupils' learning and is most effective when it is planned to integrate with classwork. All staff mark work done at home regularly and constructively. The quality of the teaching has a positive impact on the good quality of the pupils' learning. The teaching is well matched to the pupils' attainment levels and helps them to acquire progressively knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematics. The content interests the pupils, who work at a good pace and demonstrate good levels of perseverance and concentration.
- 82 The school has made a very good start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons follow the expected format. Mental work is conducted rigorously but with humour so that the pupils are enthused and motivated to make the progress which they do. The clear targets which the pupils are set encourage them to work productively during group or individual work and the final plenary sessions are effectively taught and consolidate the pupils' learning and extend their thinking.
- 83 Since the last inspection the standards of work have improved as has the quality of the teaching which has been instrumental in assisting the pupils to make good progress. The setting arrangements have also contributed to this improvement because the range of attainment in each group has been reduced enabling the teachers to plan work which is now well matched to the pupils' needs. The planning now includes appropriate attention to each of the attainment targets so the content of the work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## SCIENCE

- 84 Standards in science are broadly in line with those found nationally. The large majority of Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve, and a significant minority to exceed, the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in the school in relation to their prior attainment. Although the programme of work generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, insufficient emphasis is placed on the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject in some classes.
- 85 In Year 3, pupils draw well on prior learning to help them understand and increase their knowledge of the physical processes. This was apparent when they investigated magnets as part of their early work on forces. The majority were able to make appropriate use of terms such as "repel" and "attract" to describe what happened when they tried to join magnets together, and the average and higher attainers were able to give reasons for what happened, using phrases such as, "like poles repel and opposites attract".
- 86 In Year 4, pupils studying the human body, as part of their work on life processes and living things, show good knowledge and understanding of circulation. In one lesson, for example, after engaging in physical activity, the pupils were able to measure pulse rates and to describe the effect of exercise on the body. The majority were able to explain why their pulse rate was faster after exercise than it was before the physical activity.
- 87 In Year 5, pupils studying materials and their properties, are able to group and classify objects according to prescribed criteria. They show a good knowledge of the properties of particular materials, and appreciate that some are not easy to categorise. In one lesson for example, pupils who had invented their own criteria for sorting objects into two categories, understood the need for a third to accommodate items which met the criteria for both categories.
- 88 In Year 6, pupils extend further their knowledge and understanding of forces. For example, in one lesson pupils investigating flight understood that successful flight needs to overcome gravity. They were able to carry out and draw appropriate conclusions from simple experiments.
- 89 Although pupils in some classes make consistent progress in developing their skills in the experimental and investigative aspects of science, these elements are not emphasised sufficiently in other classes, and consequently this restricts the pupils' progress in these important aspects of science.
- 90 The work in science makes an important contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. They use a range of reference materials to locate information and an increasing vocabulary to explain their findings. Although there are some good examples of the use of information technology to support learning, this is not a consistent feature.
- 91 The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work in science. They show high levels of curiosity and a good ability to recall learning from previous lessons. Their ability to co-operate sensibly in pairs or groups is a good feature, particularly when given the opportunity to engage in experimental and investigative work.

- 92 The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Eighty five per cent of lessons observed were good and nearly 30 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. The teaching of scientific knowledge is effective throughout the school. This is apparent in most lessons as pupils, at all levels of ability, are well extended intellectually and demonstrate a good knowledge of the areas they have studied. However, teaching is less consistent in developing pupils' skills and understanding in experimental and investigative work. Although some teachers are highly effective in addressing these elements of the work, others place too little emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in systematic enquiry, such as asking questions, using focused exploration, making predictions and carrying out fair tests. Despite this, the planning of most lessons is detailed and thorough, and tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils intellectually. Very good class management promotes standards of behaviour which are consistently high and helps the work to move at a good pace. This results in good levels of productivity by the pupils. Strong emphasis is placed in most lessons on the importance of neat presentation of work and pupils respond positively. The excellent balance between perceptive input and intervention by the teacher and well planned experimental and investigative work is a strong feature in the best lessons.
- 93 Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the planning of work and in provision for high attainers. Much of this is due to the very good work of the co-ordinator who has provided clear guidance for other teachers. The school recognises the need to secure more systematic coverage of experimental and investigative work and has included this as a priority in the current school development plan.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 94 Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the levels set by the National Curriculum. The majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 95 By the time the pupils reach Year 6, they demonstrate satisfactory skills in communicating information. They are confident in generating text and in amending and improving the quality of their work. They understand how to use graphic images to complement their text. This was apparent in a Year 6 class, where the pupils used their developing skills to produce a Dovedale School newsletter. Other pupils had used these skills effectively to record their visit to the Blue Planet aquarium on the Wirral.
- 96 Throughout the school the pupils gain increasing skills in handling information. For example, in a class of younger pupils, they knew how to add to, amend and interrogate information that had been stored. They used the database 'Junior Pin Point' when working on a topic about themselves. They were able to produce a variety of information about their own houses and the range of properties in which they live.

- 97 The pupils make satisfactory progress in aspects of their work related to controlling, measuring and monitoring. Some of the Year 4 pupils for example were able to write a set of commands to draw various shapes on the screen. They understood how to determine the length of sides and the size of angles required for specific turns when drawing triangles and quadrilaterals. When running their commands on screen they achieved a high level of success. In a Year 5 class, the pupils knew how to produce and use spreadsheets. In one investigation to find the cost of electricity when using different household appliances they were able to increase the size of columns, add to and amend the information stored and to calculate running costs of the various appliances over time.
- 98 Since the last inspection, the standards reached, the range and quality of the work planned and the quality of the teaching have all shown improvements. The school has its own web site on the internet and pupils are able to use e-mail and to locate a range of information using CD-ROM.
- 99 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes of a high standard. In the best lessons, good subject knowledge and expertise are reflected in the content of the lesson and the clear and precise teaching steps which promote the pupils' learning and guide them forward effectively. However, where the teaching is less secure in some classes, the use of work in other subjects to support the pupils' developing information technology capability is under emphasised. During their time in the school, the pupils progressively acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding in information technology. The work is planned effectively and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- 100 The pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards information technology and work productively and often independently in small groups with minimal supervision.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 101 Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with those set by the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in school.
- 102 Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of Bible stories and teachings of other religions and are able to relate these to everyday life. For example, the pupils in Year 3 showed a good understanding of the story of Moses and the 'Burning Bush'; the spiritual elements of the lesson being effectively reinforced through the reading of a poem to illustrate Moses' feelings. Year 4 pupils made good progress in the study of Noah and effectively related this to the importance of keeping promises. The higher attaining pupils were able to link this theme with previous work involving the breaking of rules in the Garden of Eden. The pupils in Year 5 made very good progress in their understanding of the Muslim celebration of Eid. This was most effectively illustrated by two older pupils who shared their knowledge and understanding of Islam and wore appropriate Muslim costume. Year 6 pupils related the healing by Jesus of the leper to the work of Mother Theresa. They effectively used these examples to extend their awareness and understanding of issues such as social exclusion through illness.

- 103 The pupils are well motivated and enjoy religious education lessons. They work effectively in whole class and small groups and as individuals. They show respect for each others' point of view. Pupil to teacher relationships are mature and productive. The pupils handle resources with care.
- 104 The quality of teaching is good and teachers show a good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and managed. Lesson objectives are clear and based appropriately on the Agreed Syllabus. An appropriate range of teaching strategies helps to sustain the pupils' interest, and resources are used effectively to support the pupils' learning. The pupils' work is marked effectively and gives the pupils a clear indication of their strengths and areas for improvement. Good quality explanation and skilful questioning are strong features in the teaching and make a significant contribution to the good pace of lessons.
- 105 Religious education makes an important contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills. Many opportunities are given for the pupils to engage in extended writing about such topics as Rama and Sita and the story of Hanukkah.
- 106 Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The pupils are able to relate the religious concepts they are being taught to their own experiences. Opportunities are given within lessons for quiet reflection, for example in the Year 4 lesson on God's promise to Noah, the pupils quietly thought about keeping their promises. A range of extra curricular activities, including the Christian Club, and involvement with local churches, effectively supports the work of the teachers in religious education.

## **ART**

- 107 The pupils work at appropriate levels for their age, and the great majority including those with special educational needs, have made good progress by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2.
- 108 The pupils make good progress in representing what they see or imagine with increasing skills. For example, Year 6 pupils studied Bruegel's "The Numbering at Bethlehem" and produced their own good quality paintings of trees in snow. They captured the feeling of striking starkness in producing well-proportioned trunks and branches, creating effective and dramatic pictures.
- 109 Throughout the school, the pupils make good use of their art notebooks to practice drawing and shading skills. For example, Year 3 pupils practised techniques of shading to give their fish drawings added impact. They handled their pencils effectively using just the right amount of pressure to shade from light to dark.
- 110 The pupils develop skills in both two and three dimensional work. For example, some of the older pupils designed and made highly effective millennium masks, which demonstrated good progress in using their ideas creatively. The masks were cleverly designed and incorporated effective folding and curling techniques. Throughout the school, the pupils are confident in exploring various materials, and in colour mixing to achieve their desired effect. They recognise how visual elements such as pattern, texture, line and tone are used to add interest to their work.

- 111 The quality of teaching is generally good. The pupils are introduced successfully to a range of skills and techniques during lessons which are well planned and organised. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved in art. The pupils are now able to make wider choices in selecting the tools and materials they require for their work. In addition, classroom support staff make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 class, the pupils with special educational needs were helped to make the progress expected by the class teacher because of the good quality linguistic interaction of the classroom assistant who assisted the pupils to work productively and encouraged successfully their creative effort. Good use is made of the work of various artists from our own and other cultures, to provide new ideas and to encourage pupils to reflect on their own work. Recently, some of the oldest pupils were taught by an artist in residence and produced an effective and skilfully made wall hanging based on a theme of India.
- 112 Throughout the school the pupils make good progress in their learning and progressively increase their acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding of art. Tasks are well matched to the pupils' age and capability in each year group. The pupils respond well to their work in art. They enjoy the experiences provided and in discussion they talk confidently about the work of artists they have studied from our own and other cultures.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 113 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence available to make a full evaluation of work in design and technology. However, scrutiny of work produced previously by the pupils and examination of long and mid-term planning indicates that the school delivers an appropriately balanced programme during the course of the year.

## **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

- 114 In their work in both history and geography, the great majority of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 work at levels which are at least appropriate for their age and many pupils produce work of a particularly high standard.
- 115 Consistently good planning with a clear focus on developing enquiry skills in history promotes effective learning. Throughout the key stage these skills are continuously built upon in lessons and through project work, such as Ancient Egypt or life in Tudor times. This enables pupils to make good progress through independent research, and the acquisition of new facts, whilst enabling all pupils to grasp the importance of how history has affected present day life and lifestyles. Pupils benefit from visits to places such as Speke Hall and Wigan Pier and a re-enactment of life in Victorian school room. They write careful accounts of work they have done in history and this is often of a high standard. It demonstrates their ability not only to describe events but also to link causes and effects in changes they have considered between the past and present day.

- 116 Work in geography is planned through topics based on relevant starting points. The well planned programme of visits and associated fieldwork, such as a residential visit to Colomendy or work with the Mersey Basin Trust, provides the pupils with an effective range of experiences and plays a significant part in the development of the pupils as independent learners. Through this work, pupils become more aware of environmental issues and develop an understanding of how the natural character of an area influences its development.
- 117 The previous inspection reported that mapping skills were underdeveloped. Current inspection findings show that this aspect of the work is much improved throughout the school. Teachers focus appropriately on map-work and interpretative skills. Older pupils understand scale in map work and use grid references and co-ordinates correctly. In Year 6, for example, pupils demonstrated their ability to match photographs to corresponding maps whilst tracing the course of the River Mersey from its source in the Peak District to its mouth in Liverpool. They could identify geographical features and give sensible opinions about the main physical features and land use.
- 118 Pupils' learning in both history and geography is enhanced by their good attitudes. Most pupils respond well and enjoy their lessons and the opportunities given to them to undertake independent work. They are highly motivated and research material in books from school or home thoroughly. They collect artefacts from parents and grandparents and use encyclopaedias and computer programs as sources of evidence. They work hard and collaborate well, sharing resources and discussing issues sensibly as they work.
- 119 Learning is promoted effectively by good quality teaching. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and their familiarity with the local area, traditions, people and places is put to good use. They are enthusiastic and plan their lessons carefully. The pupils catch their enthusiasm and become increasingly confident assuming responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school. The skills acquired in Years 3 and 4 are continuously built upon as teachers plan for more intricate and extensive research using a widening range of resources. Teachers extend the work in both history and geography to incorporate knowledge and skills in other subjects. Literacy skills are successfully enhanced as pupils write lengthy passages to describe and explain their findings. Mathematical skills, especially numeracy and data handling are put to good use in map work and in producing charts and diagrams. Teachers ensure that technical language and terms are effectively recorded and understood so that progress is good in related areas as well as in historical and geographical knowledge and understanding.
- 120 There is a good policy and scheme of work in place for both history and geography which clearly indicates when and how the knowledge and understanding of concepts as well as the level of skills should be developed. There are sufficient resources available and these are put to good use.

## **MUSIC**

- 121 The majority of the pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2, work at levels appropriate for their age. The substantial majority of the pupils, at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in school.

- 122 The younger pupils listen well and make very good progress when clapping in two and three time rhythms. They easily make the transition from rhythmic chanting to melodic singing of the Puppet Dance. Effective questioning by the teacher enables the pupils to develop and use a range of musical vocabulary including, beat, rhythm, step, leap and quavers. Theoretical knowledge is effectively developed as lessons proceed. The pupils make very good progress in following the directions of a conductor and singing in two groups Petrouchka's Song of Freedom. Pupils are effectively introduced to ballet through Stravinsky's Russian Dance. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are involved in all aspects of the lesson. They make very good progress. The pupils make good progress with an appropriate balance between singing and theory. They make good progress in developing vocal skills and have a sound understanding of notation, pitch and melodic contours. They understand major and minor chords and are able to relate these to happy and sad feelings. The pupils effectively use percussion instruments and keyboards to create chord sequences and harmonies. They perform well and effectively appraise their own and each others' performances. Hymn practice complements vocal work in lessons and the pupils have a large repertoire of hymns which leads to quality singing in assemblies. The higher attaining pupils are effectively challenged and 75 benefit from specialist tuition, 16 gaining pass or higher grades in Associated Boards' instrumental examinations.
- 123 The pupils are well motivated and enjoy music lessons. Their enthusiasm is effectively shaped into quality performances. They work well as a class and in small groups and effectively appraise their own and each others' performances. Teacher to pupil relationships are mature and productive. The pupils show respect for the expensive resources they are using and listen attentively in lessons and assemblies to music from a range of cultures.
- 124 The quality of teaching is very good. The knowledge and expertise of visiting specialists have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are well prepared and planned and have clear learning objectives. Teaching methods are varied appropriately and this makes a significant contribution to the pace of lessons and helps to sustain the pupils' interest. Resources are well used to support the pupils' learning. Their work is effectively assessed as the lesson proceeds. Music makes only a limited contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy with the emphasis being on performance rather than written work.
- 125 Since the last inspection the school brings in two specialist musicians for class teaching and hymn practice as well as six visiting instrumentalists. Standards have improved across the age and ability ranges. Opportunities for instrumental work have improved through individual tuition and such extra-curricular opportunities as the school recorder group. There is no designated music co-ordinator.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 126 Pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 work at appropriate levels for their age. Throughout the school, pupils generally make satisfactory progress in all aspects of physical education during their time in the school. The great majority of pupils reach appropriate standards in swimming.



- 127 In gymnastics, pupils make good use of space to travel in different directions, changing height and varying speed. They successfully plan and perform different ways of balancing, making good use of the time given to practise and refine these actions.
- 128 As they progress, the pupils are able to perform increasingly complex sequences of movements, and to transfer their work from floor to small apparatus. Dance is included in the programme of work but was not observed during the inspection.
- 129 In games, pupils develop good skills during practice and are able to apply them in small sided competitive games. The skills of many are considerably enhanced through extra-curricular activities. Separate football teams for older boys and girls compete against other schools, and a mixed-gender cricket team competes in the local league. In addition, boys and girls play in friendly rounders matches against other schools.
- 130 In swimming, the great majority of pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6. The school's swimming team competes in the annual gala for local schools, and this creates opportunities for higher attaining pupils to improve their performance.
- 131 Athletics is taught during the summer term, and the performance of many pupils is enhanced through participation in inter-school competitions. Many boys and girls represent the school in the cross-country league; the girls team being current City champions. In addition, a mixed gender team competes in the indoor athletics league for local primary schools.
- 132 Opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities during residential visits to the Colomendy Environmental Studies Centre in North Wales.
- 133 Pupils respond enthusiastically in all aspects of physical education. They show a good ability to plan and perform in gymnastics and to improve performance through evaluation. They compete enthusiastically during games lessons.
- 134 The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory and often good. Lesson planning is effective in achieving an appropriate balance between teacher direction and demonstration and worthwhile activities. The work is pitched at a level to challenge pupils physically and intellectually. Class management is generally good although in some instances the noise level is too high.