

INSPECTION REPORT

KILGARTH SCHOOL

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105130

Headteacher: Jane Dawson

Reporting inspector: Charles Hackett
21081

Dates of inspection: 19th to 22nd June, 2000

Inspection number: 196970

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Cavendish Street, Birkenhead, Wirral
Postcode:	CH41 8BA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. J.J.E. Swaffield
Date of previous inspection:	24.06.96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Charles Hackett	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical Education European Studies	What sort of school is it ? How well is the school led and managed ? How high are standards ? How well are students taught ?
Susan Walsh Lay inspector			How well does the school care for its pupils ? How well does the school work in partnership with parents ? Equal Opportunities Inclusion Special Educational Needs
Diane Pearson	Team inspector	English including Literacy Art Music	
Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Design and Technology Humanities Information and Communication Technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Jennifer Hall	Team Inspector	Science Religious Education Personal, Social and Health education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students ?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS ?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kilgarth is a day special school for pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. The school caters for pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A small number of pupils also have additional special educational needs, which include moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties. Pupils come from the borough of Wirral, either living in the town of Birkenhead or the surrounding areas. The socio-economic background of pupils is very low; almost all pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupils arrive at the school with very low attainment levels and poor records of attendance at previous schools. Most pupils are brought into school by LEA provided taxis. Currently there are 54 pupils on roll, all of whom are boys. All pupils are of an English background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Kilgarth is an effective day school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides well for pupils who have previously found it very difficult to remain within a school situation. The strength of the school is the structured approach it takes to organising its daily life. Expectations in relation to pupils' behaviour and their presence within classrooms are high. This ensures pupils have the opportunity to benefit from good teaching and as a result their progress is good. The school is well led by the head, her deputy and the governors. Parents appreciate the work of the school and the majority are complimentary about the progress their children have made since joining the school. Given the progress many pupils make with regard to their behaviour, achievements and attendance the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Successfully improves pupils' personal development and the quality of relationships they make with adults and fellow pupils.
- Improves pupils' behaviour, their attitudes towards school and their understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors successfully ensure that the school provides an effective environment for all pupils.
- Pupils achieve well in English, science, art and information and communication technology.

What could be improved

- The assessment of pupils' achievements is unsatisfactory and their individual education plans need more precise targets that can be used by teachers in planning the work they undertake in class.
- Improvements are needed in the opportunities pupils have to study and make progress in music, geography, history, a modern foreign language and religious education.
- Reports to parents are lacking in detail about pupils' academic achievements and progress.
- Pupils' opportunities for extra curricular activities, including sporting fixtures against other schools, are unsatisfactory.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements since its previous inspection in 1996. The accommodation has been improved by the development of a library, a computer suite and improvements to the science laboratory. Pupils' attendance, following strenuous efforts by the school has improved and is now satisfactory; it has been very good this year for pupils in Year 11 and has enabled them to complete GCSE examinations. The quality of teaching of English and information and communication technology has improved. There have been some improvements to the curriculum: these include the amount of teaching time available and the school's curriculum aims now refer to the National Curriculum and religious education. Improvements have also been made in pupils' progress in design and technology and science in Key Stage 3. However, there are aspects of the curriculum that have not improved since the last inspection. These include religious education, humanities and music. There has also been unsatisfactory improvement in assessment arrangements; pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are insufficiently precise. The reports provided for parents still contain insufficient information about pupils' academic achievements. The school has a positive attitude with regard to improving its provision and as such the capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 16	Key very good A Good B Satisfactory C Unsatisfactory D Poor E
Speaking and listening	A	
Reading	A	
Writing	B	
Mathematics	C	
Personal, social and health education	C	
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	

Pupils make good progress in key areas. These include English, science, art and information and communication technology. However, progress in music, geography, history, modern foreign language and religious education is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work in personal, social and health education lessons is satisfactory but work in these areas is not co-ordinated well by staff. Pupils' improvements in literacy have a positive impact on other areas of the curriculum. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is not prominent in other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to working in class. The majority enjoy their work and show enthusiasm for learning.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils show respect for others and only rarely are lessons disrupted by poor behaviour. Behaviour of pupils out of school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils gain a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and learn to build relationships with both peers and adults. This element is a strength of the school's work.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. It is good for senior pupils.

The school has appropriately sought to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They have been successful in doing this and pupils' improvements in these areas are a major strength of the work of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	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.

The overall quality of teaching, and as a result learning, is good. During the inspection in 18% of lessons teaching was very good or excellent; in 71% it was good or satisfactory, with over half of these being good. In 11% of lessons was teaching deemed to be unsatisfactory. Many of these unsatisfactory sessions were in lessons where pupils were being withdrawn from class for small group support. The actual teaching of history, geography, religious education and personal, social education was in almost all lessons satisfactory or good. However, pupils' progress is adversely affected by the limited curriculum opportunities pupils have to study these areas. For example, in both history and geography pupils only have one 25 minute lesson per week. This is insufficient to ensure they make satisfactory progress in these subject areas. Standards of teaching in European Studies are satisfactory, however, the course that pupils follow means they fail to make satisfactory progress in the study of a modern foreign language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The breadth of the curriculum is good but the time pupils have to study each subject is unsatisfactory. The curriculum fails to provide pupils with sufficient learning opportunities in religious education, history, geography, music and a modern foreign language.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care in relation to pupils' personal development and behaviour is good. However, the monitoring of pupils' progress has weaknesses. IEPs and assessment arrangements are both unsatisfactory.

The school has endeavoured to improve its curriculum but there still remain some weaknesses. There is an appropriate emphasis to develop pupils' skills in reading and

spelling. Provision for extra-curricular activities, including opportunities for sports fixtures against other schools, are unsatisfactory. During the inspection some good PSHE individual lessons were seen. However, the whole PSHE programme is not effectively coordinated and pupils do not have access to a programme that systematically develops their skills and knowledge.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy lead and manage the school well. They have high expectations of behaviour and these are successful in ensuring pupils are in the classroom and are offered learning opportunities.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors are very committed and supportive of the school. The chair provides a very knowledgeable contribution to the overall management and development of the school. Governors' committees manage statutory requirements well but the curriculum committee has insufficient understanding of what happens in the classrooms.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is some informal evaluation of the school's performance; the school is beginning to analyse data comparing their achievements with other similar schools. However, the success of developments undertaken during the year are not formally evaluated by staff or governors.
The strategic use of resources	Money is used effectively to develop resources within the school. Examples include the recent updating of the science laboratory and the information and communication technology suite. Staffing levels make it difficult to cover the full nation curriculum. The resources for subject areas are generally satisfactory.

The overall quality of the leadership and management of the school is good. Its strengths lie in the way it has developed an effective structure and routine for each school day that ensures pupils are in class and taking advantage of learning opportunities. This is a significant achievement given the severe difficulties many pupils have experienced in previous schools. However, weaknesses in leadership and management lie in the lack of formal monitoring of teachers' planning. As a result teachers do not plan for and cover all aspects of the subjects they have responsibility for, or plan to develop pupils' individual skills and knowledge as well as they could.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents feel their children are encouraged to work hard. Teaching is good. They are well informed of progress made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are concerned about their children's behaviour and the amount of homework set. The opportunities to take part in football matches with other schools.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact between the school and parents is good and they receive very good information about their children's behaviour. | |
|---|--|

Inspectors agree with the majority of the positive comments put forward by parents. They do however, disagree with the comment about the quality of information about pupils' academic progress. This is currently unsatisfactory. Inspectors feel that the behaviour of pupils is good and the amount of homework provided for pupils is appropriate. They do agree with parents that pupils should have increased opportunities to take part in sporting events with other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 As expected in a school of this type, pupils' attainments in comparison with those in mainstream schools are below average. However, given their Statements of Special Educational Needs, pupils' achievements are good. In comparison with similar types of special schools the achievements of pupils are favourable and reflect the school's success in providing an effective environment in which pupils feel able to learn. There are significant achievements by pupils in relation to the targets the school has set. These include very good progress in reading and considerable improvement in the attendance of many pupils who in previous schools had a very poor record of attendance. Some improvements have also been made in numeracy, although this has not been fully established across the school.
- 2 In relation to their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) the majority of pupils have made good progress. Although the targets within these plans are too general it is possible to track pupils' records and see the progress they have made since they have been in the school. This progress is confirmed by the success of pupils in examinations. Many have passed GCSEs and certificates of achievements. GCSE passes have increased in recent years. Pupils have been successful in art, mathematics, English and science. Pupils' achievements, including examination results, have been improving since the last inspection.
- 3 The progress in each year group and key stage is similar but the progress of pupils with additional special educational needs, for example specific learning difficulties, is only satisfactory. This is because there are limited programmes and strategies to specifically address their different needs.
- 4 In English pupils' achievements are very good. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening and reading. Their progress ensures they can appreciate both fiction and non-fiction. Writing skills vary but overall improvement is good. Literacy skills are being developed across the curriculum but the effectiveness of support lessons is adversely affected by the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils. Strategies to address these difficulties are unsatisfactory and as a result lessons become disrupted.
- 5 In mathematics achievements are satisfactory. There have been some good individual successes in passing examinations. However, overall achievements are affected by the lack of a co-ordinated plan to improve individual pupils' performance. There are sufficient mathematics lessons but no clear system that shows that once pupils have acquired skills in certain aspects, these are developed further. Achievements of those in Key Stage 3 include improvements in both number work and work in shape and space. In Key Stage 4 the work in shape and space has been developed further; there are many examples of pupils' drawings on display.
- 6 Achievements in science are good. Pupils experience increasingly challenging work as they move from year to year and by the end of Key Stage 4 reach GCSE standard. They achieve well in all aspects of science and have developed investigative skills by predicting and planning investigations.

- 7 Achievements in information and communication technology, and art are also good. They are satisfactory in physical education and design and technology. Although pupils make gains in skills and knowledge in other subject areas, their overall progress is unsatisfactory because the time allocated to them on the curriculum does not give them sufficient opportunities to study the subjects. These subjects are music, history, geography and religious education. Progress in music is unsatisfactory because only limited aspects of the curriculum are offered.
- 8 Achievements in personal, social and health education and careers education and guidance are not high enough in both key stages because insufficient time is allocated for these subjects and the overall co-ordination to provide for progression from Years 7 to 11 is not well developed. The development of skills and knowledge from Year 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory.
- 9 Pupils make satisfactory achievements in European studies. They have a good awareness of the different countries and elements of their culture. However, the course does not meet the statutory requirement to provide pupils with the chance to study a foreign language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 Pupils have a positive attitude towards school and frequently show both enjoyment and commitment to their work. Examples of this are evident in their use of computers where pupils are enthusiastic and keen to succeed. Pupils work hard; during the week of the inspection, in almost all lessons, their attitude to being in the classroom was good. Frequent examples were seen of pupils listening well to their teachers and having the confidence to undertake new challenges. Two such examples were in Year 7 where pupils enthusiastically wrote their own plays, completing them on computer to ensure a high quality of presentation and in Year 9 where pupils handled complex computer mapping programs to identify their school and plot routes around the area.
- 11 Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Similarly, when older pupils take part in lessons away from school, such as their visits to the Laird Centre, they show increasing maturity and confidence. This positive behaviour is a consequence of the very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The positive atmosphere of lessons is marked by pupils' confidence in the staff and a strong sense of purpose towards learning. A significant majority of parents support the view that pupils behave well in school and that their behaviour shows improvement as they move through the school. The frequency of exclusions is dropping and the level is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. A further consequence of the pupils very good relationships with staff is that, on most occasions when there are instances of challenging behaviour, these are speedily and effectively resolved and rarely disrupt the smooth running of lessons.
- 12 Pupils' personal development is very good. The sense of community that exists, in which each pupil is valued, encourages pupils' self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. It helps them to participate in external activities such as their work at the Laird Centre and to gain full benefit from visits, such as listening to a storyteller at the maritime museum. Younger pupils will read aloud in class and use expensive equipment, such as computers or lathes, with care. Older pupils show an increasing maturity in their ability to show insight and understanding. For example, when discussing the consequences of football violence or the impact of oppressive

behaviour when discussing poems about slavery in English lessons.

- 13 Attendance is satisfactory. The school achieves significant improvements in the attendance rates of some pupils. Those with very good attendance and behaviour often start to attend mainstream school on a part time basis. Eventually they become fully integrated and become full time pupils on the roll of the mainstream school. New pupils often come to the school with significant and ingrained attendance problems. The school then works hard to motivate them and as a result achieves good levels of motivation and attendance for many pupils. Attendance for Year 11 pupils has been especially good this year. There are a minority of pupils who do not attend school on a regular basis. When good attendance cannot be achieved, despite all the school's and the Education Social Worker's best efforts, the school sends out a home tutor to encourage these boys to complete certificates of achievement for English and mathematics. Many of these pupils work hard and produce some well-presented work.
- 14 The previous report was positive in its judgement of pupils' behaviour and personal development stating that pupils behaved well and drawing particular attention to the lack of vandalism and graffiti. The school has maintained these positive features and continues to provide a positive environment in which all pupils feel valued.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 15 The overall quality of teaching, and as a result learning, is good. The major strength of teaching is the success teachers have in meeting the emotional and behavioural needs of pupils and as a result giving them good opportunities to learn in the classroom. During the inspection in 18% of lessons teaching was very good or excellent; in 42% it was good and in 29% satisfactory. In 11% of lessons teaching was deemed to be unsatisfactory. Many of these unsatisfactory sessions were in lessons where pupils were being withdrawn from class for small group support. The teaching of English is very good; in science, information and communication technology and art it is very good. During the inspection the actual teaching of history, geography, religious education and music was in almost all lessons satisfactory or good. However, pupils' progress is adversely affected by the limited opportunities pupils have to study these areas. The teaching of mathematics and physical education is satisfactory; in both subjects pupils are given good opportunities to gain skills but progress is not always guaranteed because of limited planning from teachers to ensure and monitor this.
- 16 The quality of teaching in personal, social and health education, and in careers education, in key stages 3 and 4 is always good and occasionally very good. It is especially effective in Year 7. For example, during the inspection very good use of resources, very good relationships and secure and well established procedures for managing pupils' behaviour combine to create an interesting and informative lesson on the importance of protection when out in the sun. The co-ordination of work in these areas is, however, not effective and as a consequence pupils' progress is not guaranteed.
- 17 Expectations within classrooms are high. All staff endeavour to ensure that the classroom is an appropriate learning environment. This is effective and in the majority of lessons pupils want to learn. There are consistent expectations which are well supported by the school's scheme for monitoring each individual pupil's behaviour. This scheme, when used effectively, as it was in most lessons during the inspection, gives pupils an opportunity to know if they have behaved and worked appropriately

during a lesson. In the vast majority of lessons pupils were given good feedback on their performance. There were however, a few lessons when pupils received full marks for their behaviour even though during the lesson there had been some difficulties with their behaviour that had had to be addressed by the teacher.

- 18 Another key factor in the effectiveness of teaching is the high quality of relationships between the majority of staff and pupils. This is particularly so in information and communication technology lessons; the excellent rapport the teacher has with pupils encourages pupils to work independently and at a good pace throughout the lessons. This is the same within art lessons where the teacher, although not a specialist, is able to talk and work well with individual pupils, encouraging them to think for themselves and compare and develop ideas from the work of well-known artists. As a result of the good relationships with staff, pupils show respect towards teachers and this in itself enhances the learning environment within the classroom.
- 19 The work of support staff enhances significantly pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching. Support staff are very effective in working with individual pupils who have behaviour problems. They sit quietly next to pupils and, without being over-powering, give support, which enables pupils to stay on task and be successful. This is particularly effective in science and design and technology sessions where some individuals sometimes found the work challenging but staff support kept pupils on task.
- 20 The use of praise is common place and very effective in developing pupils' self-esteem. This is very apparent within English lessons where pupils are given very positive encouragement when they make a contribution to the lesson. In golf this is also the case; the feedback and praise to pupils for their behaviour was very appropriate and clearly appreciated by the pupils.
- 21 The aspect of teaching which is not so well developed is the production of written lesson plans. With the exception of English, teachers do not plan their lessons to show what pupils should achieve in them. Very limited records are made of what has happened in a lesson and as a result teachers are not effectively planning for pupils to make progress at a suitable rate. Work in lessons is often not linked to pupils' individual education plans or any targets set for them. As a consequence, the teaching methods do not always meet the needs of all pupils; for example they do not incorporate the interventions detailed by the educational psychologists to meet the additional learning needs of the small number of the pupils with specific learning difficulties.

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

- 22 Some improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection and there are strengths in the provision. However, the overall quality and range of curricular opportunities are unsatisfactory. The school's curriculum policy now makes appropriate reference to the National Curriculum, and schemes of work cover aspects expected to be covered. But the linking of these to the plans teachers make for their lessons do not ensure pupils study everything they should. There are some significant curricular weaknesses. The statutory requirements for the National Curriculum are not in place for history, geography, music and a modern foreign language. Religious education, whilst now planned to follow the locally agreed syllabus, which is an improvement since the last inspection, does not meet requirements because the

twenty five minutes allocated each week is insufficient to cover the syllabus. Although the European Studies course, which replaces the teaching of a modern foreign language, makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development, it does not provide pupils with the opportunities to study a foreign language.

- 23 The length of the school day has increased since the last inspection and this has provided an opportunity to broaden the design and technology curriculum to include textiles and food technology. The amount of taught time is now above the minimum recommendation for Key Stage 3 and is in line with that for Key Stage 4. The amount of time allocated for history, geography and music, however, is too small to cover the expected work.
- 24 A significant weakness in curricular provision is the inadequate planning to meet the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs. The interventions specified by educational psychologists to meet the literacy, numeracy and additional learning needs of a small number of pupils are not reflected in the targets and strategies of their IEPs. Teachers are not planning to meet their needs in their schemes of work and lesson plans. As a consequence these pupils are not making such good progress as their peers.
- 25 The Key Stage 4 curriculum is not sufficiently distinct from the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The overall co-ordination of arrangements to prepare pupils for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life is unsatisfactory. Separate programmes are provided for personal, social and health education, careers education and guidance, vocational education, work experience, Youth Award Scheme, records of achievement and COMPACT arrangements, but these are not brought together into a coherent programme. Only one lesson a week is timetabled for these aspects which is too short for in-depth coverage of this important element of the curriculum. Key Stage 4 pupils have satisfactory access to externally accredited courses; they are offered GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science and art. The Certificate of Educational Achievement is available in English, mathematics and design technology in graphics and resistant materials. The RSA certificate is taken in food hygiene.
- 26 The planning of an appropriately age-related programme of personal, health, sex and drugs education from Years 7 to 11, and of a careers and vocational education programme from Years 9 to 11 lacks detail and is not securely established. Planning to ensure progress in personal, social and health education was similarly reported as not secure at the last inspection.
- 27 There are well-established and effective links with the Careers Service. Work experience is continuing to develop but as yet employers' evaluations, and pupils' own self-evaluations, of work experience are not well established. The compilation of records of achievement and the Youth Award Scheme is not well co-ordinated; and their value in promoting personal and social development is underdeveloped.
- 28 There is no programme of extra-curricular activities. The decision to teach a compressed school day, with a very short, staggered lunchtime, does not support the organisation of an extra-curricular programme. Transport arrangements at the end of the day further compound the difficulty the school experiences in providing clubs and other activities.
- 29 Across the curriculum, the promotion of literacy generally, and the teaching of the specialist language of different subjects, is effective. The recently introduced numeracy strategy is satisfactory, but there is no overall co-ordination of the daily

numeracy lessons, the mathematics curriculum, and the promotion of numeracy across the curriculum. The long-term absence of the co-ordinator in this area is a mitigating factor in this weakness.

- 30 The school creates satisfactory opportunities to work with the local community. Employers provide work experience opportunities, there are sporting links at a local boys' club and a local golf club. Optional activities on a Friday take pupils out into the community. There are missed opportunities to promote pupils' social development through links for team games with other schools and organisations, for example, for five-a-side football competitions. Good links are established with the fourteen schools where staff provide outreach support. Every opportunity is taken to help pupils integrate into mainstream schools either on a part-time or full time basis to widen their access to accredited courses in Key Stage 4, to enrich their experience of art, English and food technology and to support pupils' social development. Although pupils are not receiving their full entitlement to the National Curriculum, they do have good access to the curriculum that is provided, and there are no exclusions from activities on the grounds of pupils' race or level of ability.
- 31 Provision for pupils' moral development is good and for social development it is satisfactory. Support for pupils' spiritual development has not progressed since the last inspection when it was judged to be underdeveloped. Provision for spiritual development remains unsatisfactory. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
- 32 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The school has a code of conduct that is effectively implemented. Pupils are reminded consistently of the need for good behaviour and to respect and value the efforts of other pupils. Although no assemblies were observed during the inspection, there are records of the themes covered, for example, fairness, valuing truth and open-mindedness, understanding the consequences of one's actions on others. Current affairs and local incidents are often used as the themes for assemblies and form time discussions. Football violence, prominent in the news, during the inspection week, was discussed in personal and social education and in form time. There are opportunities in lessons for pupils to consider moral issues, for example, pupils learn about the Holocaust and they discuss prejudice and the declaration of human rights. Sex education covers emotional and ethical aspects of sexual attitudes and moral values.
- 33 The opportunities provided to promote pupils' social development are satisfactory overall, although there are some very good examples provided in individual lessons. In a numeracy lesson, for example, there was very skilful and effective encouragement of pupils to listen to others, co-operate, take turns and share information. Through the curricular options available each day pupils are encouraged to make choices. The times set aside during the day for association, although brief, are well supervised to promote better social relationships. The Friday option scheme takes pupils out into the community and provides some opportunity for pupils to participate in team games. Older pupils on work experience placements are given the chance to work responsibly and safely in industrial and commercial settings. The decision to restrict lunchtime to twenty-five minutes restricts opportunity for pupils to socialise.
- 34 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about famous artists and sometimes are in awe of the pictures these artists create. Curriculum enrichment is provided in art, food technology and English through visits to

mainstream schools. In the past there have been visits to art galleries, theatres and cinemas, but the absence of a school log book of visits makes it difficult for teachers to evaluate whether the aims of these visits are met and the effectiveness of the visits in promoting pupils' personal development. In religious education, pupils are taught about the traditions of the major world faiths. Although there has been careful attention to auditing multicultural images and messages in the purchase of library books, there continues, as reported at the last inspection, to be little celebration of cultural diversity.

- 35 Planned provision for the development of pupils' spirituality is unsatisfactory. The main world faiths are taught in religious education lessons and the birth of religion and of Christianity are discussed. The contribution of this subject, however, to a sustained promotion of spirituality is not possible because the subject is taught, in conjunction with moral education, for only twenty-five minutes a week. In art, Year 10 pupils were seen to be spiritually moved when presented with copies of the work of Van Gogh. Fund raising for people in need makes a tangible contribution to pupils' spiritual development. A 'thought for the day' is presented in form time each day but the quality of this provision is very variable. It can be highly effective, in Year 7 for example, but generally this time for reflection is superficial and ineffective. The school makes insufficient efforts to provide a daily act of collective worship. The provision of class prayers is still inconsistent, as reported last time, and only one whole school assembly is held each week.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 36 The school continues to offer good quality informal support and guidance to its pupils. There are very good quality relationships between teachers and pupils. All staff encourage pupils to believe in themselves and improve their schoolwork and behaviour. Pupils who are deemed ready to return to mainstream schools are given the opportunity to do so. The well-developed partnership between Kilgarth and the pastoral departments in local mainstream schools results in pupils being very well supported. One of the great strengths of Kilgarth is that boys who improve their behaviour and attendance can re-enter and become successful in mainstream education.
- 37 Teachers know their pupils well, especially in terms of personal development. Behaviour continues to be very closely monitored and very well recorded. Control continues to be firm yet friendly and the very good relationships between teachers and pupils promote mutual respect. These well-developed arrangements result in a calm, orderly environment where pupils can learn.
- 38 The school makes extensive and sustained efforts to improve attendance. The attendance of every pupil is very closely monitored. Parents are contacted early on the first day of absence and every effort is made to encourage pupils to attend school on a regular basis. The school is ably supported by an Education Social Worker, who visits pupils and their families regularly in their homes. This encourages good relationships to develop between home and school.
- 39 The use of Individual Education Plans generally to support learning is ineffective. The plans are not used to guide subject and lesson plans, the targets are too general, as reported last time, and, until recently, review of the targets has only occurred annually.
- 40 As reported in the previous inspection, the school's arrangements for assessing and

recording pupils' academic progress are not fully effective. They are effective in English, and in mathematics and information and communication technology lessons commercial schemes are followed that have in-built assessment tasks. However, assessment of science, religious education and all other foundation subjects is unsatisfactory. Advice received from educational psychologists, including specific teaching strategies, are sometimes not included in individual education plans. Individual education plans are often not a working document and are not always reviewed regularly enough. Detailed information is not always sought from specialist subject teachers and other relevant professionals prior to the annual review. Although pupils have obviously made significant progress during their time at Kilgarth School; it is very difficult to ascertain the details of that progress, apart from records showing improvements in spelling and reading ages.

- 41 The school's arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe are effective. The school follows locally agreed procedures for child protection and when concerns arise they are reported to the appropriate authority. The school has an effective health and safety policy and no significant concerns about health and safety issues were reported during the inspection.
- 42 Since the previous inspection the school has sustained its very good procedures for monitoring behaviour and attendance. There is clear evidence that teachers care about their pupils. Although it has sought to improve individual education plans and assessment procedures these changes to procedures have not been as successful as was hoped. The annual review procedures still do not review all aspects of provision and pupils' progress is still not reported satisfactorily.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 43 Most parents are satisfied with the quality of education their children receive. They are pleased with the quality of teaching and that their children are encouraged to work hard. A small number of parents are concerned about the quality of homework their children receive but the inspection team judge the amount set to be appropriate and are pleased to see that many pupils completed their homework tasks. Parents are also concerned about standards of behaviour in the school. They receive extremely detailed weekly behaviour reports about their children and are, therefore, highly aware of every incident that has occurred. The inspection team found that behaviour in the school is very good considering that the pupils have been referred to the school because they have emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 44 Parents receive a satisfactory amount of information about the work of the school and their children's behaviour. Informal contact is good; there is frequent contact by phone between the home and the school. The active and supportive roles of the home tutor and the education social worker encourage regular contact between home and school. Information from the school about pupils' academic progress is more limited. Subjects of the National Curriculum are now reported on but there is often very little detail of how the pupils have improved in what they know, understand and can do. Reports tend to emphasis how pupils have enjoyed a subject rather than the progress they have made.
- 45 The school has continued to encourage parents to be involved in their children's education; the strong informal contact between home and school encourages this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 46 The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and deputy have ensured there is a very clear, structured environment in which pupils are clear about expectations with regard to their behaviour and performance in the classroom. As a result pupils have the opportunity to take advantage of learning opportunities. This has also had a very positive effect on pupils' behaviour and personal development and their attendance at school. Senior staff set a good example to their colleagues, offering support as required and leading by example in the professional manner in which they undertake their duties.
- 47 The school has very clear aims and values, which are evident both inside and outside the classroom. Staff have good working relationships with each other and this is evident in the consistent approach offered by all. The way in which all staff meet expectations, for example by monitoring pupils at the start and end of each lesson, enables the school to function as an effective provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 48 The governors of the school provide very good support. The Chair of governors, in particular, is very insightful and aware of the day to day difficulties staff face in dealing with a potentially disruptive population. As Chair of the Finance Committee he has good detailed knowledge of the school budget and the way in which money is allocated to meet appropriate costs. Money has been allocated well. Recent examples include the refurbishment of the science laboratory and the development of the information communication technology suite. Money has been well spent and the facilities improved appropriately.
- 49 The senior management team has been less effective in monitoring the curriculum and teaching. The checking of what happens in the classroom has been too informal. Although there are many examples of good, very good and excellent teaching in the school, these and those where teaching is less satisfactory, could be improved if teachers' planning was linked more closely to the individual plans to improve the progress of each pupil. The curriculum is not formally monitored and as a result, in humanities, music, and religious education pupils are not receiving their full entitlement with regard to the work expected to be covered in these areas. In personal, social and health education pupils receive guidance in a number of areas; however, this is not monitored carefully and again, as a result, pupils do not receive a satisfactory level of support.
- 50 Development planning has improved since the last inspection. There was criticism previously that school development priorities were not linked to the school budget, and it was not clear how the school was going to develop further. These concerns have been addressed and this aspect is now satisfactory. However, there is still a need to develop this further with regard to the development of each subject area. There is still an insufficient link between what is allocated for each curriculum area and how these areas are to be developed.
- 51 The school has a limited number of teaching staff given the demands of the curriculum and, as a result some subjects, such as art and humanities, are taught by non-specialists. Training has been received in the teaching of literacy skills but the lack of staff expertise in the use of computers is inhibiting their use across the curriculum. The previous report drew attention to the lack of job descriptions. These are now in place and accurately reflect the duties of teaching staff. Support staff provide very good assistance to teachers throughout each working day. However, the

management of this group of staff needs to be further developed. Currently there is a lack of formal opportunities for their work to be appraised and supported and their job descriptions are unclear. The school is very supportive of new teachers; the most recently appointed have been given appropriate assistance by the headteacher and LEA advisory staff. This has been effective in improving the quality of teaching, and health and safety requirements within the design and technology practical areas.

- 52 Although a new secretary has only recently taken up her post, administration is satisfactory. It is greatly assisted by support from learning support assistants. The school does not, though, use information and communication technology particularly effectively to aid its administration. This area though is being developed and new computers for administration have been purchased.
- 53 The accommodation only just meets the needs of the curriculum. Facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory but the school makes good use of local sports halls. The previous report identified several strengths, such as the specialist provision for design technology and science. The school has maintained these strengths and continues to provide a pleasant environment with good wall displays of work. However, whilst toilet facilities have been improved, the school continues to lack adequate changing facilities for physical education. The school has successfully addressed the need for a separate library.
- 54 Overall, the school has adequate resources for the teaching of the curriculum. English resources are very good and the library has a good range of age appropriate fiction and non-fiction books. Computer resources have been well developed and the school is now well equipped to ensure their use across the curriculum. Effective use is made of local resources such as visits to the Maritime Museum, the Laird Project for technical training and local sports facilities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Senior staff and the governors should:

Ensure the curriculum provides more appropriate opportunities for pupils to study history and geography (humanities), music and a modern foreign language. (22)

Improve the arrangements to assess, record and report on pupils' achievements. (40)

Action should include:

- ensuring all teachers assess pupils' progress in each subject; (21,39,40)
- teachers using information from these assessments to produce precise targets within pupils' individual education plans (IEPs); (39)
- teachers recording pupils' progress and ensuring parents receive reports that contain details of their child's achievements. (21,44)

Increase pupils' opportunities for extra-curricular activities, including sporting fixtures against other schools. (28)

In addition senior staff and the governors should address the following less significant concerns:

Improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development; (35) ensure support staff have a line manager, job descriptions and regular access to support meetings; (51) improve the co-ordination of the Key Stage 4 curriculum; (26,27) produce individual subject development plans that are linked to the school budget. (50)

The figures in brackets refer to the paragraphs in the report that refer to these aspects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	15	42	29	11		

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	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	54
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	53

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	22.9	School data	13.7

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 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	99	10	0	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	1	0
	Total	0	1	0
Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above	School	0	10	0

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	1	1
	Total	0	1	1
Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above	School	0	10	0

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	99	12		12

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	0	5
	Total	0	0	5

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and The percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	5	100

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	59	4
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Average class size	10

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	152

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	431401
Total expenditure	408736
Expenditure per pupil	7299
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1185
Balance carried forward to next year	22665

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

54

Number of questionnaires returned

16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	25	63	0	13	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	44	0	13	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	13	63	6	13	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	56	13	6	0
The teaching is good.	50	44	0	6	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	31	0	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	31	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	44	0	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	44	0	6	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	50	0	6	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	44	6	6	6

Other issues raised by parents

Parents would like to see increased opportunities for pupils to play football against other schools.

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

ENGLISH

- 55 Progress in English is very good. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening and reading; they are now able to appreciate a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Writing skills vary but improvement is good where pupils have spent a consistent time at school. By the time they leave school most pupils attain certificates of achievement and a few are successful in gaining a GCSE grade.
- 56 The very good work ethos encouraged by the English teacher ensures pupils in year 7 to think carefully when developing their writing of scripts. They remain lively and with interest read short sentences fluently with growing expression. The use of music creates a calm atmosphere where pupils write and express themselves well. For example, they made good progress during the lessons to write a play for three characters. The very good relationship and high expectations of the teacher encourages them to concentrate well. They are enthusiastic about English and use language imaginatively to twist the end of their story. Fun games encourage pupils to understand grammar. They correctly use adjectives and nouns to make sentences using dictionaries. Pupils produce neat work using satisfactory keyboard skills. The teacher's expressive reading of an account of the 'Blitz' by Lois Clark encouraged year 8 pupils to develop an understanding about questions and spelling. Most pupils know a stanza is a verse and are developing a good range of vocabulary and reading skills.
- 57 By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils make good progress in spelling and punctuation and have a developing understanding of how a character would speak or act to another character. They confidently write a simple script and read the parts. The good range of approaches by the teacher keeps the lessons lively with pupils eager to name characters in a story. Pupils write words on the blackboard, helping each other with spelling, and are developing a responsibility to complete homework regularly.
- 58 Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress with spelling patterns and contrasting pairs. Pupils are able to talk with experience about the life of a slave after their visit to the Liverpool Maritime Museum, a video clip and a study of the book 'Amistad', the life of a slave. The teacher gives importance to the text to create awareness of similes where pupils express well the meaning of 'teeth as sharp as a pirahna'. They are developing the skills of searching for a meaning for words and make good progress to understand the story to name the tribes and characters. There is good evidence of Year 11 pupils achieving a very good output of work which has resulted in attainment of a certificate of achievement and two pupils taking GCSE. They have studied Macbeth, a good range of poetry, compared a story and evaluated texts.
- 59 Teaching is very good overall. There are examples of excellent introductions to lessons and reviews of work. These are linked well to the continuous high expectations for work and behaviour. The very good plenary sessions encourage pupils to share what they have learnt in the lesson. The classroom assistant and the teacher make an excellent team, supporting the pupils very well in each lesson. Homework is set regularly and work is marked well with regular comments. Pupils contribute well to evaluating their own achievements; end of unit tests are used to inform assessment and the future planning of lessons. The room used for English is

pleasant with a good range of age-appropriate books, for research and reading, dictionary and vocabulary work. The comfortable chairs, space and individual tables create a good working atmosphere.

Literacy

- 60 Pupils who require additional help take part in literacy skills in small groups with another teacher for some of the sessions. The standard of achievement in these sessions varies from unsatisfactory to good. Where there are effective strategies to encourage pupils to interact with the tasks and use of time is effective with a variety of methods used, pupils respond with interest. Young pupils can decode and have good recall of what they have read. On many occasions sensitive correction of errors and the use of praise gives pupils confidence to read aloud. When good support is given quickly pupils who were frustrated with their learning soon respond to work again. The teacher is confident and has good subject knowledge of the corrective reading programmes used in lessons.
- 61 When work is not programmed or planned, or where expectations are low and there are no clear guidelines for good behaviour, pupils achieve very little and the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. In these lessons pupils' behaviour deteriorates.
- 62 The focus of using a computerised commercial programme with Year 7 pupils in support of English and numeracy helps most pupils with spelling and reading. Individual records of pupils' scores are kept and a few try hard to better their score. Spelling and reading tests take place twice a year and indicate good progress for some pupils. Keyboard skills are developing well. However, targets for pupils with specific learning difficulties are not sufficiently identified in order to meet individual needs. As a consequence of this the development of their literacy skills across the curriculum is not consistent. Subject teachers fail to plan to take account of pupils with literacy difficulties.

MATHEMATICS

- 63 Pupils' achievements in mathematics are satisfactory. All benefit from the opportunities to follow a commercial programme which ensures they cover all aspects expected of mathematics. As a result of this pupils have achieved and made progress in all areas. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have improved their basic skills in addition, subtraction and are now concentrating on multiplication and division. They have made progress in their recognition and understanding the properties of basic shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. Many understand what is meant by fractions and decimals and almost all can tell the time. For the youngest pupils in Key Stage 3 their numeracy skills have been further enhanced by the use of a commercial computer programme that enables each individual to chart his progress.
- 64 In Key Stage 4 pupils have developed their basic skills and knowledge. Many have made very good progress in working with different shapes and have been able to produce detailed drawings, including tessellations. The progress of Key Stage 4 pupils has meant that the higher attaining pupils can undertake GCSE examinations. Progress in using mathematical ideas to conduct investigations is much slower because of the limited opportunities given to pupils to work in this area.
- 65 Mathematics is given a good profile in the school and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to engage in mathematical activities. The recent introduction of a numeracy session for all pupils has again helped enhance pupils' basic skills.

- 66 Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. The strengths lie in the opportunities being provided for pupils to develop skills in all areas. The use of a commercial scheme of work assists greatly with this. Where pupils follow this scheme the teacher ensures pupils work throughout their 25-minute sessions and there is instant back up in the form of marking. Often one to one support is provided by the teacher or the classroom assistant. However, in these lessons weaknesses lie in the failure of the teacher to group pupils together and teach particular topics. There is an over-reliance on the scheme and pupils are not given opportunities to work with each other and be engaged in activities that could 'liven-up' the subject. It means that pupils consistently work in mathematical lessons but are not encouraged to gain an interest and become motivated to work at an even greater pace.
- 67 The work in mathematics lessons where the commercial scheme is not used is not sufficiently linked to pupils' individual progress. Pupils are taught in a group and all taught the same topic irrespective of the standards they have achieved in other aspects. This means there is no effective system for developing each pupil's level of skills and knowledge.
- 68 The teaching of the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 does enable them to practise and revise examination techniques. However, there is not sufficient planning that ensures pupils are taught and can learn and make progress at a rate consistent with their ability in this subject area. The teaching has been effective though in ensuring a few pupils have passed GCSE examinations.
- 69 The subject has not moved forward since the previous inspection. There is a need for far greater planning to allow for each pupil's individual skills and knowledge. The current system does ensure pupils have mathematical experiences but it does not guarantee that they will progress at a suitable rate. Numeracy is not well promoted in other subject areas; during the inspection only in science were there links to mathematical concepts. There are sufficient materials and resources for mathematics and the displays in the maths rooms are impressive.

SCIENCE

- 70 Pupils make good progress in science lessons and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils experience increasingly challenging work as they move through the school; by the end of Key Stage 4 many reach GCSE standard. Pupils with additional special educational needs make somewhat slower progress because there is insufficient planning to take account of the classroom interventions which are specified by the educational psychologists for these pupils. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils attain National Curriculum attainment Levels 3 to 5. In Year 7 pupils are developing an understanding of the structure of cells, human systems, and the adaptation of animals to their environments. They have an understanding of the pH scale and make comparisons of the properties of different materials. Pupils investigate forces, including the use of levers. By investigating the movement of a toy car down a slope pupils develop the skill of predicting and they explain fair testing. Using prompts provided by the teacher they begin to analyse results and evaluate the methods they use, successfully completing sentences like 'My results may not be very accurate because'. By Year 8 pupils are beginning to use chemical symbols, and investigate how to separate mixtures. They have an understanding of elements and compounds. They attempt more challenging work on forces than they experienced in Year 7, for example, they progress to making calculations using the formula for speed. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good understanding of the characteristics of living

things and begin to access the GCSE single science syllabus.

- 71 Key Stage 4 pupils follow the GCSE single award and achieve grades in the range C to G. They continue to develop their investigative skills by predicting and planning investigations, for example, finding out which balls bounce higher and why, and finding the factors which affect the rate at which sugar dissolves in water. Pupils develop the full range of investigative skills but generally make better progress in the skills of planning an experiment and obtaining results than in the skills of analysis and evaluation. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their science lessons and respond very well to the high quality of teaching. They listen attentively, participate keenly in practical work and work safely and sensibly in the new laboratory.
- 72 The quality of teaching in science is consistently good with some very good features. Expectations of pupils are high and realistic and pupils enjoy science and rise to the challenges set for them. The pace of learning in the short science lessons is demanding requiring pupils to concentrate well, which they do. Questioning skills are very well developed; they are demanding, open and frequent and pupils are constantly reminded to think scientifically, and explain their answers. Very good opportunities are taken for pupils to access the full range of National Curriculum science and they are developing the full range of investigative skills, although achievements in the skills of analysis and evaluation are not as high as those for planning, predicting and carrying out experiments. The management of pupils is very secure and this enables time to be very well used. There is a very good learning ethos in science lessons and the teacher and pupils are refreshingly enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons together. Homework is well established and completed. The resources for lessons are well prepared but written lesson plans are inadequate and there is no reference to pupils' individual education plans, nor are any individual science targets set. The formal arrangements for GCSE course work assessments are in place but assessment procedures generally lack detail and are under-used for planning the next steps.
- 73 Although the science curriculum meets statutory requirements the scheme of work is inadequate and does not link specifically to the National Curriculum science programmes of study. Very good use is made of a new science laboratory and pupils treat the facilities with care. The displays of pupils' work, key scientific words and published resources are used very well to support learning.

ART

- 74 The provision for art is good. Pupils achieve a good standard and make good progress in lessons and over time. The standard for art remains good since the last inspection.
- 75 Within Key Stage 3 pupils draw views of faces from the side, they work on shadows, perspective, body parts, features of the world and shape and colour. They are developing good skills of visual and critical awareness. Younger pupils know about 'perspective' and 'flesh tones'; the teacher's gentle approach successfully involves them in problem solving. Pupils in Year 9 are developing their three-dimensional work well to build up a portrait of a face and make masks. Pupils support each other well, for example, during an option lesson a year 10 boy supported a year 7 boy well to help him mend his self-portrait drawing.
- 76 Within Key Stage 4 pupils work on three projects for the course work and controlled test for the certificate of achievement and GCSE. Medium term projects cover

technical and manipulative skills well with end of unit evaluation noted by the teacher. In the classroom an excellent display of work shows the experiences and range of work and good progress which pupils make. There are good examples of stained glass, portraits, landscapes, 3D figures, clay work, poster designs and ornaments. Older pupils research textures and colours of work by Michelangelo, Van Gogh and Rodin. One boy reproduced a picture of the artist Rodin with a good eye for detail.

- 77 The quality of teaching is good. The teacher gives good demonstrations, reference to artists and attention to detail in drawings. Lessons are most successful when they are well planned with specific taught targets. A positive feature of the lessons is the encouragement given to pupils to think for themselves. With the teacher's good advice, and calm interventions with restless pupils, the majority of pupils show interest in the subject and are willing to try different techniques. The classroom assistant is also very effective in keeping pupils on task.
- 78 The art room has good art tables and a range of resources. Pupils have full access to a range of media to produce work in watercolours, pencils, oil pastels, wax crayons and acrylics. However, there are limited resources and facilities for pupils to do pottery and other 3-D work. A good selection of excellent reference books is available and used well. Occasional visits to museums and galleries in Liverpool have further advanced pupils' knowledge and understanding.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 79 Pupils' achievements in design and technology are satisfactory overall. In resistant materials pupils are using hand and electric tools effectively to produce a range of models and are undertaking related design work. During their first year in the school pupils undertake projects, such as making a coaster or a fairy light tester in which they learn and practise skills of tool usage, as well as measurement and design. By the age of 14 pupils can use machinery effectively to shape and smooth wood in the production of items such as a board game. Pupils respond well to the challenges provided and by the age of 16 are sufficiently skilled to produce more sophisticated items, for example, a clock or garden furniture. Year 11 pupils attain a certificate of achievement in resistant materials as proof of their developing making skills. Currently pupils' ability to evaluate their work systematically and work on independent designs is insufficiently developed due to them being given too much support. No lessons of the recently introduced food technology were observed. Records show that in food technology pupils make satisfactory progress in areas such as the design of a pop drink for teenagers in year 7 and in looking at diets and snacks in years 8 and 9.
- 80 The quality of teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall. The current schemes of work are closely followed but the assessment of pupils' skills is insufficient and needs further development so that individual progress may be more closely monitored. Whilst the provision of teacher prepared drawings is effective for the teaching of basic skills in design there is a need to develop opportunities for higher attaining pupils to be able to work independently. The good relationships that exist between staff and pupils allow the safe use of the workshops; the highly effective contribution of the support staff is noteworthy in its contribution to pupils' progress.
- 81 There is now a better balance of learning opportunities since the recent introduction of food technology and work on textiles. However, links with other subjects, such as mathematics, remain underdeveloped. A significant shortcoming is the lack of computer use, which inhibits the ability of pupils to develop skills in areas such as computer-aided design.

- 82 The previous report was generally positive but drew attention to the limited curriculum being offered. The school has been successful in introducing food technology and establishing a well equipped teaching base. However, the provision of work on textiles still requires further development. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection,

HUMANITIES (History and Geography)

- 83 Whilst the teaching in both history and geography is good, as are pupils' achievements in lessons, the limited amount of lesson time devoted to the subjects means that pupils cannot cover the required amount of work and, consequently, pupils' long term achievements are unsatisfactory.
- 84 By the age of 14 pupils have undertaken detailed study of the physical geography of their area and have combined this with work on map reading. Good use is made of a wide range of resources. Aerial photography of the local area and a computer satellite programme support the work on map reading and the study of local physical features, such as Bidston Hill, develops pupils' knowledge of physical geography. In history pupils gain an understanding of British society from feudal times to the Second World War. The very good relationships with teachers and the encouragement of active and problem solving activities generates an enthusiasm amongst pupils for the study of both history and geography.
- 85 Teaching is characterised by good use of computers to enable pupils to undertake independent research on other countries, such as Japan, and on historical events, such as the causes of the World Wars. Good use is also made of questioning to generate discussion and the imaginative use of artefacts, for example, photographs and shell cases from the First World War, is a noteworthy feature of the teaching of history. The imaginative use of resources combined with very good relationships is an important factor in ensuring pupils' interest and encouraging constructive discussion. Pupils ask questions confidently and enter into discussion with enthusiasm.
- 86 Since the previous report, humanities are no longer taught to the older pupils and the restriction of the time allocated to the subject has adversely affected pupils' progress in Key Stage 3. The previous report was generally positive but did draw attention to an over reliance on work sheets and the lack of opportunities for collaborative working. The quality of teaching has improved and now involves the use of computers and artefacts, as well as planned opportunities for discussion. The previous report also drew attention to the lack of teacher training and the limited resources. The resources available are now well developed and allow an interesting and varied range of approaches. However, there is still a need to further enhance teacher training to further support the good quality schemes of work that have been developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 87 Pupils' achievements in computer skills are good. By the age of 14 all pupils show good progress in the acquisition of word processing skills. Pupils copy text accurately by using a range of fonts and highlighting elements of the text. Pupils start and close the computer independently as well as being able to print their work. The mouse and the keyboard are used with accuracy to access and use a range of software, such as information programmes for history or 'City Viewer' for geography. Higher attaining pupils can create spreadsheets to display a range of data, such as prices of items. They also use the computer to carry out calculations.

- 88 By the age of 16 pupils show good progress in their ability to create and use databases to store information such as examination results. Higher attaining pupils sort data alphabetically and numerically as well as using a range of other criteria. Pupils also produce 'published' work, such as an advertisement for a school sale or for a cruise. Higher achieving pupils are able to import pictures to illustrate their work.
- 89 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The emphasis placed on pupils to work independently and find their own solutions to problems is a strength of the teaching, as is the very good management of pupils' behaviour which keeps them working and enhances their enjoyment of the subject. Pupils are enthusiastic about information and communication technology and this enthusiasm is used well in the teaching. The confidence given to pupils is illustrated by the ability of a year 8 class to work independently on retrieving information about Japan and a year 11 class being able to complete a science test in preparation for an examination. The good use of questioning enables pupils to consolidate and develop their knowledge. They learn, for example, to apply their word processing skills to the writing of a play for English.
- 90 The use of information and communication technology to support other areas of the curriculum requires further development. Currently, whilst use is made in English and literacy lessons, subjects such as science and design and technology do not take advantage of the subject. There is also a need to further develop staff expertise in the use of computers so that they can take advantage of the well-equipped computer rooms.
- 91 The previous report was positive in its judgements but drew attention to the lack of a co-ordinator for the subject, as well as the need to develop a policy. These areas have been effectively addressed and good quality schemes of work have also been developed.

MUSIC

- 92 The provision for music is unsatisfactory overall. Younger pupils make very little progress during music lessons, the progress of older pupils is satisfactory. When keyboards are used pupils enjoy this activity to play a range of very simple tunes printed on sheets. Pupils do not, though, compose, listen to their work or play or perform together. Pupils in Year 7 experience listening to themes from films to link moods of the music to the type of film such as adventure, action and thrillers. The teacher attempts to involve the pupils and tell them about the different styles of music but a lack of good management skills results in constant interruptions during the lesson. The use of a CD ROM is successful in introducing pupils to the world of composers and they are able to talk about their research and say which classical music they like. When listening to a range of CDs pupils make good choices but are not involved in expressing their views on different types of music.
- 93 Teaching of music is unsatisfactory for Key Stage 3 pupils and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. The teacher has a pleasant attitude to pupils but the lack of attention to behaviour, lack of planning and structure to lessons results in pupils receiving a very small range of musical experiences and ability being encouraged. Without planning and extension work it is not clear what the targets are for the development of pupils' musical ability or appreciation. A peripatetic music teacher takes a number of boys each week for keyboard skills, reports are completed but there is a lack of sharing of information or continuity between teachers to ensure progress of talented pupils.
- 94 Teaching is more effective with older pupils where themes from Spain and Africa are

linked well to rhythm and beat. The pupils are encouraged to think about which instruments are playing and talk about the countries linked to the music. A good link was made between their English studies of slavery and the history and culture of the music of Africa and its influences. Good reference was made to jazz and Latin American music, which has evolved through different cultures. Pupils recognise the music of different countries, such as Spain, and identify sounds of the flute and drums.

- 95 In the last inspection music was good. It is now unsatisfactory due to a limited range of resources, unsatisfactory planned lessons and a lack of access for pupils to a suitable range of musical experiences. The teaching of percussion, singing, playing, composing and performing is under-developed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

- 96 The school does not have a teacher who can offer a modern foreign language. As a result pupils are not given suitable opportunities to study a different language. This is poor and should be addressed as a priority by the governors.

EUROPEAN STUDIES

- 97 This short course is offered as an alternative to the teaching of a modern foreign language. Achievements in this course are satisfactory. Pupils gain a good knowledge of different countries of Europe and their different cultures. For example, recently they have studied Spain and the Spanish tourist industry. They have studied what is available within resorts and gained a basic knowledge of some of the key words of the language. There is a satisfactory level of planning for this aspect. As no lessons were timetabled during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning within this area.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 98 In physical education lessons pupils make satisfactory progress. In gymnastics pupils have developed basic skills such as forward rolls. Pupils in Key Stage 3 can safely take off from a trampette and land on a crash mat. They have developed useful skills in football and during breaktimes many were seen to be able to play in small-sided games successfully. There have been good achievements for pupils who have taken part in a module in learning how to play golf. These improvements have included developments of their swing as well as a good understanding of the etiquette of the game.
- 99 Achievements in other elements of physical education are limited by the unsatisfactory planning for the subject. Pupils are given choices for the majority of lessons which means that a number of activities can take place in the same session. For example, during the inspection in one physical education lesson pupils were engaged in rugby skills training, learning the techniques of shot put and javelin and finished with a game of uni-hockey. This is unsatisfactory and is not effective in ensuring pupils can develop skills in one particular aspect. This is particularly so in the teaching of shot put and javelin where different techniques are required and pupils become confused when taught both in the same session.
- 100 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' records show that they do have experience of a suitably wide range of physical activities. They are also given good opportunities to be physically active during lessons; this was a positive feature of the

lessons seen during the inspection. The subject would though benefit from a greater level of planning and preparation, both long term and for each individual lesson. This would ensure that pupils' individual skills are developed in a more thorough and consistent manner. It is also unsatisfactory that pupils have much less opportunity to take part in sports events with other schools than is normally the case for schools such as Kilgarth.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 101 Standards in religious education are below what they should be because there is not enough time allocated for this subject and because there is no specialist teaching in religious education. Pupils in both key stages are not making enough progress. Only a small amount of written work was available for scrutiny during the inspection and this showed that the coverage of topics is largely the same in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils learn about world religions with a focus on Christianity. They study the life of Jesus and the meaning of baptism. Religious education lessons also include topics, which promote moral education, for example pupils discuss prejudice. During the inspection pupils learned about the Jewish faith and the events leading up to the Holocaust. The lesson was, however, too short and the teaching so rushed that pupils had no time to reflect on what they heard. Year 9 pupils learn about marriage in the Christian faith, but their knowledge is very superficial because there is so little time allocated on the timetable for religious education - just twenty five minutes a week.
- 102 The quality of teaching in religious education ranges from satisfactory to unsatisfactory; it is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 3. Written lesson plans are brief and it is unclear how the content of lessons aligns with the locally agreed syllabus. There is no specialist knowledge of world religions, but topics are taught sensitively, and whole class teaching captures pupils' interest. An ambitious amount of content is found in lesson plans, too much in fact for the short lessons. A narrow range of teaching methods is used; mainly whole class exposition with no time for reflection. Few demands are made on pupils other than to listen and observe, and occasionally ask questions. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4 when the same lesson is presented as in Key Stage 3, with no obvious additional challenge for the older pupils. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are satisfactory and they generally listen. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very good and the management of pupils satisfactory. Pupils are rarely challenged to write but when they do their work is thoroughly checked and pupils' good efforts are appropriately praised.
- 103 The school has, since the last inspection, adopted the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. However, not enough time has been allocated to teach this syllabus; the amount of time is considerably lower than average. The subject is taught as part of a religious and moral education programme. But only twenty-five minutes a week is allocated. This is wholly inadequate to give pupils sufficient understanding of Christianity and other world religions. There is too little time for exploration of the importance of religion in people's lives and to help pupils develop more fully their own values and beliefs.