

INSPECTION REPORT

THORNTON HOUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105015

Head teacher: Miss. M. Murray

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes
16249

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 25th April 2002

Inspection number: 197001

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	St. George's Way Thornton Hough Wirral
Postcode:	CH63 1JJ
Telephone number:	0151 336 3427
Fax number:	0151 336 3947
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	9 th -13 th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16249	Mrs S. M. Barnes	Registered inspector	English, art, religious education	English as an additional language, what should the school do to improve further? the school's results and pupils' achievements, how well are pupils taught? how well is the school led and managed?
19365	Mr G. Stockley	Lay inspector		how well does the school care for its pupils? how well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27899	Mrs G. Beasley	Team inspector	information communication technology, music	foundation stage, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development,
31801	Mrs Y. Bachetta	Team inspector	science, design technology, history	equal opportunities, special educational needs, how good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22704	Mr G. Williams	Team inspector	mathematics, geography, physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd
6 Abbey Close
Alcester
Warks
B49 5QW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
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?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary school, situated in the small village of Thornton Hough, on the Wirral. There are 159 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and eleven. Some of the pupils come from the village, but more than half come from surrounding areas. This is due to parental choice because of the popularity of the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as are the numbers of pupils with statements of special needs. Pupils have a wide range of difficulties. The number of pupils with special needs attending the school is well below average. The size of each year group is relatively small at about 25. The pre school experience of the children varies greatly. There are wide fluctuations in levels of overall attainment on entry to the school between individual year groups. In recent years it has varied from well above average in 1999 to average in 2000 and is currently above average overall. At the time of the previous inspection attainment on entry was judged to be well above average. Virtually all pupils speak English as a first language, although there are also a very small number of pupils who are bi-lingual. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of a new head teacher in January 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that has worked hard over the last year to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise standards. The very good, clear-sighted leadership of the head teacher and good management of the governors has led to substantial improvements in many areas of school life. The overall quality of teaching is now good and pupils make overall good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes are very good. Relationships within the school are very good and there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school has been granted the School Achievement Award for the last two years for achievement in Key Stage 2 test results. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average at both key stages.
- The leadership by the head teacher is very good, and management is good overall. Good systems of self evaluation have been put in place, which have led to a shared commitment by all staff to raise standards.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and relationships within the school are very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour and personal development are very good.
- Teachers' management of pupils is very good throughout the school. This combined with effective teaching methods leads to pupils having good levels of interest in lessons. Their concentration is good and they maintain a good pace in their work in lessons.
- Links with the community and parents are very good. The school provides good opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning.
- The school provides very good learning opportunities for all its pupils. Provision for extra curricular activities is also very good and has a positive impact on the standards attained.

What could be improved

- Pupils have too little regular access to information and communication technology in other lessons.
- The role of the co-ordinator is not yet sufficiently developed in all non-core subjects and religious education to include monitoring of teaching and learning and tracking of standards.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Both of these areas have already been identified for improvement by the school in its action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Recent focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school has resulted in a significant improvement in standards. Management skills of co-ordinators have been developed effectively for the

core subjects and music and the school is now focusing on the work of co-ordinators for other non-core subjects. The leadership of the head teacher is very good and governors and staff are effectively involved in school development. In addition, standards have been raised in religious education, English, mathematics, science, physical education, geography and design and technology. The provision for children in the foundation stage (children from the age of three to the end of the reception year) has been improved, as has provision for pupils with special educational needs. Other improvements include the financial management, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the involvement of parents in their children's learning. All of these have resulted in a raising of standards throughout the school and the development of a very positive ethos.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A*	A*
mathematics	A	C	A	B
science	C	C	A	A

Key	
top 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Currently standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory progress for pupils in Year 2 and good progress for pupils in Year 6. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls, and school monitoring indicates that their achievements are similar.

As can be seen from the table above, results in end of year tests in English in 2001 were in the top five per cent nationally for pupils in Year 6. The results were also in the top five per cent of schools with similar contexts, using the criteria of the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The results in the tests for reading and writing at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well above average. The results of the reading tests were above those of similar schools and that of the writing tests well above average. In mathematics, the results of tests for pupils in Year 6 were well above average, which represented well above average results compared to similar schools. The results of the tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average, which was above average when compared to similar schools. In science, the results of the tests at the end of Year 6 were well above average and well above the average for similar schools.

Standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Year 2 in all other subjects of the curriculum. This is an improvement in information and communication technology, design and technology and geography since the previous inspection, when they were below expectations. At the end of Year 6 standards are in line with those expected in art and design and above those normally attained in history, physical education and religious education. This is an improvement in religious education and physical education. The standards noted in history at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Standards in music continue to be well above those normally attained at the end of Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening are well developed by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Skills in information and communication technology are not yet fully incorporated into all subjects.

Children in the reception class make at least satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, and in some aspects, such as writing and number recognition, their progress is good. Standards are above average. Pupils with English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils make progress in line with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. The school sets targets which take account of the standards of pupils on entry and which are sufficiently challenging for all.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	All pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school. They take part enthusiastically in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good both in class and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when personal development was judged to be good. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	The school has a good level of attendance that is consistently higher than the national average, with very little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	satisfactory	satisfactory	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 quality of teaching is good overall and effectively meets the needs of pupils from all groups and of all levels of prior attainment. During the inspection the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory and good teaching was observed in every class. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to vary unacceptably and was unsatisfactory in almost three out of every ten lessons. Currently, the great majority of lessons are good and lead to pupils making good gains in their learning. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy has been satisfactory over the long term in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) and good overall in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2). Currently, it is good overall throughout the school. Particular strengths of the teaching throughout the school are the teachers' management of pupils and the range of teaching styles they use. These are effectively matched to the needs of the pupils in individual lessons. For example, on occasion the whole class is taught together and at other times pupils work in groups or as individuals to complete their tasks. Support staff and resources are used well to help pupils to understand their work more clearly. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and make good use of on-going assessment, particularly in the core subjects. As a result of the overall good quality of the teaching, pupils are interested in their lessons and pay attention to their teachers. They work at a good pace with concentration.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. In particular the opportunities for extra curricular activities are very good and have a positive impact on the progress pupils make.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well integrated and have equality of opportunity.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are supported effectively and their achievements are good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision for child protection is good. There is a good level of educational and personal support for pupils and the monitoring of their academic performance is good. Assessment is good.
--	--

The school's links with parents are very effective and parents' involvement in their children's learning has a very positive effect on the standards pupils attain. The school provides good quality information to parents, which parents appreciate.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head-teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the newly appointed head teacher is very good and has led to significant improvements in the last year. Management of the core subjects and music is good. Management of other subjects needs to be similarly developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively and have a good knowledge of the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very honestly and effectively and appropriate action is planned for those areas identified for development.
The strategic use of resources	Resources, including financial resources and staffing, are deployed efficiently. The principles of best value are effectively employed. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory and the school has plans to develop these further in the near future. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
(1) Parents all agree their children like school. (2) They would feel comfortable approaching the school with a question or a problem. (3) Parents say the school is well led and managed. (4) School helps pupils to become mature and responsible.	(1) Some parents do not feel well enough informed about how their children are getting on. (2) Some parents feel the school does not work closely with them. (3) A significant proportion of the parents do not think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. (4) A number of parents at the meeting felt the school did not pay sufficient attention to teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The inspection team agree with the positive comments the parents expressed. However, information to parents is good and the contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is good. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided is very good including the range of activities outside lessons. The teaching of basic skills is currently good overall throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There are fluctuations in levels of overall attainment on entry to the school between individual year groups, due in the main to the relatively small number in each year group. Attainment on entry in recent years has varied from well above average in 1999 to average in 2000 and is currently above average overall. At the time of the previous inspection it was judged to be well above average.
2. Trends over time varied according to ability of group, teaching and curriculum. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be requiring some improvement.
3. Currently, standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement for pupils in Year 2 and good achievement for pupils in Year 6 and is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards in these core subjects were at only average levels at the end of Year 2, despite well above standards on entry to the school. Progress from reception to Year 2 was unsatisfactory. At that time standards in science at the end of Year 6 were above average and progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was satisfactory, but in English and mathematics, standards remained only average and progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. Currently pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their development of literacy and numeracy skills between reception and Year 2, and good progress between Years 2 and 6. Skills in information and communication technology are insufficiently threaded through work in other subjects.
4. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or of pupils from different groups and school monitoring supports evidence that they all have equality of access in their learning. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Year 2 in all other subjects of the curriculum and religious education. This is an improvement in standards of attainment in information and communication technology, design and technology and geography since the previous inspection, when they were below expectations. At the end of Year 6, standards are in line with those expected in art and design and above those normally attained in history, physical education and religious education. This is an improvement in religious education and physical education. The standards noted in history at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Standards in music continue to be well above those normally attained at the end of Year 6.
5. Children in the reception class make at least satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals and in some aspects, such as writing and number recognition, their progress is good. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers. All pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, higher attaining pupils and those identified as talented are well supported in their classes where work is well planned to match their individual targets as identified in individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and this is also an improvement since the previous inspection, when their progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school sets targets which take account of the standards of individual pupils on entry and which are sufficiently challenging for all.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. All pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been effectively maintained. Children in the reception class

are very settled in school. They are confident to approach adults to ask for help and assistance and talk about their work with confidence. They are developing good levels of independence, following the class rules for choosing activities. They tidy things away unaided and care for the resources they are using. They are proud of their garden area and care for it regularly during their visits. Careful consideration was given to where to put their flowerpot man, giving suitable thought to its safety and to where it could be seen most attractively. They walk sensibly about the school and can be trusted to behave when walking in the local area.

7. They take part enthusiastically in all activities and this is reflected both in lessons and in the number of pupils who take part in the very wide range of extra curricular activities on offer. They take part proudly in sporting competitions and in numerous musical events in school and the village. Pupils throughout the school listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other and are confident to express their opinions. For instance in one lesson, pupils talked sensitively about the different journeys people take. Issues about resolving problems were discussed and some were confident enough to talk openly about coming to terms with bereavement while their classmates listened with a great deal of respect. In all lessons pupils are enthusiastic learners. They concentrate very well and are keen to do well. Everyone feels that their contribution is important and all join in enthusiastically in activities. For example, in the Key Stage 2 singing session all pupils sang enthusiastically the lively and interesting songs with which they were presented.
8. Pupils' behaviour is very good as was noted by the previous inspection. Pupils play happily individually and in groups during playtimes, taking part in a wide range of co-operative games and talking to their friends. Younger pupils feel safe in the environment and play happily alongside and with the older pupils. At the end of playtimes, pupils walk very sensibly into class remembering to put their litter into the bins un-reminded. Pupils report that there are very few problems with bullying and oppressive behaviour and can explain exactly what they need to do if they encounter a problem. They say that the school always handles any incident quickly and effectively. During the inspection no incidents were witnessed during playtimes and the one occasion when a teacher needed to speak to a pupil the matter was dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been no exclusions recently. Parents are pleased with the standards of behaviour.
9. Personal development is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when personal development was judged to be good. Pupils have a very good understanding of what is right and wrong at a very early age and this helps them to develop very good insight to their own and other's feelings. Pupils talk responsibly about their roles on the school council and enjoy representing other pupils' ideas and opinions. The introduction of play equipment is a direct result of pupils' involvement in the council. Pupils use initiative very well to note when jobs need doing or to make sure that they understand what they need to do in lessons. In one lesson a pupil moved to the back of the classroom so that the teacher had room to write unimpeded and he could see more clearly, returning to his seat at the end of the process. His action was perfectly spontaneous and no words were exchanged. Similarly in a Year 1 class, pupils demonstrating procedures on the computer walked to the front finding the least disruptive pathway to the computer independently. This is clearly very good improvement since the previous inspection when concern was expressed about the too few opportunities available to pupils to develop their independence and use their initiative.
10. Relationships are very good. There is a mutual respect between all adults working in the school and pupils. Pupils respond very well and at times excellently to the numerous occasions offered for them to work together collaboratively on a task. They talk quietly together negotiating what to include in their science investigation, taking note of the most important points to remember. Older pupils watched in silence when the children in the reception class presented their assembly. Visitors could feel the pupils' silent encouragement to the younger children to remember their individual parts. This they did admirably as they responded to the atmosphere and proudly presented a flawless presentation of 'Jasper's Beanstalk'. It was a friendly occasion in which

everyone felt valued and welcome. Particular thought is given to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils think carefully about the needs of others and are keen to support them whenever they can to make sure that they play a full part in all the activities. Therefore all pupils are included in relevant activities regardless of any difficulties that they may have.

11. The school has a good level of attendance that is consistently higher than the national average, with very little unauthorised absence. Registers are marked correctly and registration is completed promptly, enabling lessons to start on time. This has a positive impact on learning throughout the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good overall. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to vary unacceptably and was unsatisfactory in almost three out of every ten lessons. Currently all of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory and the great majority of lessons are good and lead to pupils making good gains in their learning. Good teaching was observed in all classes. Three quarters of the teaching observed was at least good and nearly a third was very good.
13. One of the judgements of the previous inspection was that, at that time, work was not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' learning. There has been a significant turnover in teachers in recent years and the school has had much recent training and development of a new team and focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a consequence, this issue has been effectively resolved. Teaching currently effectively meets the needs of pupils of different groups in all classes. Teaching of children in the reception class (foundation stage) and in Years 1 and 2, has been satisfactory overall in the long term and currently the great majority of the teaching is good. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 2. On occasion, very good teaching was observed. At Key Stage 2, in Years 3 to 6, teaching in the recent past has been good overall and during the week of inspection a significant proportion of very good teaching was observed. All of the teaching in Year 6 was at least good and much of it was very good. This quality of teaching is having a good effect on standards.
14. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall. It has been at least satisfactory overall in the long term in the youngest classes and good for pupils in the oldest classes. Currently, due to the recent focus on improving standards, teaching is good throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in teaching these subjects. They have appropriately high expectations and pupils respond to the challenges set with interest, maintaining concentration well. Very good teaching takes place in music, including peripatetic teaching.
15. A strength of the teaching in all classes is in the teachers' management of pupils, which is very good. As a consequence, lessons are orderly and calm and pupils give their full attention to their work. For example, in a good lesson for some of the oldest pupils, the lesson was effectively planned and the teacher had very good relationships with the pupils. The lesson flowed effectively and pupils listened attentively and politely to the instructions they were given. There was effective recap of work already covered and careful questioning by the teacher ensured all pupils were actively involved in the discussion. Pupils focussed well on the discussion and were thoughtful in their answers, resulting in them making good progress in their knowledge of story styles and ways of making writing interesting to the reader. Teachers also make good use of a variety of different teaching methods, appropriately matched to the subjects being taught and the needs of the pupils. At times they address the whole class, whilst at others work with small groups or individual pupils on a specific aspect of their work. As a result, lessons are well matched to pupils' learning needs and they respond with good levels of application, maintaining a good pace in their work. Teachers know their pupils well and make good use of on-going assessment, particularly in English,

mathematics and science. Marking is constructive and points out to pupils how they can improve still further. Good use is made of homework and this is particularly well used in literacy. Teachers make overall good use of resources and well-deployed support staff to improve the quality of pupils' learning. While planning of lessons is generally good, there is too little planned use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

16. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers make sure that work planned for them is closely matched to their needs so that they achieve well. They receive good support from classroom assistants who diligently follow their targets and monitor their progress closely. All adults have very good relationships with pupils and keep very clear records of what they can do so that future work can be planned to meet specific needs. Very careful and detailed records are kept of pupils' achievements and these are used to plan relevant activities matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Resources are very well organised. Regular reviews take place to which parents are invited. Many parents take full advantage of this opportunity to discuss and support their child's learning at school and at home.
17. Teachers ensure equality of opportunity for boys and girls and for pupils from different groups, including those with English as an additional language. Consequently all pupils, including higher attaining pupils make at least satisfactory and often good gains in their learning throughout the school.

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

18. The quality and range of learning experiences provided for children in the foundation stage and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, they are of particularly high quality. This is because the pupils are given many extra things to do, visitors and visits are used effectively and also there is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, especially for music. Peripatetic provision impacts highly on the quality of pupils' ability to play a wide range of instruments and on the high quality of singing of pupils in Year 3 to 6. The wide range of extra-curricular activities noted by the previous inspection has been effectively maintained. Although some parents would like still more.
19. Very good improvement is evident since the previous inspection when the quality of provision for pupils under five was unsatisfactory and learning for pupils with special educational needs was judged to be inappropriate. Provision for these pupils now includes a good range of practical activities and first hand experiences. Planning has improved since the previous inspection and the school now uses assessment efficiently to provide well for pupils of different abilities, who are then given appropriately challenging tasks and suitable support.
20. The curriculum is well designed to enable the school to achieve its mission statement of giving each individual a lifelong love of learning. Overall it is broad and well balanced and meets statutory requirements for all subjects including religious education, collective worship information about drugs mis-use and sex education. It is enriched with carefully planned experiences that take into account ways to capture pupils' interest, firmly based upon methods and ideas for their personal development. As a result the school promotes equality for all and effectively prepares pupils for life in a multi-cultural Britain.
21. Subject co-ordinators agree with the staff what could be further developed which has made a significant improvement in planning in how to make the curriculum relevant to pupils' needs. There are good examples in the school where the curriculum has been modified as a result of the school evaluating its provision in science and history with an improvement in planning for pupils to develop their skills of enquiry. Co-ordinators are aware of how forms of literacy related to their subject could be further developed during literacy hour. High quality planning frequently identifies

opportunities to link subjects together, for example, history, art, geography and information communication technology. Planning for pupils to use information and communication technology in the context of all subjects is not systematic and effective to challenge and extend learning.

22. Curriculum policies are of high quality and implemented effectively. Each identifies the contribution to be made to pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship. Opportunities within science and physical education are created for pupils to discuss hygiene, healthy living and care of the environment. Provision for their emotional well-being, and how they make choices is linked well to religious education and making democratic decisions with history, geography and the school council election. Specific time is planned for pupils to discuss feelings and attitudes during "Circle Time" for younger pupils. The school is a recognised health promoting school and an eco-project for involving pupils in sustainable development. The school is taking stock of its provision and working hard to plan a co-ordinated curriculum for personal, social, health education and citizenship. The implementation group consists of all representatives of the school community and parents who have collected the views of pupils, parents and teachers. They have agreed on an action plan with sex and relationship education, appropriate to pupils' age as a priority for development in the light of school aims and values. This is good practice. Acts of collective worship make a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of the importance of prayer and reflection in peoples' lives.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress overall. This is due to the precise learning targets, which are considered closely in teachers' planning. Learning support assistants know the pupils' needs very well and are therefore able to address these in lessons. For example, learning specific spellings, consolidation of previous learning, which may have been forgotten temporarily, or addressing particular behaviour targets. All pupils are treated in a positive manner, therefore they receive encouraging feedback to build their self-confidence and self esteem and know precisely what they need to do next to improve. When withdrawn from the classroom for literacy and numeracy work they receive very good support from the special support assistants and make very good progress. Consequently, on return to the classroom these pupils are more confident and contribute readily to whole class mental calculation lessons and to literacy word level work. Provision for pupils with a statement of special educational needs is very good. Suitable equipment is available to support specific learning needs. Detailed programmes are very well matched to meet the needs of each individual including higher attaining pupils and all staff members follow these diligently.
24. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is very good improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. It is due to the positive role models presented by all members of staff and to the very positive ethos created by the head teacher since her appointment. Pupils learning to play a musical instrument perform as pupils come into assembly. All pupils listen in respectful silence as they walk into the hall. This initiative makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. There are clear expectations on behaviour and pupils respond very well to these, as they have been involved in deciding the school rules and code of conduct. The inclusive atmosphere created by the school means that pupils with special educational needs are well looked after by other pupils. There is often more than one volunteer for making sure that relevant equipment is available for those who have difficulty carrying things for themselves.
25. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and is promoted effectively through English, religious education, music and the well-planned assemblies. The Year 6 assembly about Islam gave good opportunity for the whole school to consider carefully the beliefs of different religious groups. There are regular and relevant acts of collective worship, which meet statutory requirements. In one assembly, pupils were given good opportunity to think about what it means to be brave. Due to the positive atmosphere created, pupils talked openly about the times when they were personally brave and considered the feelings of others in the community who are brave despite going into difficult situations. This included discussions about the work of fire-fighters and

lifeboat personnel. Opportunities to talk about bereavement in one literacy lesson, lead to pupils writing candidly about their feelings when their cat died. The care of the environment is reflected in the work done in geography in Year 5 and the recent local eco-project award. The development of the reception children's garden reflects the importance the school places on this aspect from the earliest stages of the pupils' school career. This small area allows the children to develop a sense of awareness of the part they play in caring for the environment and provides a lovely place to sit quietly with their friends. This welcoming atmosphere is not yet extended into all areas of the school environment but is ongoing in the school's development plans.

26. The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development. Codes of conduct are clearly displayed and staff and pupils alike follow these conscientiously. There are clear expectations on how to behave when outside in the local area and the younger children are developing a good sense of right and wrong when looking at plants and animals. During a visit to collect leaves for a lesson, two children picked up a ladybird to show the teacher and were in danger of causing harm. This was promptly dealt with and was reinforced very well later in the week when "Lucy Ladybird" visited the classroom to ask the children not to pick her up if they see her out and about as they might hurt her. The children's attention was very focused and the message about caring for living things was successfully put across. The residential visit for older pupils plays an important role in developing their social skills. In many lessons, activities are organised which require pupils to work together, either planning their own work or negotiating who will do what in group activities. In a Year 5 music lesson for example, pupils had to agree who would play which instrument, when they would start and finish playing and who would lead the proceedings to make sure that they all played at the right time and together. Pupils are given very good opportunities to consider people less fortunate than themselves and this is reflected in the support given to "Operation Christmas Child" and the money raised for the local hospice. Those pupils standing for school council responded very well to the opportunity to write and present their own election manifesto and clearly reflected the work developed by the school in preparation for this event. The manifestos reflected the pupils' commitment to improving the quality of outdoor play and relationships between pupils within the school.
27. Provision for cultural development is good. Local traditions are promoted very well and pupils play a full part in local events. The very wide range of opportunities for pupils to perform in local community events mean that they have a very good understanding of their own local culture. Pupils are looking forward to the forthcoming Scarecrow Festival and are already planning the particular part they will play. The school orchestra and choir are hard at work rehearsing pieces to perform at the planned Golden Jubilee celebrations. Literature and the reading and writing of stories and poetry play a very positive role in enhancing pupils' cultural knowledge. While there are suitable opportunities to consider the cultures of others through religious education lessons and in music, there are too few opportunities to develop this learning beyond a superficial level in other subjects and is an area for development. For example in art and design, pupils' study of different artists does not often extend beyond Western European art. Pupils talk about the visit to the local synagogue and it is evident from their conversations that they have developed a good understanding of the beliefs and culture of this group of people.
28. The school makes very good use of the community to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Pupils take part in a range of sporting activities with other schools, including Wirral Games, the swimming gala and the inter-school egg race. Pupils are also involved in a number of village events, including the annual Scarecrow Festival and the Eco-Project on the village green. Children attend the local Church for some services and local church leaders visit the school regularly, sometimes leading assemblies. Local artists have organised a workshop in school where children produced interesting and colourful patterns using a variety of techniques. The school uses the local area for activities in history, geography and art, and older people from the village come into school to tell children about what life was like in earlier times. Some children were able to visit Thornton Manor to see filming for the new television production of "The Forsyte Saga".

29. The school has long standing links with a local children's hospice and pupils raise money by holding carol-singing and other events. The choir also entertain at the 75+ Club and at other local events. At harvest time, pupils deliver over a hundred parcels to local residents, and local people are invited to school concerts. All these initiatives extend the children's experiences and add considerable value to their education.
30. The school has good links with other schools and pre-school providers and these help the children as they transfer into and out of the school. Pupils entering the foundation stage come from a large number of early-years providers and this makes effective liaison with all of them rather difficult. Good links have been forged with the village playgroup and children from the playgroup attend some school events and visit the school regularly before they transfer.
31. Pupils leaving the school in Year 6 transfer to many different secondary schools, and this again makes effective links difficult to achieve and sustain. There are, however, good links with the nearest secondary school, to which the vast majority of pupils transfer, including opportunities for Year 6 pupils to take part in specific projects at the secondary school and visits by Year 7 teachers to Thornton Hough. All Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit their future school during the summer term prior to their transfer and this helps to reduce any worries that they might have.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school takes good care of its pupils, and staff and governors give a high priority to health and safety. The high levels of care for pupils' safety and well-being, noted by the previous report, have been effectively maintained. The staff have created a welcoming place where pupils are safe, well cared for and valued. Good procedures promote pupils' health and safety well and all staff have a genuine concern for pupils' well-being, whatever their needs. The head teacher is responsible for child protection and makes sure that all staff know what to do should concerns arise about a pupil. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid procedures and the school informs parents when their child has had a bump to the head or other significant injury. The head teacher and governors make regular checks on the building and grounds and deal promptly with any health and safety concerns. Routine checks on fire equipment, electrical appliances and physical education apparatus take place regularly and risk assessments have been done effectively. The community policeman visits to talk to the children about keeping safe.
33. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, although these are rarely needed because the children enjoy coming to school and parents ensure that they attend regularly. The occasional attendance or punctuality issue is quickly and effectively dealt with by the head teacher.
34. Good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour focus on rewards and sanctions that are agreed and used consistently by teachers and support staff. Pupils are involved in producing a set of rules for their class and are very aware of the behaviour expectations. These procedures create an orderly community where pupils learn without disturbance. A selection of toys is available at break and lunchtime and this reduces the likelihood of poor behaviour in the playground. Good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour involve pupils telling a teacher or other adult if they are bullied. As a result incidents of oppressive or racist behaviour are rare.
35. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Personal development is assessed on entry and is reviewed regularly throughout the pupils' time in school. Any specific concerns are recorded and the updated record is passed onto the next teacher. Any issues or concerns about personal development are discussed with the parent at each parents' evening, thus ensuring that both partners in the education process are aware of the situation and

can work together on any problems. One or two pupils have quite significant behavioural problems and they have an individual behaviour plan which is shared with parents and other staff in the school who need to know. These procedures are particularly effective because teachers and support staff know pupils well.

36. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance is good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when although the school met the statutory requirements for assessment, it indicated that they were not used effectively in planning pupils' work, pupils' attainment on entry were inaccurate and pupils' abilities were underestimated. These issues have now been appropriately addressed. At the foundation stage, initial assessments are used well to ensure that children have activities that match their needs. Entry assessments are used in the reception class to determine children's attainment on entry to compulsory schooling. Procedures for assessment are now good at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There are good systems in place to track pupils' progress in the core areas from baseline assessment, non-statutory, statutory and end of unit tests to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. In the non-core subjects, teachers evaluate and record carefully the results of end of unit tests and this information is used similarly to the diagnostic system used in core subject tests. The data is analysed carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses in order that future planning may be amended if necessary. The effect of using this information to track progress made against pre-set targets verifies the effectiveness of teaching and learning and advises future planning. The school has just installed a computerised assessment system, which now needs time to "bed-in" before its overall effectiveness can be evaluated. Monitoring of the use of assessment by the head teacher and co-ordinators is proving to be effective and impacting on raising standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. In general, parents are pleased with the school and the quality of education and breadth of experiences that it provides. The good relationships noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. They report that their children enjoy coming to school; that the school is helping their children to develop into mature and responsible young people, and that they feel comfortable in approaching staff about any issues or concerns. A small number, however, feel that the school does not work closely with parents; that they are not as well informed as they would like about their child's progress, and that there is not a good range of extra-curricular activities.
38. During the inspection, all these points were looked at closely and inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents, but not with the negative views of a few parents. The evidence indicates that the school works closely with parents, provides good quality information about the school and about children's progress, and offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
39. The school provides good information that helps parents to understand their children's learning. In addition to the informative prospectus and governors' annual report, the school produces attractive half-termly newsletters containing useful information about school developments and future events, including invitations for parents to attend assemblies and help in school. Some items of news are written by the children themselves and the newsletters are enlivened by illustrations and photographs of children's work. At the start of each term the teachers give parents details of the main work that their children will be covering during the term so that they can help if they wish to do so.
40. There are three opportunities each year for parents to meet the teacher and a detailed and informative written report is provided in the summer term, together with a report written by the pupils themselves. Staff are also very willing to meet parents at other times and the head teacher and other teachers are usually around at the end of the school day for a quick word or to make an appointment. The reports prepared by teachers include targets for the future and at the end of

each key stage they tell parents how well their child is doing in relation to national expectations. A very small number of parents at the meeting indicated that they would welcome some help from the school in supporting their children with meeting the targets.

41. At the time of the previous inspection there were no arrangements for parents to help in school. This has now changed with the introduction of parent partnership, a scheme where parents are trained to work with children in school. A number of parents are involved in this scheme, and other parents help by mounting pupils' work and carrying out other routine jobs to help teachers. Parents also run extra-curricular activities such as the popular Spanish Club. The school invited parents' views when preparing for the Health Promoting School initiative and when planning the school's future development.
42. The school's budget is boosted by the efforts of an active parent-teacher association that organises a range of social and fund-raising events. These are well supported by parents and have recently enabled the school to purchase additional information technology equipment and to create a small garden for the youngest children, the actual work being carried out by parents.
43. The school has created very effective links with parents that have a very good impact on the work of the school. Parents make a very good contribution to children's learning both at school and at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. In the year since her appointment, the head teacher has provided very good, strong, clear educational direction for the school. As a result all staff work together with purpose, and the school has a good ethos promoting high standards. The governors meet regularly and are active in their support of the school. They have a good level of understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is a detailed school development plan, devised following in depth discussions by staff and governors, and taking appropriate consideration of the views of parents. The plan has identified aims, specified targets to be met and suitable time-scales for completion. Support and monitoring of the curriculum planning and teaching of the core subjects are good, as are the school's systems for monitoring and self-evaluation. The school's aims are appropriate and all staff work to provide equality of opportunity to pupils from all groups and of all levels of prior attainment.
45. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching have improved greatly since the previous inspection and are now good. The head teacher and deputy work well together to review performance regularly, agreeing relevant areas for improvement and identifying related training for all groups of staff. This has led to improved standards and personal development and more efficient and effective use of information and communication technology to evaluate and review performance. The role of co-ordinators of non-core subjects in monitoring and evaluation is not as good as it should be and this is being addressed.
46. The school has a good number of teachers whose qualifications and experience are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Performance management arrangements are in place and effectively support school development. Teachers' objectives for professional development are usefully linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan and thus supports school improvement well. Procedures for the induction of new members of staff are very good. There are detailed job descriptions, which are closely linked to raising standards so teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The detailed staff handbook ensures that all new staff are made aware quickly of important policies and procedures relevant to them. The school would provide very effective training for new teachers. The school is very well placed to put into practise priorities for improvement that have already been identified.
47. The accommodation is satisfactory, although classrooms are small and the reception class is particularly crowded. There is no grassed play area on site, but games take place on the village playing field, a short distance away. The fact that the hall currently houses the library and the computer suite, limits its use for activities such as gymnastics. The situation will improve when the planned extension is built. The current location of the library limits its use for research and private study.
48. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall, which is about the same as reported by the previous inspection. The resource provision for children in the reception class is satisfactory. The provision of materials and equipment in all classrooms is good and the provision of books both in classrooms and the library is good. The books in the library are utilised well but not currently organised to encourage independent study. There is difficulty of pupils being able to access the computer suite since it is in the hall, which is used for several activities. Computers in classrooms do not always accept the same software. Provision for information communication technology is satisfactory and the number of computers and range of resources to support learning across the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Because of limited access, due to their siting, computers are not used effectively to support the systematic application of pupils' skills in information and communication technology in other areas of the curriculum. The range of materials to support learning for science and design and technology are good and in music they are very good. Very effective use is made of the local community and visits and visitors as learning resources and this gives the curriculum greater breadth.

49. Financial planning is good. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when strategic financial planning was judged to be unsatisfactory. The current finance committee adopt a prudent approach to expenditure and ensure it is carefully matched to priorities and needs agreed and prioritised by the school. The principles of best value are effectively applied. Recently, great care and considerable time was taken by the finance committee to compile a dossier of financial regulations to ensure secure financial control. The finance committee meet regularly to review aspects of financial control and expenditure with both the chair of finance and the local education authority bursar. This procedure, which has evolved over the past year or so, has proved to be successful and the finance committee is now to consider formalising this process. Effective use is made of specific grants to support new initiatives and improve further the quality of opportunity for raising standards. The procedures for bidding for items of major expenditure are carefully managed and the governing body values the support from the L.E.A. in this area. The school currently has an under-spend, which is within the agreed limits and the finance committee have potentially identified this as a buffer to maintain best possible staffing levels. The recommendations of the last auditor report were addressed immediately and were found to be good. The school's administrative staff carries out day-to-day financial management of the school effectively. Administrative procedures are well established and the school secretary adopts a very helpful approach to staff, pupils, parents and visitors. This contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school. The school has just recently adopted computerised systems which are currently working well. The school is shortly to use the new technology for other aspects of school recording, such as a program to manage assessment data. Procedures overall are unobtrusive and support the day-to-day running of the school well.
50. Taking the high standards, good teaching, learning and good leadership and management into consideration, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further the head teacher and governors should

- (1) Ensure that pupils have sufficient regular, planned access to information and communication technology in other lessons by:-
 - a) increasing the number and quality of computers and software
 - b) site computers where they can be easily used in information communication lessons and also at other times in other subject lessons
 - c) develop explicit planning references to ensure teachers make the most of all opportunities to extend pupils' skills in using information and communication technology as a learning tool.
 - d) monitor teaching and learning and standards throughout the school
(Paragraph Nos. 21. 48. 102. 103-108. 126)

- (2) Develop the role of the co-ordinator in all non-core subjects and religious education to include monitoring of teaching and learning and tracking of standards so that the good standards of management in English, mathematics and science are emulated across the school.
(Paragraph Nos. 45. 87. 92. 97. 114. 120. 126)

(Both these issues have already been identified as areas for improvement by the school, in its development plan.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	17	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	31.5	44.5	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	159
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	14	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	22	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	96 (95)	91 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	22	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	14	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	21	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (94)	86 (82)	100 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	22	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (91)	95 (82)	100 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	357,277
Total expenditure	336,581
Expenditure per pupil	2117
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1741
Balance carried forward to next year	18955

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	159
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	44	6	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	35	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	44	9	6	0
The teaching is good.	39	46	7	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	30	28	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	31	13	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	37	33	22	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	30	2	2	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	24	28	6	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. There are 20 children in the reception class who all attend full time. Most have been in school since September and are very well settled into the routines. The children have a wide range of pre school experiences. The school has good links with the local playgroup and those children who attend visit the school regularly for story time and other activities before starting school full time. This helps them to start school with confidence as they are familiar with the environment and know what to expect. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, which reported standards, provision, teaching and learning as unsatisfactory. These are all currently satisfactory and children make at least expected progress in all areas of learning. In writing, and in some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world they make good progress.
52. Over the last few years, attainment on entry has varied from well above average, to average levels expected. The current reception children entered school with above expected attainment in all areas of learning except in their early writing skills and some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world, which were in line with expectations. The good range of suitable activities is securely based in structured play activities and enable all children to make satisfactory progress overall. Consequently, by the end of the reception year, virtually all are attaining the early learning goals in all the areas of learning and about half are exceeding these. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, which reported provision as unsatisfactory as learning was too formal and not based enough in suitable play and practical activities.
53. Assessment procedures in the reception class and their use are good. The previous inspection reported that children were not accurately assessed on entry. This is no longer the case. Careful assessments are made and the accuracy of these is supported by scrutiny of the children's work in literacy and numeracy when they started school in September. Regular assessments are made of the children's work and the information is used well to match work to individual levels of attainment. The children are put into groups on the basis of this information and these are changed for each area of learning depending on the children's particular strengths. Those children who are more able and gifted and talented are identified and suitable account taken of their needs during lessons. Similarly, children with special educational needs are identified and appropriate support is put into place.
54. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was reported as unsatisfactory. Good teaching was seen in writing lessons and in aspects of mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The outdoor environment is used particularly well to support learning in science and knowledge and understanding of the environment. The adults in the reception class work very well together to make sure that the children receive a suitable curriculum and that they take some responsibility for their own learning. The children launch into the new activities with enthusiasm due to the practical nature of the tasks. Time spent listening to the teacher is kept to a minimum and there is a suitable balance between the teacher talking and practical tasks. Questioning is effective to include all the children in the whole class teaching sessions and this is quietly reinforced by the support assistant with children who require further explanation.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Suitable opportunities are planned for the children to develop their personal, social and emotional development. The children start school with above average personal development skills and due to satisfactory teaching, by the end of the reception year virtually all attain the early learning goals in this area of learning and at least half of the class exceed these. All adults working in the

reception class provide very good role models and work very well together to provide opportunities for the children to develop their social skills. The children are developing good levels of independence. They play happily with and alongside older pupils at lunchtime and afternoon playtime. They have good levels of independence reflected in the way they follow the school rules sensibly when returning to the classroom from play and assemblies. In the classroom the children always refer to the choosing board so they know exactly what they are and are not allowed to choose during their self directed learning times. This is organised in pictures so that the children who have not yet started to read, are able to use this skill as soon as they start school in September. The children are not always given enough opportunity to think for themselves about how they should approach a task or complete a particular activity. Although during class teaching time good opportunities are provided for the children to put forward ideas, resources are often provided for them and there is too little opportunity for them to decide for themselves which resources they need to complete a particular task. This was evident in a design and make task when the children suggested adhesive tape for sticking their seed packets together yet only glue sticks were provided.

56. The children are developing good levels of self-confidence and self esteem due to the good range of opportunities for them to contribute to whole school events and the very good relationships established in the classroom. Gentle reminders of how to contribute their ideas to the whole group are positive so that the children remain keen and continue to take a full part. The assembly that they presented to pupils, staff, parents and visitors was an example of their good levels of self-confidence and self esteem. During rehearsal they worked very hard to make sure that they remembered their individual parts well and could sing the song in tune and in time together. They were not daunted by the size of the audience, or the sense of occasion, and did a very good job.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Children enter school with above average communication, language and literacy skills and due to the satisfactory teaching overall, the majority of children are already attaining the early learning goals in this area of learning with half exceeding these. Early writing skills are average on entry and due to good teaching, the children make good progress and already half are exceeding the early learning goals in this aspect. The teacher uses the detailed assessment information well to match planned tasks to individual levels. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, which reported that the children were expected to do work which was too easy and did not make the progress they should. Achievement is now satisfactory overall and good in writing.
58. The children talk to each other and to adults with confidence and choose from a wide vocabulary to talk about their recent experiences. They contribute confidently in front of the whole school by describing times when they think they have been brave. They recalled a number of people who are brave in their jobs and are happy to put forward these ideas in assemblies.
59. The children are developing a good sight vocabulary and half are already reading short stories with expression and clear understanding of content. They recall significant detail and can talk about the characters and plot. Half of the class respond to the humour in the stories and use a range of strategies independently to help them decode new words. Work is linked to the high frequency words identified in the National Literacy Strategy and the children learn these to support their reading and spelling skills. The teacher organises games to make learning fun and these are made at different levels so that higher attaining children learn new words at a faster rate and less able children are given small group support to consolidate previously learned words before moving onto new ones. The children particularly like the Bingo game and everyone is keen to take part. The learning support assistant responds well to those pupils who have a special educational need and makes sure that through her calm, positive approach they all concentrate well.
60. Achievement in writing is good. The children start school with little experience of writing independently and rely heavily on copying what the teacher has written for them. During the

inspection about half of the children are writing a few sentences independently and are confident to have a go at their own spellings due to the input from the activities during literacy. Many are still not forming their letters correctly, however, as they have not yet spent enough time on developing this skill.

Mathematical development

61. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and most are already attaining the early learning goals in this area of learning. Due to the particular emphasis placed on counting rhymes and games, the children make good progress in counting and number recognition activities. The children take part in a daily numeracy lesson and follow the objectives outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy. The activities are practical and help the children to develop a sound understanding of the order and conservation of numbers to 10 and beyond. Many of the children are ready to apply this knowledge and understanding to problem solving activities and to develop their mental recall of addition and subtraction facts. As yet there is not enough opportunity for them to do this as too few activities are planned for these aspects of mathematical development. The children work in small groups and this helps build their confidence. It also gives the adults working with them good opportunity to probe their understanding individually and to ask questions to take this learning and understanding of number forward. They have a good knowledge and understanding of shapes and measures and this is reinforced through well-chosen stories and rhymes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. The curriculum to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is rich and relevant and coupled with good teaching, ensures that the children make good progress in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year the great majority attain the early learning goals in this area of learning and about half exceed these in the science and information and communication technology aspects. The outdoor environment is used effectively to support the children's learning and this is an improvement since the previous inspection, which reported that the outdoor areas were not used well enough. While outside collecting leaves, the teacher makes sure that the children understand how to care for the environment. Particular emphasis is placed on what they should do to keep themselves safe. All agree rules before activities take place and all children are aware of the rules. The leaf collection activity was particularly successful. The children successfully found a range of different leaves and talked knowledgeably about the differences in terms of their shape, size, colour and texture. On return to the classroom, the range of activities supported their investigations further so that they were all able to record in pictures a number of similarities and differences. Higher attaining children talked about how the properties of the leaves may change as the seasons changed.

Physical development

63. Teaching of physical development is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and by the end of the reception year the majority attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. New large wheeled toys have meant that the children have improved opportunity to think about their own and others' safety. They ride along the pathways sensibly and manage to keep on the track successfully. As yet the children are experiencing the toys and activities are not yet planned to develop specific skills closely enough. All children have appropriate pencil grips and have suitable control to colour between the lines. Most can write their own names unaided but although they can all copy to a satisfactory standard, too many still do not always form their letters correctly and this means that they have not yet developed a fluent handwriting style. During playtimes, pupils run, jump and skip to suitable levels and have a good sense of space. They move with thought to their own and others' safety.

Creative development

64. Satisfactory teaching ensures that the children make sound progress so that by the end of the reception year most attain the early learning goals in their creative development. There are good opportunities for the children to mix their own colours when painting and consequently most know the common colours. Activities are linked to an overall theme and this makes the learning more meaningful and relevant. This motivates all children to take part. During one lesson, the children all managed to mix the correct tone of colour to match the flowers of which they were painting pictures. They used their good observational skills to paint petals and leaves of the correct shape, size and position. The craft table in the classroom is organised to allow the children to have independent access to a range of materials for design and make tasks. However, the classroom is too small for them to have regular access to paint and clay. The school is aware of this and there are plans to enlarge the classroom in September 2002. Pupils know a range of songs, which they sing during a regular weekly music lesson. While this aspect of musical experience is satisfactory, there is not enough space in the classroom for the children to have regular opportunities to play a range of percussion instruments to explore how sounds can be produced and changed.

ENGLISH

65. The teachers have worked well to raise standards in English resulting in improvement as pupils move through the school. At the time of the previous inspection standards of attainment were only average at the end of both key stages, despite the well above expected attainment of the pupils on entry to the school. The quality of teaching at that time ranged from good to unsatisfactory, but there was too much unsatisfactory teaching and the progress was unsatisfactory throughout the school. Currently, pupils have been making satisfactory progress overall in Years 1 and 2, due to the sound quality of teaching. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 2. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good overall. In classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6, teaching in the recent past has been good and during the inspection a significant proportion of very good teaching was observed. Improvements in the management of the subject and the school's focus on literacy have raised standards still further and the quality of teaching and learning is now good throughout the school with significant amounts of very good teaching in Year 6. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6.
66. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are generally very well developed. They offer answers to questions and explain their own thoughts clearly. When asked to share ideas in small groups, they talk together effectively, communicating their opinions well. Younger pupils are polite and followed the conventions of discussion by waiting for others to finish before talking themselves. Older pupils use correct grammatical terminology when studying language and speak fluently and expressively. Listening skills are well developed in all aspects of school life and across the curriculum. Pupils, at both key stages, are responsive listeners and engage well with each other, and with adults. Speaking skills are good. Pupils in all classes are given good opportunities to explain their ideas to each other and to their teachers. They recall their experiences, assemble their ideas and present them to the class. They are enthusiastic and talk confidently about a range of subjects and interests. However, the width of vocabulary of some pupils does not always extend beyond their daily experiences. For example, pupils in Year 2 did not know the meaning of "bale" or "trough" and some pupils in Year 5 were unsure of the meaning of the word "humble".
67. Pupils' attainment in reading is above the national average at Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils learn appropriate reading strategies, for example, sounding and splitting words. They are enthusiastic and well motivated readers. A wide range of books is available and pupils are encouraged to choose and take books home to read. Reading schemes, together with reinforcement books, provide a graded and well-structured system. At the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils read fluently, observing punctuation and using expression. They are enthusiastic and read widely for pleasure at home and at school. All pupils have clear ideas on favourite books

and authors and many regularly use the public libraries in the area. Most can scan text efficiently to extract ideas.

68. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop good writing skills. Pupils in Year 1 write short sentences and, with help, use simple punctuation. Pupils in Year 2 write clear instructions to make sandwiches and imaginative pieces on “how to turn teacher into a sea monster”. Their writing demonstrates good understanding of normal conventions and stories have clear beginnings, middles and endings. Spellings are correct or phonetically justifiable and punctuated properly, with some use of link words. Handwriting skills develop well with most pupils forming letters with reasonable accuracy and many using joined writing.
69. At the end of Year 6, work is very well presented and the majority of pupils use a fluent writing style. Pupils’ work includes writing for a wide range of audiences and purposes, including descriptive and evaluative writing. It is used well to support work in other subjects, such as when pupils wrote about their interviews with members of the community about their memories of the Second World War. Sentences are demarcated correctly and punctuation is used well, including the use of speech marks. Spelling is generally correct, including polysyllabic words. Pupils use plans to arrange their thoughts and draft stories effectively. As a result, the pace of the writing is crisp and captivates the interest of the reader. Most pupils’ work is at least at the level expected for pupils at the end of their primary stage (level 4) and a very large proportion work at even higher levels. Word processing is used appropriately to present work attractively.
70. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of literacy skills. They plan lessons carefully with specific learning objectives and a clear structure for the development of the session. Literacy is effectively planned to support work across the curriculum. Whole class reading and discussion groups are well managed and careful questioning probes pupils’ thinking. In the most effective lessons there are high expectations for effort, concentration and achievement, no time is wasted and teachers are constantly challenging the pupils. Sessions at the end of lessons are used very well to reinforce learning and discussions are purposeful. The tasks pupils’ are set are challenging and interesting and good support for pupils with special educational needs allows them to make optimum progress. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged. There are good systems in place to assess and record pupils’ progress in reading and spelling and teachers make good use of them to plan for progression in learning. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and response and as a result pupils respond well and focus effectively. This was particularly apparent in a lesson on story styles for the oldest pupils, where the respect and consideration between pupils and teacher had a positive impact on the thoughtful discussion on the analysis of the text. Marking is effective, and offers constructive advice and further information. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and given equal opportunities to express their ideas.
71. Pupils’ attitudes to work are always at least satisfactory and usually they are good or very good. They enjoy the structured literacy hours and are very responsive to questions. They listen well to instruction and to each other. Behaviour is very good. Pupils in Year 6 maintain discussions for a significant length of time and treat each other with respect and consideration. They show good levels of responsibility for their own learning. Pupils work well in whole class sessions and in groups as well as on individual tasks. They take a pride in their work to ensure that it is usually neat and well presented.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked effectively with all staff to implement the literacy strategy and ensure consistency throughout the school. She supports the staff by monitoring planning and also monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment is used well to track the progress of the pupils as they move through the school and to ensure that realistic yet challenging targets are set for their attainment. Stories from other countries and cultures are used effectively to widen pupils’ awareness of story styles and

traditions. The subject is well resourced and there are further plans to improve the library as a learning resource when the planned extension is built.

MATHEMATICS

73. Standards of attainment are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This indicates a considerable improvement from the previous inspection, when standards of attainment at the end of both key stages were in line with national expectations.
74. Pupil's use of mental mathematics at Key Stage 1 is well above the national average overall. In Year 1 pupils count on and back in tens, they understand the concept of adding ten and subtracting ten and are able to identify and explain the pattern. They are confident in moving up or down using the 100 square and use mathematical vocabulary of more and less than, competently. Their numeracy skills are then transferred to solving simple mathematical problems. In lessons, pupils remain totally focused and listen and watch carefully whilst their peers take it in turns to write the number sentences. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are eager to respond to questions and enjoy the opportunity to write the number sentence on the board, including pupils with special educational needs. When set their tasks, most pupils settle down quickly but the less able groups are not always totally motivated and require adult support to sustain the concentration shown in mental session. Pupils in Year 2 recognise that subtraction is the inverse of addition and they use this principle very successfully in solving mental calculations. Pupils are given opportunities to ask and answer questions and to explain in their own words, which operation is to be used to solve a particular problem. Pupils use mathematical vocabulary well and pupils are aware of their teacher's expectation to use it when responding to her "rapid fire" questions. This has the very positive effect of maintaining interest and sustaining enthusiasm. Very good routines have been established, for example, when pupils are required to write answers on their white boards, they do not show them until instructed. However, there is never any reticence to answer and pupils are not afraid of giving the wrong answer. Irrespective of the ability of the group, the differentiated work ensures that all pupils are able to tackle problem solving at their own level of ability. This they do well. In an interview with Year 2 pupils they confidently explain procedures for counting on and counting back, odd and even, partitioning up to 100. They know what objects would be measured in grams and what would be measured in kilograms. Similarly for capacity and length. They competently described the work on symmetry they had done and confidently named different shapes, such as polygon and octagon.
75. Standards observed in Years 3 to 6 are well above average overall. At the lower and middle of the key stage, pupils identify doubles and halves to 100 and explain the strategies they use to arrive at their answers. Most pupils understand which operation they need to answer problems. The support for lower attaining pupils at this level is very good. Effective teaching and learning took place in the withdrawal group of less able pupils, where the support assistant revisited place value to consolidate pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. These pupils did very well and were able to add 1,000, 100, 10 and one confidently to the correct digit. At the end of Year 6, pupils during the mental session, worked on all aspects of mathematics. The pupils themselves controlled this session and operated at a brisk pace. All pupils needed to be and were totally focused in order to continue the fast flow of questions and answers. During the task session, pupils completed the tasks of their previous work on investigating the number of combinations of a three-course meal. Pupils established effective sequences to ensure no combination would be omitted and searched and found patterns in their investigations, which they were eager to discuss. From the scrutiny of workbooks, pupils had covered all the required aspects of mathematics, such as fractions, ratio and proportion, percentages, shapes, angles, data handling, probability and problem solving to a high level. Presentation of all work was at least good. Pupils are aware of the expectations of their teacher. They take care with their work, approach collaborative work with enthusiasm and use mathematical vocabulary confidently and appropriately. Overall, pupils' use and application of mathematics is extremely well developed and all pupils, including those with

special educational needs, make good progress. They display positive attitudes and work diligently and continually confirming well-established classroom routines.

76. Teaching is good overall. Work throughout the school is well matched to the pupils' abilities and needs, including pupils with English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils. Opportunities are provided to use mathematics across the curriculum areas. For example, in science in Year 3, pupils identified appropriate units of measurement and in Year 4 they considered possible scales for drawing a line graph. Teaching across and within the key stages is effective and opportunities for promoting independent learning is a key feature. The management of behaviour is nevertheless than good and the pace mostly brisk. Pupils respond well to this. They are enthusiastic, have positive attitudes to their learning, concentrate hard and remain focused. This has a positive effect on the progress pupils make in their learning. Introductions are delivered at a good pace, pupils kept on their toes and they actively respond with no evidence of restlessness or lack of concentration. Teachers' planning is effective and they work together to ensure equality of learning opportunities. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a positive impact on both teaching and learning. Each lesson sets out clearly what are the intended outcomes of the lesson and these are consistently shared with pupils. Assessment opportunities are identified and used well to inform future planning and teaching to secure appropriate learning. Teachers make good use of resources but during the inspection, there was limited use of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject.
77. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise standards since the previous inspection and the improved standards clearly reflect her efforts and commitment. She works very well with other staff, offering support and co-ordinating on planning and standards. The area of monitoring is not fully established in teaching and learning but she acknowledges this and already has strategies in mind to improve this area. The overall very positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, the relationships which exist between staff and pupils and the enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator puts her in a strong position to complete the development of this aspect.

SCIENCE

78. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above the national average for their age. In comparison with the previous inspection this represents a very good improvement for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and a good improvement for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This is because of the high expectations of teaching, which is firmly based upon the assessment of pupils' previous achievement and attainment. In all year groups pupils enjoy the experiences of discovering scientific principles for themselves. This is beneficial to pupils of higher abilities since they gain a high level of independence. Pupils of lower abilities receive good support, which raises their attainment to at least average by the end of Year 2 and 'Booster' sessions for Year 6 lead to very good achievements and high standards. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported and make good progress in their learning in line with their peers.
79. At the end of Year 2 pupils choose questions to investigate and base suggestions about what might happen on their everyday experiences, for example, rough surfaces slow down movement. Pupils understand that thicker materials block out more light. They explain that some different fabrics are better insulators and are more suitable to prevent ice melting. Very good teaching fully involves pupils offering their own ideas and activities are managed well by the teacher with effective classroom support. Pupils of higher ability show a good level of thinking and learning for themselves and behave well, sharing tasks. Because the teacher has provided clear instructions and means of recording they record measurements as they proceed. Good teacher intervention during group investigations ensures that pupils learn how to organise their data so that it makes sense to them when they need to analyse it. The majority of Year 1 pupils have a good

understanding of the properties of materials and, with support, recognise how to be fair when testing. They explain what materials are best for building a house for the ‘Three Little Pigs’.

80. By the end of Year 6, pupils’ ability to use scientific knowledge and terms to help them decide what evidence to collect is better than might be expected. This is because very good teaching correctly focuses on pupils’ progress in inquiry skills and impacts favourably on pupils’ physical and creative effort. They select from a good range of light sources and apparatus to test their ideas. Pupils collaborate exceptionally well and work at a good pace. The majority of pupils correctly explain that larger surface areas create a greater resistance to air and that opposing forces ‘fight against each other’. Although science teaching is good, opportunities are sometimes missed to use computers to make graphs of the results. Generally, teachers have high expectations of pupils to purposefully apply mathematical skills, such as in Year 4 where pupils decide upon a scale to graph distances.
81. Visits and visitors are used very well to increase pupils’ understanding, for example, in Year 5 the visit to Thurstaston, of relationships between animals and plants in different habitats are studied and on another occasion a local doctor visited to talk about the facts about circulation. Effective teaching in Year 3 extended pupils’ scientific knowledge with probing questions in a design and technology lesson. Pupils respect their environment and have a good understanding about what makes a healthy lifestyle and would like more opportunities for exercise.
82. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the subject co-ordinator has led to a shared commitment by all staff to plan more closely for pupils’ progress in enquiry skills. The school bases its curriculum on a local education authority scheme. The co-ordinator has developed a manageable and simple procedure for tracking pupils’ progress in skills more frequently and recording pupils’ achievement in all aspects of knowledge. Resources are suitable and are effectively deployed.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Pupils from all groups throughout the school make satisfactory gains in their learning and attain standards in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils were judged to make unsatisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2.
84. Throughout the school, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to record what they have observed and imagined and to experiment with techniques for drawing, printing and painting. For example, pupils in Year 1 make patterns from leaves and features of the environment. Their illustrations are bright and attractive. Pupils in Year 2 experiment with different media to produce collages with different textures and patterns. Pupils in Year 3 use computers to make pictures of Grecian myths to decorate their drawings of urns in work linked to history and pupils in Year 4 design paisley patterns in work linked to geography. In Year 5, pupils produce interesting pictures in the style of Van Gogh using pastels, concentrating hard on aspects of colour and texture. Pupils in Year 6 produce careful drawings of moving figures concentrating on developing skills of line to indicate movement. At both key stages pupils are given opportunities to print and use collage and sculpture.
85. Teaching is satisfactory and teachers ensure that all pupils including higher attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have suitable opportunities to take part in art and design activities. Lessons are appropriately planned and prepared, as in a lesson on the work of Georgia O’ Keefe in Year 5, when the teacher ensured that there were sufficient samples of the artist’s work for all pupils to have one to look at carefully. Because pupils find the work interesting they quickly settle to their tasks with good levels of concentration.

86. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and are well-behaved and attentive in lessons. Pupils in Year 2, settled enthusiastically to their tasks when making a three dimensional representation of the “Island of Struay” in work linked to literacy and geography. They took turns and shared equipment good-naturedly and worked with obvious enjoyment.
87. Art has not had a high priority in the school improvement plan in recent years and although the co-ordinator monitors teachers’ planning, she has not yet had opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, or to track pupils’ progress. Pupils all have a file in which they keep their work, but this work does not carry forward year by year and the examples in it are limited, in the main to a few pencil sketches. This limits its use as a means of tracking pupils’ progress and also as a resource for the pupils themselves to build upon designs and sketches they have made. The school has plans to develop the management and co-ordination of the subject in the near future and to raise standards further. Resources are satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their learning. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when standards for pupils at the age of seven were below national expectations. This was because activities were not appropriately matched to pupils’ abilities and so pupils made poor progress. The position has now improved and has been assisted by the government scheme of work. It was possible to observe only one lesson in Year 3 during the inspection and part of a lesson in Year 6 where pupils were working effectively with a high level of confidence and independence. Judgements are based on these observations, from talking to pupils and teachers and scrutiny of books, photographs, products and wall displays. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school.
89. By the end of Year 2 pupils demonstrate satisfactory designing skills. Teachers have high expectations for pupils to label drawings carefully, list materials and explore different ways of joining before making their own decisions. Higher attaining pupils draw imaginative designs, which show that they are thinking ahead about how they intend to join the materials. In discussion, these pupils use technical terms for the structure of “Santa’s Delivery Vehicles” and correctly explain how they use measurement for accuracy. Most pupils evaluate different ways of joining fabrics before selecting the best method. They provide good reasons why their models have been modified to look different from their original designs. In their written evaluations, pupils describe what they like such as a folding door or how they could make improvements to the decoration. For lower attaining pupils the teachers record their oral evaluations for them.
90. By the end of Year 6, pupils collaborate very well to make decisions about the dimensions of fairground rides and clearly explain how mechanisms which they include in their designs can be controlled using the computer and control box. They make effective use of information and communication technology to write a procedure that controls the movement of a model and of challenging construction materials to create ideas for fairground rides. Teaching appropriately increases pupils’ understanding of mechanisms and motivates and challenges them to work at a good pace. From scrutiny of previous work, teachers’ expectations for pupils to research from different sources and record a sequence of actions for making are not always high enough.
91. Year 5 pupils research and plan ahead and evaluate biscuits produced clearly. A visitor extended the skills of Year 4 pupils who created very imaginative textured and colourful chairs from a variety of materials “fit for a King and Queen of India.” Teaching in Year 3 encourages pupils to make observations on products that enhance their scientific understanding of air as a force. Homework supports class learning and pupils respond well by collecting toys that use air.

92. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The subject has not been a priority for the school. Management of the subject in terms of monitoring pupils' standards and quality of teaching remains an area for development. The recent school system for monitoring pupils' progress is now more rigorous. The head teacher has considerable expertise and enthusiasm for the subject and is raising expectations in the school for pupils to attain higher standards.

GEOGRAPHY

93. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards of attainment in both key stages are in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection when attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 fell below national expectations but met national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and they achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged.
94. In Year 1 and 2, younger pupils start to develop early fieldwork skills well. They explore their local village and identify different features. By the end of the key stage, when pupils have begun to identify certain features on aerial photographs, pupils compare similarities and differences between their own village and those on the imaginary "Island of Struay". They learn how a map works and use literacy skills and geographical terminology to consider and record their findings. Pupils also identify seaside resorts visited by them during their holidays and plot them on maps of the United Kingdom and Europe.
95. In Years 3 to 6, younger pupils use secondary sources to learn about similarities and differences in land use in Chembakolii. They describe land use and farming by examining farming photographs and reading about a day in the life of a woman in Chembakolii village. But information and communication technology is not used regularly enough. Older pupils study and develop an understanding of six figure grid referencing. They consider an area of environment in Thornton Hough and evaluate what needs to be improved. This class is involved in a two-year project to improve this area. They have taken photographs, which are well displayed, identifying what needs to be changed. By the end of the key stage, pupils discuss enthusiastically about the aspects of water they have studied. They talk about the water-cycle using geographical terminology and the investigative work they carried out with their river study. They thoughtfully compare the physical and human features of the environment as the river flows to the coastal plain at its mouth. In all year groups, pupils present their work well. They take care when drawing and labelling their maps and diagrams. They use geographical vocabulary familiarly when discussing aspects of the flow of the river, such as meander, tributary, mouth and source. In their map work they identify on a map of the Wirral and the surrounding areas, roads, places and national parks. They extract information from maps identifying such aspects as highest and lowest rainfall.
96. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory at both key stages. In the lessons observed, learning objectives were carefully shared with pupils and lessons are well set in the context of previous work. Work is suitably planned to motivate pupils and the practical approaches in the stream investigation and improving a local area is motivating enthusiasm in the subject. Teachers plan well and use the locality around the school as a resource for learning. Scrutiny of written work generally reveals that work is differentiated and during one lesson, a lower attaining pupil was given good support in his geographical task.
97. Leadership and management of the subject are at least satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only just recently assumed responsibility for this area. However, she is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about what is required and has a good understanding of the most effective way in which the locality may be used. The scheme of work is appropriate and assessment is being carried out to measure the progress being made by the pupils. Resources have improved and are satisfactory, although, having all aerial photographs and maps in colour would assist pupils to identify similarities and differences in contrasting areas much more easily. Monitoring of the planning of the subject

is secure but monitoring of the teaching, learning and standards pupils attain are not formally monitored. The co-ordinator has drawn up an effective action plan to raise standards in this subject.

HISTORY

98. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Year 2 and above those expected by the end of Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning in Years 1 and 2 and good gains in their learning in Years 3 to 6.
99. By the end of Year 2 pupils find history exciting and ask their own questions about the past. They are suitably aware of a range of sources of information and describe how famous people made a difference to peoples' lives. They recognise how hospitals and the work of nurses at the present time have changed since the time of Florence Nightingale. Interesting displays and artefacts extend pupils' knowledge, which sustains their concentration and independence.
100. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils apply their knowledge of fabrics, colour and forms of transport to analyse objects to determine their age and use. In discussion, they make correct use of terms and identify how people in different periods have contributed to our existing society. Most pupils use a good range of information sources to produce well-informed factual accounts of British History and explain how laws and agreements can prevent wars and conflict. Lower attaining pupils describe clearly the effect of rationing and restrictions on clothing. As part of their homework pupils in Year 6 interviewed their grandparents and other members of the community who were supportive in describing their experiences during World War Two.
101. From lessons observed and scrutiny of books and wall displays the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers create an interesting learning environment in which pupils use their initiative to research and develop good enquiry skills to evaluate a rich variety of evidence about different periods of history. Effective questioning directed to pupils of different abilities ensures that all, including higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are suitably included in class discussions. Tasks are effectively adapted for different abilities and there is a good focus on small group or paired discussion to make decisions, which promote pupils' social skills and the sharing and development of ideas. Pupils in all year groups apply their literacy skills well but most of the writing is descriptive. More teaching opportunities for pupils to use persuasive language to present different points of view about events and life styles could be made where relevant to the abilities of the pupils.
102. Co-ordination of the subject is recent and has made an effective impact upon the quality of the curriculum. Planning is based upon a government scheme, which has been appropriately adapted to allow pupils to make a more in-depth study with linked visits or visitors, which broaden learning opportunities. A visiting 'Victorian Lady' helped pupils in Year 5 increase their understanding of Victorian times and Year 6 visited the 'Forsytes' at Thornton Manor. Members of the local community make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of how life was different during the Second World War years. There is a whole school system for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring of the standards of teaching is timetabled. Good links are made with geography and citizenship but too little use is made of information and communication technology for pupils to research information.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. There has been good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology since the previous inspection. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is now satisfactory across

the school. Pupils start school with good keyboard and mouse skills due to the number who use computers at home. This is now being built upon throughout the school through a comprehensive scheme of work, which covers a broad curriculum. Since the installation of the small suite of computers the school has focused on developing pupils' skills and this is beginning to be effective. Rising standards are reflected in the higher attainment at the beginning of each year and this means teachers plan more challenging work for the following year group. Standards currently meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

104. While there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their computer skills, there are still too few computers for pupils to consolidate their skills on a more regular basis in a range of subjects. The school has plans to develop a larger information and communication technology suite but as the computers are currently sited in the corner of the hall, this makes access and concentration difficult for teachers and pupils alike. There are often other activities taking place and as only half a class can use the computers at a time, some pupils are required to do less challenging work unless supported by an additional adult. It also cuts down the amount of time spent using the computers so lesson time is cut by half. Although teaching and learning in lessons seen were very good, pupils' progress is only satisfactory.
105. Pupils in Year 1 are learning to put information into the computer so that they can present their work as graphs and pictograms. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to do this but as yet are not doing this independently. There is only one computer in the classroom so, although the whole class teaching session is clearly presented, pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding independently, and practically to extend learning as much as they could. Therefore achievement is hampered by unsatisfactory levels of resources. By the end of Year 2 pupils have the necessary skills to save and print their work independently, representing satisfactory standards overall. Work in Years 1 and 2 is planned to link together work in a range of subjects and this provides interest and purpose to the tasks and motivate pupils well. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils learned how to label features of a map of "Katie Morag's island" and this made a good contribution to developing literacy skills and knowledge and understanding of geographical terms.
106. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 effectively build upon these skills during lessons in the computer suite. Computers in the classroom do not have the same software, however, making it difficult for them to develop and extend their skills at other times. Pupils are able to insert pictures into their work and to think carefully about the presentation by changing font, size, colour and position. They are familiar with tool bars and can select independently the tools that they need to use. Teachers intervene at appropriate moments posing questions to get pupils to think for themselves what they need to do to create a particular effect. Pupils in Year 3 can enter information into a database about shapes and can use the information to sort into sets. They cannot yet identify when databases are used in the community. By Year 6, pupils use a spreadsheet format to plan items to include for a party. Year 6 pupils have very good understanding of control and as this was a weakness identified in the previous report, represents excellent improvement in this aspect of information and communication technology. They are all able to write, unaided, a simple procedure to light two sets of eyes and to spin a tie on a model of a clown at the same time. This activity motivates pupils because of the close links to their work in design and technology. Suitable links are made with science through using light sensors to monitor changes in light when bulbs are placed inside a box. The extra curricular computer club makes a good contribution to addressing the needs of higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs who need to use a keyboard have a laptop facility if required.
107. The quality of teaching seen was very good across the school, but it has not been of the same high quality in the past. Teachers plan work, which is relevant and linked closely to work in other subjects. There is no system in place yet to monitor how often subjects are supported by the use of information and communication technology and this is an area the school intends to develop. It is left very much to individual teachers to organise. Teachers are very creative in lessons to make

sure that the organisation of learning is as productive as possible. Teachers set clear expectations that as soon as someone has finished their task and a computer becomes available, pupils move immediately into the vacant seat to start work as soon as they can. This makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers intervene at appropriate moments supporting pupils independently to consolidate and extend these skills. The interactive projector is a useful resource and is used effectively to demonstrate a new skill, tool or software to pupils.

108. Leadership and management of the subject are good and have resulted in many improvements made to provision since the previous inspection. In addition to the small suite of computers, there is a digital camera and scanner, which are used effectively to support the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. The identification of links to other subjects is left too much to individual teachers and are not yet identified clearly enough on the whole school curriculum plan. The co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor coverage of the subject and this has meant improvement in the breadth, balance and relevance of the activities. Assessment procedures are good and used effectively to identify skill levels of each year group to make sure that work of a suitable level is planned for them the following year.

MUSIC

109. Standards in music have been maintained since the previous inspection and meet expected levels at the end of Year 2. They remain well above expected levels by the end of Year 6. This is due to the number of pupils who learn to play an instrument in school in Years 4, 5 and 6 and the quality of specialist teaching. The needs of those pupils identified as musically talented are being met through this comprehensive programme and through the many very good opportunities provided for them to perform at a number of school and community events. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils can read music and talk knowledgeably about how they need to perform in order to produce the right mood and atmosphere intended for each musical piece. The combination of a very wide range of musical instruments means that the orchestra produces a rich mixture of musical sounds, which are a joy to listen to. Achievement of pupils of all levels of ability in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is very good.
110. Singing in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is of a very high standard. Pupils have a richness in their voices when singing songs of the right pitch and tempo. Pupils have a very good understanding of performance skills. Their rendition of 'Hernando's Hideaway' was particularly thoughtful. The very skilful way that they created loud and quiet moments and the crispness and precision of the rhythms, produced an excellent interpretation of the mood of the song and reflected the cultural roots it portrayed. The school choir is well attended and pupils enjoy the wide repertoire of songs, which they sing very well.
111. Composition skills are good. Pupils regularly work together to compose simple pieces of music and these are often recorded in picture form for others to perform. In one lesson in Year 5, pupils revealed a good understanding of the musical elements of dynamics and tempo when they used vocal percussion to compose a short piece of music to portray different scenes from the environment. They combined contrasting quiet and long sounds creatively to portray the calmness of a sunrise, while loud, short and disjointed sounds portrayed the roadwork scene very well. The sounds chosen for each group composition were relevant and pupils showed a good understanding of the range of sounds, which can be produced using only their voices. Due to good planning and organisation, pupils were able to work collaboratively, negotiating which sounds to include and the structure of their performance. Teachers plan the use of computers when relevant to support pupils' learning about the structure of music. The particular piece of software used required the pupils to compose sequences of sound and to build into a particular length and sequence. These opportunities, although very beneficial, are not identified formally on the whole school curriculum plan for the subject.

112. It was not possible to observe music lessons in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection to judge the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good overall. This is due to the weekly specialist singing and instrumental teaching and regular input from specialist staff at other times. The excellent subject knowledge means that pupils develop a wide musical vocabulary and terms, which they use appropriately to describe how a composer creates the intended mood and effect or how they will play a particular instrument when performing their personal compositions. Year 6 pupils have developed very good playing techniques of how to make open and closed sounds on a range of percussion instruments through the precise and well matched learning objectives of the lesson during the inspection. Those learning to play an instrument have very good techniques for their particular instrument and have a very good knowledge of musical notation.
113. Teaching and learning in all lessons seen and scrutiny of work were at least good. The school has recently reviewed its scheme of work and this makes sure that the full range of musical activities, skills and knowledge are comprehensively covered. Pupils therefore receive rich and diverse musical experiences.
114. The quality of the curriculum is very good and has a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils have very many good opportunities to perform in school and in the local community. Pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6 take turns to play solo and group pieces as pupils enter and leave assembly. This they do to a high standard due to their commitment to practise to make sure that their performance is perfect. Great skills are shown through the richness of tone of the woodwind, string and brass instruments and flow of the music as the piano pedal is applied. The school orchestra and choir are looking forward to the forthcoming Scarecrow Festival and Golden Jubilee celebrations and are rehearsing very enthusiastically for these. They are not daunted by the challenging material, which they have chosen to perform. These occasions make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has had some opportunities to monitor teaching and learning but this has focussed on coverage of the curriculum and liaising with teachers who come in to teach instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Standards are in line with those expected by Year 2 and above those expected by Year 6. This indicates an improvement from the previous inspection when standards in games skills appeared to be below national expectations at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 appeared to be in line.
116. In Years 1 and 2 pupils use gymnastic movements well and display appropriate body co-ordination to warm up. They use space effectively and follow instructions carefully. They run and dodge, jog and dart and behave sensibly in avoiding other pupils during this activity. In the games lessons observed in Year 1 and Year 2, safety aspects were discussed and pupils were clearly aware of the numerous safety aspects, which needed to be observed during the games lesson. Their throwing and catching skills displayed well-developed co-ordination skills for pupils of this age.
117. In years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their skills. Most pupils show precision and control and understand the principles of teamwork. Opportunity is provided to evaluate their own performance and this together with guidance from their teachers produced improved performances during the games lesson. Pupils displayed confidence and competence in striking the ball. Their fielding and retrieving the ball was brisk and accurate and with appropriate power. Their skills in employing effective tactics for attacking and defending developed extremely well and their understanding for the need of team co-operation was well tuned. All pupils at Key Stage 2 attend swimming sessions totalling a term in every academic year. Standards of attainment are above average with in excess of 95 per cent completing the 25 metres unaided swim. Apart from that, many pupils achieve other swimming awards in personal survival and life saving. The school provides the full range of National Curriculum physical education activities. Athletics are covered

in the summer months. Games are taught during the appropriate season and are supported by extra-curricular activities. The school offers a full range of dance activities, including creative and country dancing, and pupils speak enthusiastically about this programme. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy the opportunity of attending a four-day residential experience, when they experience other activities such as, archery, abseiling, climbing and fencing. This residential experience, which also includes a team building aspect, serves to promote independence and inter-dependence. The wide range of extra curricular activities has a positive impact on the progress pupils make, both academically and socially.

118. Pupils throughout both key stages enjoy their physical activities, which serves not only to improve basic skills and teamwork but also to assist in their social and moral development. They have positive attitudes to physical education. They accept responsibility in collecting and returning equipment and when walking to the village green for games, they display their knowledge and understanding of the rules of safety. Staff, throughout the school, dress appropriately for these lessons. They are good role models and pupils follow their example.
119. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and skills development. Planning is good and pupils enjoy crisp, enjoyable and energetically challenging lessons. The enthusiastic approach adopted by teachers has a positive effect on standards. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The effective teaching received and the positive attitudes adopted encourage the enjoyment of physical activity and develop and promote confidence, self-esteem, competence in skills and pupils, management of their own behaviour.
120. The co-ordination of the subject has been temporarily assumed by the head teacher in the absence of the usual co-ordinator. The school has adopted the local education authority proposed scheme of work. This is supported by an assessment programme which is to be introduced in the near future. This aims to provide the school with opportunities for more precise evaluation, which then may be used to evaluate performance on a regular basis. Resources are satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make satisfactory gains in their learning in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. By the time they leave school pupils' understanding and knowledge is above that expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, which judged standards to be in line with expectations throughout the school.
122. Pupils are developing a mature understanding of the needs and feelings of others. Religious education enhances their personal and social development in terms of their understanding of commitment, fairness and respect. It makes a positive contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them well for life in multi-faith Britain. It is suitably enhanced by the well-planned termly themes for collective worship.
123. Teaching is good overall. Planning is thorough with clearly defined objectives linked to the locally Agreed Syllabus. Activities are planned effectively to match the pupils' levels of attainment. Work is generally completed at a good pace and effective questioning enhances pupils' learning. In the best lessons and in the best work observed, teachers are committed to offering pupils many opportunities to reflect on the meaning of life and explore the concept of faith. By the way they respond to pupils, teachers demonstrate positive values and help raise self-esteem. They are sensitive to pupils' feelings and encourage them to ask and answer questions so that adult views and ideas do not dominate discussions. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, exploring various religious celebrations and developing an awareness of the wonder and mystery of the world. Pupils make good progress in the older classes where the width of the curriculum

enables them to identify features of religious celebrations and reflect on the nature of the world and their place in it. They also understand the need for rules in society and they consider various moral questions, such as the concept of temptation. They are aware of the need for co-operation and harmony, and also the spiritual and worship elements in a religious group. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress because of the level of support in lessons.

124. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and are well behaved and attentive in lessons. By Year 6 they carry the themes of lessons on into their work in other subjects, which they approach with thoughtful sensitivity. This application of themes they have discussed, such as consideration of others and responsibility for their actions to their daily life and lessons has a positive effect upon their learning and upon the general ethos and atmosphere of the school.
125. The curriculum is broad and appropriately based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. It is well-balanced, and suitable attention is given to what pupils learn from religion, as well as what they learn about religion. It is enhanced by visits to local religious centres, such as a synagogue in Liverpool. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Many good opportunities were seen to be taken in both lessons and the assemblies seen during the inspection.
126. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership in the subject. However, she has limited opportunities to monitor standards, as yet, or to share best practice. There are presently no whole school systems to record and monitor pupils' progress. This has been identified as a priority for the coming year. There is a suitable range of resources, including a good range of artefacts and visual aids. However, insufficient regular use is made of information technology as a tool for pupils' learning.