

INSPECTION REPORT

GILMOUR INFANT SCHOOL

Garston

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104544

Headteacher: Mrs E A Wylie

Reporting inspector: Mr P T Hill
6642

Dates of inspection: 19th - 21st June 2001

Inspection number: 214280

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Garston Liverpool
Postcode:	L19 9AR
Telephone number:	0151 427 6306
Fax number:	0151 494 9106
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Brenda Gee
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
6642	Peter Hill	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Information Technology Special Educational Needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9882	Alice Rea	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1272	Ian Hocking	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	English History Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? The school's results and pupils' achievements

30362	Jacqueline Henshaw	Team inspector	Music Religious Education Foundation stage Equal opportunities	
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The inspection contractor was:

School Inspection & Consultancy
19 Marple Road
Charlesworth
Glossop
Derbyshire
SK13 5DA

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gilmour Infant School is situated in the Grassendale area of Liverpool bordering Garston. The school takes children from quite a wide area and although the socio-economic circumstances of most children's families as average overall, a significant number of children come from an area where there is a considerable level of social and economic deprivation. There are 224 full-time pupils in the school, including the nursery. Most children are of white UK heritage with only a small percentage of other heritages. There are nine children who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Almost a quarter of children are identified as having special educational needs, with three children having statements of special educational need. The majority of children start school with average levels of attainment but a significant number enter with levels which are below, and, for some, well below the average found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good effective school. Standards are improving, from being below those of similar schools in English and well below in mathematics to a position where current standards are judged to be in line with the national average. Teaching is good overall with a significant amount of very good and some excellent teaching. Significant improvements have been made in leadership and management and this is now very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good improvement since the last Ofsted inspection and especially recently. Excellent action taken to meet the school's targets.
- Excellent improvement in leadership and management. The school is now very well led and managed.
- Teaching is good overall. A very good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' planning is very good.
- Standards are improving. The inspection found that the standard of children's work is in line with the national average.
- Procedures for assessing children's progress and attainment and for using information to guide curriculum planning are very good.
- Parents have a very positive view of the school.
- Procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare are very good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Spiritual and moral development is good with social and cultural development being very good.
- The curriculum for children aged under five is good and very good in the nursery.
- Children's attitudes to school are good and relationships are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards of children's writing linked to their presentation of written work and presentation of work generally.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1999 when it was found to have some serious weaknesses in aspects of leadership and management, teaching and children's behaviour. An Ofsted monitoring visit in May 2000 showed progress had been made, but that serious weakness remained in leadership and management. Since the last monitoring visit the school has continued to improve very well, with excellent progress in improving the leadership and management. Standards are improving; there have been very good improvements in teaching, children's behaviour, the provision of the outdoor play area and in staff morale. Overall the school has made considerable and very significant improvements since the time of the last full inspection and especially very recently following the appointment of the new headteacher.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	C	C	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	C	D	D	D	
Mathematics	C	D	D	E	

The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading, and below in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments for science indicate that children's performance was above the national average. The trend over the last two years has been one of notable improvement in English, mathematics and science, enabling the school to exceed the targets it has set and successfully address the last inspection key issue of raising standards in English. However, standards in writing, as the school recognises, are a priority area for improvement, as is the overall presentation of children's work. Overall, children are achieving well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children like school and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Children are well behaved in all areas of the school. In over 70% of lessons behaviour was good or very good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Personal development and relationships are good overall with relationships between children and between children and adults being very good.

Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
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There has been a significant improvement in children's behaviour since the last full inspection. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all good with relationships between adults and children and children themselves being very good. These strengths make a very significant contribution to children's good rate of progress and help to create an environment where children enjoy learning. Since the last full inspection, standards in all of these areas have been improved. The results for 2001 indicate a further improvement on the school's previous results. The attitudes and behaviour of children in the nursery are very good and a considerable strength.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of lessons in which teaching is very good and excellent. During the inspection teaching was satisfactory in 36% of lessons, in 36% it was good, in 23% it was very good. In 5% of lessons teaching was excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents an impressive amount of good and very good teaching and is a considerable improvement as it was considered to be a key issue at the time of the last full inspection. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good overall. The skills of both numeracy and literacy are well taught. Children work hard and show very good levels of interest, concentration and independence, putting high levels of effort into their work. However, on occasions, noise levels become rather high in some classes and, whilst this rarely detracts from the quality of learning, it does not promote good work habits. Children with special educational needs are well provided for and, as a result, they achieve well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, with a large number of children being involved in the French, football, computer and science clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Children are well provided for in all classes, with additional teaching for those children who have some difficulty with English.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The number of children who speak English as an additional language is small and they are well provided for, having full access to all that the school has to offer.
Provision for pupils' personal, including	Good overall, with very good provision being made for children's social and cultural development.

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are very good procedures in place for child protection and ensuring children's welfare, as well as for assessing children's levels of attainment and progress. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good.

There is a very good partnership with parents and the school highly values the contribution that parents make to the school and to children's education. Parents overwhelmingly feel they can approach the school with any queries or problems and feel that the school is well led and managed. This partnership is a strength of the school. The range of learning opportunities is good overall and is very good for children under five. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched through a good range of additional activities. The school cares very well for its children. Teachers know children's strengths and needs and the school's procedures for assessing children's levels of attainment and their progress are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school is very well led and managed. The new headteacher has inspired considerable confidence and all senior managers have a shared commitment to the school and to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and are highly committed to its further improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This is now a strength and has led to very good and appropriate priorities for future development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The way in which the headteacher and governors have used the resources available to them has been one of the key areas in the considerable recent improvement of the school. The Local Education Authority has played a very significant and important role in supporting the school.

This is an area of considerable and impressive improvement. The improvement brought about in the leadership and management has been excellent. It has had an extremely positive effect on staff morale and on a shared commitment by all staff to succeed. The action taken to meet the school's targets, including the Key Issues identified in previous reports, has also been excellent. The development of the accommodation and resources has been very good and provides children with an exciting environment, both inside and out. The development of the outdoor play area has been innovative and of high quality and a very good response to the key issue identified previously. Additional staffing is provided for children with special educational needs, emphasising the importance of this area in the work of the school. The school clearly and effectively applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p><i>All parents who returned questionnaires strongly agree, or agree, that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. <p><i>Over 95% of parents who returned questionnaires strongly agree, or agree, that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable approaching school about problems and suggestions. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school is helping children become mature. 	<p><i>Approximately 20% of parents who returned questionnaires would like to see improvements in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their children get to do at home. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Parents, both in the questionnaire and the Parents' Meeting, expressed a high level of support for, and satisfaction with, the work of the school. Inspectors agree with all the positive responses made by parents. However, inspectors judge that, overall, the school makes good provision in the areas which some parents identified as needing improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading, and below in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments for science indicate that children's performance was above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the children's performance was below average in reading and writing, well below average in mathematics and well above average in science. The attainment of most children in the current Year 2 classes is average in reading, mathematics and science but below average in writing. However, this group of children had low skill levels, especially in language and literacy, when they started school and they have achieved well in relation to this prior attainment. The trend over the last two years has been one of notable improvement in English, mathematics and science, which has enabled the school to exceed the targets it has set and successfully address the key issue from the last inspection of raising standards in English. This is as a result of the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the significant amount of good quality teaching that children receive throughout the school. There are no significant variations in the achievement of boys and girls.

2 On entry to the Nursery, most children show average levels of attainment but significant minorities are below average and some well below. They experience a wide range of worthwhile activities that effectively develop them across all six areas of learning recommended for children in the Foundation Stage of Learning. By the age of five, most achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. This represents good progress, which is a result of good quality teaching and children being provided with a stimulating learning environment that effectively prepares them for the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum as they enter Year 1.

3 The introductions and plenary sessions of lessons are used well to develop children's speaking skills, which are satisfactory and show improvement from when they start school. There are many opportunities for children to discuss and explain their ideas, as was seen in lessons in Year 2 when children were discussing how to turn statements into questions. Though the children are confident when talking to others, they are limited in their ability to retell stories that they have read and to speak in a creative and imaginative manner. The school has identified this as an area for development and is developing a variety of strategies, such as providing more opportunities for role-play and drama activities, to improve this aspect of children's learning. The listening skills of most children are satisfactory, which helps them to make relevant answers to the teachers' questions and to gain a suitable understanding of the work that they are to do. Most teachers ensure that there are suitable opportunities for children to listen to the views and ideas of adults and other children and, consequently, there is effective development of their listening skills. However, in some classes, the noise levels are too high and this adversely affects the children's concentration and their ability to listen to and follow their teachers' instructions in an appropriate way.

4 Children make good progress in their reading and by the time they are seven, most pupils achieve well in relation to their low skills on starting school and achieve average standards. Many pupils show suitable ability to read accurately and confidently from texts

appropriate for their age and are able to use a range of strategies to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics to identify the initial sound and other blends. This was evident in shared reading sessions, when Year 2 children were learning how to scan texts to locate specific information. The more able children are reading from a wide selection of books and can use information books well to further their knowledge of topics studied. Children of average ability know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and are increasing in their confidence to read aloud in a large group. Lower attaining children have suitable mechanical skills to read unknown words but their comprehension skills are under developed and, as a result, they find difficulty in retelling what they have read. The library provides a very stimulating environment for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading and in classrooms there is a very good variety of fiction and non-fiction books to enable teachers to develop children's reading skills.

5 Standards in writing have been rising dramatically over the last two years, though remaining below average. Many children are able to write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with simple words spelled correctly, as was evident in a Year 1 lesson on sequencing the life cycle of a frog. The school has successfully targeted an improvement in spelling, involving daily practice sessions for each class, which has enabled most children to attain appropriate standards. Children are able to write in a variety of formats and, in Year 2, they have produced some good quality poems about spring, which have been well displayed by teachers. However, most children do not yet show a suitable ability to use an interesting range of vocabulary or demonstrate an awareness of the reader in their writing. There are not yet enough suitably structured opportunities for them to develop their skills of writing at length in a creative and imaginative way. Handwriting is untidy and the standard of presentation of written work in most subjects is poor. In some classes, the expectation of teachers of children's performance is not high enough, which results in work of poor quality being accepted and praised. The school has identified further improvement in the standards in writing as a priority area for development

6 Children have opportunities to develop their literacy skills in a suitable manner in other subjects. In mathematics lessons, they are able to develop these skills when reading questions and then discussing and explaining their strategies for finding solutions. Teachers insist on the use of accurate subject vocabulary, as was seen in science and mathematics lessons. In geography and history, pupils record their ideas in a variety of written forms and make labelled drawings in science.

7 In mathematics, by the time that they are seven, children have made good progress in learning about basic number facts and operations, such as addition and subtraction, and the concept of place value in terms of tens and units. Children can make reasonable estimates of the number of dots on a card, find halves and quarters of shapes and identify reflective symmetry in shapes. Most are able to apply their knowledge of number when solving simple problems involving money and are able to tell the time, for example half-past the hour, when reading an analogue clock.

8 Children are able to use and apply their numeracy skills effectively in other subjects, particularly in science, such as when calculating the area of their hands. Other examples include the use of measuring skills in design and technology.

9 In science, standards are average and children of all abilities achieve well, because of the strong emphasis that teachers place on developing their knowledge and understanding by being involved in structured, practical investigational activities. They are encouraged to work co-operatively, as in lessons in Year 2 when investigating how ice melts when heated.

As a result, by the time that they are seven, most children can carry out a fair test, with some help from the teacher, and record their findings in a variety of ways.

10 In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are average and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. There has been much improvement in the provision for the subject since the last inspection, with the creation of a computer suite that is used very effectively to develop the children's ICT skills.

11 Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The children gain a sound understanding of the traditions and beliefs of a variety of religions through visits and visitors, and direct teaching that uses a good selection of authentic artefacts and other resources.

12 Most children achieve satisfactory standards in design and technology by the time they are seven. There is an appropriate balance between designing and making, using a wide range of materials, that effectively develops their skills in these aspects of the subject.

13 In history and geography, the children achieve well and attain average standards. In history, previous learning is consolidated by the use of books, photographs and historical artefacts. They can use evidence to find out about the past and how things change over a period of time, as seen when children in Year 2 were using a variety of photographs and postcards to find out how peoples' attitudes to holidays have changed since 1900. In geography, the children have appropriate mapping skills and a suitable knowledge about transport and communication and the different uses to which land can be put. There is good use made of the immediate environment and visits to places, such as Formby National Park, and a tour of Liverpool to further develop children's knowledge and understanding in the subject.

14 In art and design, standards are average, with the children being able to use a range of media and techniques in an appropriate fashion. Visits to such places as the Tate Art Gallery in Liverpool provide further stimulating learning experiences.

15 Standards in music are average and children sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They can use instruments well, as was evident in an excellent lesson delivered by the talented co-ordinator, when Reception children were using a variety of musical instruments very effectively to develop sound effects for a story.

16 The standards that children attain in physical education by the time that they are seven are average. In Year 1, they make good progress because of the good quality of the specialist teaching they receive. As they pass through the school, they show a suitable awareness of space and of others, and can control their bodies when performing a range of movements. Teachers set good examples by dressing appropriately for physical education lessons and, as a result, are able to demonstrate techniques in a suitable way.

17 There are good systems in place to support children with special educational needs, enabling them to make effective progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and achieve well. There is also effective support for children with English as an additional language and for those who are gifted and talented, so that they also make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18 Pupils like school, where they feel valued and respected as individuals. They are happy, secure and confident in the classrooms and around school. Parents rightly value the attitudes that the school encourages in their children.

19 Behaviour is generally good and parents feel that this is so. Pupils usually behave well in classrooms and respond quickly to their teachers. They know the routines for breaks and lunchtimes and enjoy playing together. Often pupils are quite noisy in the classroom but this does not usually result in less good behaviour or in pupils not getting on with their tasks. On occasions, however, pupils are not clear about what is expected of them and they shout out answers or comments and talk when the teacher is talking. When this is not checked, pupils begin to assume this is acceptable behaviour. Overall there has been very good improvement in behaviour in the school since the last inspection.

20 Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils try hard to please their teachers. In the nursery pupils develop independence, they learn to listen well, to share and to co-operate. They do as they are asked quickly and willingly. Throughout the school pupils work well together and co-operate with each other. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson pupils were happily able to share laptop computers and in a Reception class dance lesson pupils worked well with partners. Generally they listen well to each other but occasionally they talk over a classmate who is answering a question or commenting.

21 Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is below, or better than, the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of lessons in which teaching is very good and excellent. In 36 percent of lessons teaching is satisfactory, in 36 percent of lessons teaching is good, in 23 percent it is very good and in 5 percent it is excellent. This represents an impressive amount of good and very good teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

22 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and it is very good in the Nursery. Teaching is planned very well, and has clear intended outcomes. Regular assessment of children's learning enables staff to gain a clear knowledge of children's developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms provide a secure, stimulating and caring environment that engages children's curiosity and motivates them to learn. As a result, children achieve well and make good progress in their learning. In one Nursery lesson, excellent imaginative and enthusiastic teaching, using 'Mrs Mopple' (a doll), captivated children's interest for more than twenty minutes as they assisted 'Mrs Mopple' in some mathematical ordering of numbers. Teaching of music is also exceptional when lessons are taken by the teacher with specialist expertise. For example excellent teaching in a Reception class lesson culminated in each child playing an instrument within a mini performance enjoyed by all. Very good relationships between the staff and children contribute to effective class control. A strong sense of teamwork between teachers and very good support staff contribute significantly to the good provision that exists in the Foundation Stage.

23 In Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, music and information technology and it is satisfactory in history and geography. Teaching in physical education is very good due in main to the teacher's specialist expertise, which is used to very good effect, in Year 1. Insufficient lessons were observed during the

inspection period to enable secure judgements to be made about the quality of teaching in religious education, art and design and design and technology.

24 In all lessons, children's behaviour is managed very effectively. However, noise levels become unduly high in some classes and whilst this rarely detracts from the quality of learning it does not promote good work habits. Teachers and support staff work in close partnership to present a consistent and supportive ethos in classrooms. Children respond very co-operatively as a result of the high levels of mutual respect between staff and children. Teachers take care to make clear to children the intended learning outcomes of the lesson. These objectives are usually revisited during the summary phase of the lesson to reiterate the key learning points made earlier and to enable children to become aware of their learning. This approach is especially prevalent in the English and mathematics lessons and reflects the successful manner with which the school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. 25 The teachers' good delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is enabling children to achieve well in reading, spelling and mathematics.

26 Good systems of assessing, recording and checking individual children's progress in English, mathematics and science are used effectively to plan future work. This means that teachers are able to present work at levels that are appropriately matched to children's prior attainment and therefore enables them to build on what they already can do, know and understand.

27 Teaching is good for children with special educational needs (SEN). Lesson planning reflects the fact that teachers and support staff have a high level of awareness of the needs of individual children. Teachers and very good support staff respond sensitively and appropriately to the needs of all children including high attainers and especially for those who have statements of special educational need. However, there is a need to raise teachers' expectations of the presentational quality of work in general for children of all levels of prior attainment.

28 Homework is set appropriately in line with the school policy and supplements work done in school.

29 There has been very good improvement in teaching since the last inspection when there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching i.e. 22 per cent of lessons. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and the amount of very good teaching has increased from 24 per cent to 28 per cent. This improvement is attributable to the combined effect of the headteacher monitoring teaching throughout the school, much improved planning, a better match of work to children's ability and the raised morale leading to very good teamwork amongst the staff.

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

30 The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is very good, which shows improvement since the last inspection. There is strong emphasis on promoting the children's language and mathematical skills and their personal, social and emotional development, which allows them to gain confidence and quickly settle into everyday routines. The school has successfully addressed the key issue of improving the provision for outdoor play and children can now play imaginatively and creatively in safe surroundings. The teachers and other adults working in the Nursery and Reception classes, provide a very stimulating learning environment for the children in their care, leading to

them making good academic progress and being well prepared for the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum as they enter Year 1. Children aged five to seven are also provided with a variety of rich learning experiences within a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, that meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being successfully implemented, which has been a significant factor in the notable improvement in standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection. There are planned opportunities for skills learned in Literacy and numeracy to be used in other curriculum areas. There has been much improved provision for information communications technology (ICT), with the creation of a computer suite that is used very effectively to improve the children's ICT skills. The school successfully supports the children's physical and personal development and there is good provision for them to experience personal and social education, including health education as part of the 'Healthy Schools Award Scheme'. As part of their work in science, the children are also made aware that medicines are drugs and can be dangerous if misused. Formal sex education is not taught but, from the early years, all questions are answered sympathetically and appropriately as they arise. There are weekly 'Circletime' activities for all classes, in which children sit in a circle with their teacher, to talk about such issues as caring for others and the importance of behaving well. The curriculum is also enriched by the school's involvement in national and local initiatives, with it being part of an Education Action Zone. This has enabled the school to provide further significant learning opportunities for its pupils and has had a positive effect on standards, especially in English, mathematics and ICT.

31 There is strong emphasis on the school being a socially inclusive community and it is successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to the curriculum. Equality of opportunity is implicit in the work of the school, with the examples set by all staff being fundamental to this provision. There are good systems in place to support children with special educational needs, that enable them to make effective progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. There is also effective support for children who have English as an additional language and for those who are gifted and talented, so that they also make good progress. The school has very good planning procedures in place for English and mathematics, which are based on the National Literacy and Numeracy planning frameworks, to ensure continuity and progression of learning in these subjects. The long-term planning provides an overview of the aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study delivered by each year group over the year. The medium and short-term plans effectively detail the key learning objectives and skills to be taught to pupils. There has been improvement in the school's planning procedures for other subjects since the last inspection, as they have updated to effectively incorporate the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's curricular schemes. These planning procedures provide teachers with effective information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught, so that they are able to give work that suitably builds on children's prior learning.

32 The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, with a high number of children being involved in the French, football, computer and science clubs. All children have opportunity to take part in a wide variety of educational visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. Visits to the local post office and a garden centre by children in the Foundation Stage start off their termly topics and act as a stimulus for role-play areas. The children in Years 1 and 2 have visited Formby National Park, Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and also go on a tour of Liverpool that includes a ferry ride and going into museums and the Tate Art Gallery. There is also effective use of the immediate surroundings of the school to develop children's learning in science, history and geography. The school arranges for many visitors to come to school, including authors,

artists, musicians, puppeteers and drama groups to work with children to develop their skills across a range of areas.

33 There are strong links with the community, especially the local church, which makes a very effective contribution to children's learning. The vicar is a regular visitor who takes assemblies and works with children to deepen their knowledge and understanding in religious education. All the children went to the church to take part in the Christingle Service, which played an effective role in their spiritual development. Representatives from other denominations also visit to talk about their beliefs and traditions, which help the children to develop their understanding of other religions and cultures. There are opportunities for children to raise money for a variety of local and national charities, including 'Comic Relief', and they have taken part in a sponsored poem to help the children from Chernobyl. As a result of being involved in these activities, they gain a good understanding of the needs of others. The strong links with parents effectively support the children's learning, as is exemplified in the way that volunteers help out in the library to develop children's reading skills. There are also effective links with the partner junior school, with staff working closely together to ensure that the children are well prepared for when they transfer to the school. The links with West Cheshire College have resulted in students coming in to work with children and teachers to set up a school Internet Website.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 Children are well cared for by the school. There are very good relationships between the headteacher, the teachers and their pupils. The children are well known and valued as individuals. Good procedures are in place for child protection and the school has taken, and continues to take, effective measures to ensure a secure environment for its pupils.

35 Attendance and punctuality are very well monitored and promoted by the school. The headteacher monitors the registers, contacts parents and involves the educational welfare officer when she feels it is appropriate. Parents are regularly informed of the attendance rates and of the school's targets. They are requested not to take their children out of school, in term time, for family holidays and are reminded of the benefits of being on time for school for individual children and for the class as a whole.

36 The school has a clear behaviour policy and very good procedures for monitoring behaviour. Any instances of bullying or harassment are promptly and effectively dealt with by the headteacher. Parents are encouraged to see the headteacher if they have any concerns about bullying and parents do feel they can do this. Occasionally children are lively and noisy but this does not usually detract from their interest and concentration. There is some inconsistency in the way in which teachers deal with classroom noise and occasionally this does have an effect on listening skills and on children's development of respect for others. It also reduces the impact of targeted questioning if other pupils call out the answers. The school is, however, working on ways of disseminating the best practice throughout the school and the Nursery presents a very good role model. Small groups of children with special educational needs also respond well to very high expectations for their behaviour. Very good progress has been made in monitoring and promoting good behaviour since the last inspection. Parents are rightly pleased with behaviour in school and the headteacher feels the improvement shows in the atmosphere in school.

37 Children are well cared for outside their classrooms. They are well looked after at lunchtimes; they are clear about the routines and where they are allowed to go, but are enabled to develop their independence as well. Lunchtime assistants look after the children well, encouraging them to play together, such as when they help children to organise races.

There is, however, some inconsistency in how the lunchtime assistants deal with inappropriate behaviour and the approach is not always in line with the school's behaviour policy.

38 The school has just completed the Healthy Schools Award Scheme and is introducing a new scheme of work for personal, health and social education to further enhance children's welfare and personal development. Children are encouraged and helped to develop independence and to work co-operatively together from when they enter the Nursery.

39 Academic progress is well monitored and the headteacher considers the progress of different groups of children, for example those from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school does not, however, take sufficient account of what children can already do when planning the Reception classes' curriculum and the pace of the very good start children get in the Nursery is sometimes slowed.

40 The previous report indicated weaknesses in the procedures for assessing and recording individual children's attainment and monitoring the progress that they make. These procedures have been significantly improved and there is now very good monitoring of the children's academic performance and the use of assessment information to plan future work. There is a very effective whole-school system of assessment and record keeping that can be used by teachers to decide children's levels of attainment and set targets for improvement, especially in English, mathematics and science. The school recognises the need to expand these record-keeping procedures to incorporate subjects not already covered. There are very effective procedures in place to analyse the optional and statutory test results to identify areas of weakness and then set manageable targets for improvement for groups and individual children. This has resulted in significant improvement in children's spelling and in their problem-solving skills in mathematics. Teachers use assessment information effectively to evaluate children's performance, enabling them to plan future work accordingly. Good use is made of assessment information to plan future work for pupils with special educational needs. The information from the initial assessments when children start school is used very effectively to plan learning experiences in the Foundation Stage. Good systems are in place to monitor the achievements of different groups of pupils, thus ensuring that the school is effective in meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 The school has a very good partnership with parents and highly values the contribution they make to the school and to pupils' education. Parents overwhelmingly feel they can approach the school with any queries or problems and feel that the school is well led and managed. The partnership is a strength of the school.

42 Communication with parents is very good and written communication is of a very high quality, especially the prospectus and the regular newsletters, which keep parents informed about all aspects of school life. Written reports about children's progress are detailed and informative. They comment on all aspects of children's development and set targets for the future for children in Years 1 and 2.

43 Parents give a lot of help to the school. The Parents' Association not only raises funds for the school but also provides practical help, such as making new curtains for the hall and blinds for the classrooms, and help in classrooms. A number of parent helpers have gone on from providing voluntary help to being trained and employed as classroom assistants.

44 The school has supported parents to help their children. For example, they ran a session on the numeracy strategy and also ensured that videos were available for parents to borrow. Although not taken up, the school obtained videos in parents' ethnic languages. The school finds that the parents have not required information in languages other than English, but are mindful that the need might arise.

45 Parents help their children at home, sharing books with them, listening to them read and playing numeracy games. A number of parents have benefited from the Parent School Partnership Family Learning Programme, that runs courses in school. The courses aim to help parents support their children's education and parents who have attended do feel that this aim has been achieved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 The leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are very good. The new headteacher has inspired considerable confidence and all senior managers have a shared commitment to the school, to school improvement and to promoting high standards.

47 This is an area of considerable and impressive improvement. The improvement brought about in the leadership and management in recent months has been excellent. It has had an extremely positive effect on staff morale and on a shared commitment by all staff to succeed. All staff now make a very positive contribution to the management and running of the school, in contrast to the situation found during the last inspection which contributed to this aspect of the school's work being made a key issue. The headteacher delegates well, ensuring that those with management responsibilities make a good and effective contribution to the running of the school.

48 Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and are highly committed to its further improvement. The period since the last inspection has been difficult for the school. The governing body has shown considerable commitment to school improvement and raising standards in all areas and especially in meeting the Key Issues. They, together with the headteacher and the Local Education Authority (LEA), have identified where, and how, they wanted to bring about change. Funding has been carefully and efficiently targeted, based on a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Financial management has been very thorough and has clearly supported the educational priorities. Together with the LEA, the governors and the headteacher have had regular meetings to review the targets for improvement and ensure that the school is making progress towards meeting them. As a result, the action taken to meet the school's targets, including the Key Issues identified in previous reports, has been excellent.

49 The school's evaluation of its performance is very good and a strength and has led to very good and appropriate priorities for future development. The headteacher has made a very thorough analysis of pupils' standards and has identified areas for improvement. Teaching has been monitored and the very good practice within the school has been shared with all staff, further improving the standards and quality of education throughout the school. Very effective appraisal and performance management structures are in place and newly qualified teachers are very well supported. All these systems and structures are having a significant effect on standards and on school improvement.

50 The strategic use of resources is very good. The way in which the headteacher and governors have used the financial and other resources available to them has been one of the key areas in the considerable recent improvement of the school. The Local Education Authority has played a very significant and important role in supporting the school. Key indications in this area are the improvements to the buildings and resources resulting in considerable recent developments in both the internal and external environment.

51 The development of the accommodation and resources has been very good and provides children with an exciting environment, both inside and out. The development of the outdoor play area has been innovative and of high quality and a very good response to the Key Issue identified previously. Additional staffing is provided for children with special educational needs, emphasising the importance of this area in the work of the school. Internally the accommodation is very attractive and well used and is enhanced through very good quality display, including very impressive photographs of some of the school's children and new library provision with very well designed quality custom made furniture and decoration. The ICT provision is excellent and very well resourced with a suite of networked personal computers and an interactive whiteboard. The school is generally well maintained and is clean and very well cared for.

52 Staffing levels are appropriate and there is very good teamwork between all adults, to the considerable benefit of all pupils, including those with special and individual needs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is considerably enhanced through the use of a part-time specialist teacher. The school is committed to the continuing professional development of staff. Classroom assistants and nursery nurses contribute significantly to the learning and progress made by all pupils. The school administrative staff carry out their duties efficiently and effectively and present a welcoming image of the school.

53 Learning resources are good overall. They are good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, for pupils aged under five and in art, religious education, and history. Resources are very good for ICT, especially in the excellent ICT suite, and are also very good for music with an exciting range of instruments from around the world.

54 Given the very good improvement since the last inspection, the good teaching provided, and the improving standards attained by pupils, the school is providing good value for money and clearly and effectively applies the principles of best value.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the standards of children's writing in all areas of the school and especially in English. (paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 82)

This should be linked to children's presentation of written work and presentation of work generally.

The school has identified this as an area for development, recognising that there is some variation in teachers' expectation of the quality and accuracy of children's presentation. This is linked to the development of consistent expectation, for example noise levels in some classes and the link between this and children's concentration.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	23	36	36	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	194
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.2

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	29	38	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	26
	Girls	31	34	34
	Total	54	56	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (78)	84 (87)	90 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	26	28
	Girls	34	34	37
	Total	55	60	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (90)	90 (91)	97 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	5
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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 – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	27.7

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30.0

Total number of education support staff	1.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15.0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	471901
Total expenditure	473132
Expenditure per pupil	2031
Balance brought forward from previous year	30966
Balance carried forward to next year	29735

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	224
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	15	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	31	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	35	15	4	7
The teaching is good.	67	31	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	27	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	22	5	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	62	31	5	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	33	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	38	18	2	11

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

55 Children are taught, part-time, within a sixty-place Nursery and in two reception classes. Standards of attainment on entry to the Nursery are mainly in line with national expectations. There is, however, a significant minority who, at this stage, attain standards below or well below national expectations. By the time they are five years of age most children attain the Early Learning Goals. There are, however a significant minority who have not yet achieved expected standards in all the areas of learning.

56 Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across all the areas of learning but make very good progress in the Nursery. This is as a result of very good teaching by the teacher and by a very well qualified Nursery nurse. This is also as a result of the school's commitment to improvement through the 'Effective Early Learning Project' provided by the Centre for Research in Early Childhood. Good practice resulting from the project is beginning to be disseminated to other Foundation Stage staff. The project is to be developed throughout school. There has been a very good improvement in provision for the Foundation Stage since the last inspection.

57 Children are polite, share activities well and are independent. Very young children tidy up sensibly They use resources safely and with care. Behaviour is mostly good, the children are responsive and they enjoy school. Children are friendly and, at times, can become quite noisy. Rules for noise and behaviour are not always reinforced or made clear enough.

58 Teaching overall is good. Teaching in the Nursery is very good and excellent. All lessons in the Foundation Stage are at least satisfactory. Lessons with fewer strengths do not always take account of varying abilities during whole-class work and children are asked to sit on the carpet for too long. Some children are not always directly involved in the tasks and therefore lose interest. Rules for behaviour and listening in some lessons need to be made much clearer. On occasions better use could be made of good support staff. Where the teaching is very good or excellent, relationships and a calm approach are highly successful in generating a peaceful but interesting climate for learning. Children are challenged in their learning. Adults in all classes work as a team and relationships throughout this stage are very good.

59 All areas of learning are well planned and provided for, with a significant improvement in provision for outdoor play. This is now a safe, secure and imaginative environment. Further major development is taking place to make this provision an even more exciting and stimulating environment for the children. Improvements made to internal decoration and the provision of new windows has enhanced the accommodation for one Reception class and the Nursery. The other Reception class is housed in poorer accommodation and there should be consideration of an improvement to this environment: in particular, a better use of internal space, storage, updating or improving furniture and a pleasanter environment in the toilet areas.

Personal, social and emotional development

60 Attainment in this area of development is mostly in line with national expectations. There is a small minority who do not achieve the expected levels of development by the end of the Foundation Stage. Provision for ensuring development in this area is a strength of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children play together well, share resources and enjoy good relationships with adults and with each other.

61 Role-play is provided in a variety of ways and further developed by a range of visits and visitors. The children are involved in their activities, show persistence and are motivated. Children show a good imagination when they play in the shop or with the train set and often tell their own stories, with puppets. They are aware of other cultures and faiths and learn about the environment and how to care for living things.

62 Teaching in this area is good overall and in many lessons it is very good or excellent. Children are asked to solve problems and are set challenges such as being asked to make a bridge which is large enough for the 'Troll' to hide under but strong enough to hold the weight of the 'Billy Goats'. All staff and adults provide an atmosphere of security and have positive relationships with the children. Staff ensure that children have a balanced view of all groups of people and avoid using stereotype images. Children are very well cared for and they are learning to be independent and to help others. Almost all children can dress and undress themselves and use tools and equipment safely. Very occasionally, children in the Reception year lack self-discipline and they are not always reminded of their responsibilities.

Communication, language and literacy

63 Attainment is mainly in line with national expectations. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across the Foundation Stage. There is a significant minority of pupils who do not attain the expected levels for this area by the age of five. They develop speaking and listening skills through social interactions in all the areas of provision and through specific literacy sessions. In one class children were familiar with the strategy of using 'talking partners' to discuss ideas in class sessions. By this stage of the Reception year the children are used to a routine similar to the National Literacy Strategy literacy hour. Children in the Nursery listen very well, trying hard to sound out the initial sounds of their names. Reception children can read the texts of familiar stories and can assist in the retelling and re-writing of stories altering characters settings and events. Children take home reading books and parents are very supportive in helping their children and returning books to school.

64 Teaching is very good or excellent in the Nursery and good overall. There are many opportunities offered that develop skills: poetry, choosing from a wide variety of books, using listening centres, role-play, puppets and other small world activities. Planning for this area includes the incorporation of key vocabulary and language structures to be taught within other areas. Communication is encouraged through the use of dialogue books in the Reception year. Visits and the good outdoor environment play an important part in the development of the children's communication skills. All staff verbally model good structures and listen to children well. They show respect and accept all contributions. However, the same good modelling does not always occur in the teachers' writing within the Reception pupils' books. Children need a good model of handwriting, clarity and accuracy when

comments are written in books. Staff also need to ensure that although, pupils' work is celebrated, expectations of presentation or achievement are not set too low.

Mathematical development

65 Overall, mathematical development is in line with national expectations. Children in the Nursery learn number poems and songs and measure their growing plants. They know about prepositions through the story 'Rosie's Walk' and become familiar with money in their shop play. They talk about heavy or light when making their boats. Children in the Reception classes have opportunities to explore mathematics, for example in water and sand play, through maths activity areas and through their daily maths lessons. They learn about number, shape and space, measurements, patterns and movement.

66 Mathematics is mostly well taught and the teaching of mathematics in the Nursery is excellent. Very well planned, exciting lessons in this class engage and involve pupils in their learning. Opportunities for mathematical development are wide ranging and are provided within many other areas. Planning focuses on mathematical language development throughout the curriculum. In Reception classes children carry out surveys of seeds, learn about ordination of number and learn to total numbers using imaginative activities. Children in one lesson were not always aware of where help was available, such as on the number square. The pace of this lesson was not quick enough and higher attaining pupils were not always challenged.

67 Resources for independent learning are available and mathematical opportunities are planned within other areas of the curriculum. Children are able to use number competently and to record answers or findings in different ways. Outdoor play involves pupils in using mathematical language. They build structures outside from large bricks and ride wheeled toys, aware of space. The newly surfaced playground has not yet been marked out, but the inclusion of mathematical marking would be a worthwhile resource.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68 Attainment in this area of learning is mostly in line with expectations. Children investigate and ask questions as they learn about the world around them. The outside environment and many trips or visitors to school provide opportunities to learn about the wider world. The children in Reception classes investigate waterproof materials and assess suitability using their senses and with the aid of magnifying glasses. They test out their findings. Children play in their garden centres and plant sunflower seeds and beans. They study snails and can use a range of modelling materials. They competently use tools, such as scissors, and are able to cut and join a variety of materials. Children learn about effects and changes using the outside environment to observe weather and seasons.

69 Children's use of ICT is above expectations. By the end of the Foundation Stage most can programme a Roamer toy and estimate the lengths needed. They can use arrow keys on a computer to navigate, can select colours and many can estimate and programme the lengths required. The children are well aware of the cultures and beliefs of others through the range of displays and artefacts that are a permanent feature of school. The school prayer is very prominently featured on the school wall and children know and recite this. Historical artefacts in the main school are arranged as role-play areas.

70 Teaching is good overall and in Nursery it is very good and excellent. Planning of lessons is detailed and activities incorporate development within other areas such as language and mathematics. Personal, social and emotional development is always considered. Imaginative resources are well prepared and used, particularly within the ICT suite. In the Nursery, children play in deep blue water that contains a range of underwater sea creatures and sparkling stars. They investigate colour changes and effects within the water. The teaching staff have developed very good relationships with the well-briefed support staff and with parents who help. All contribute greatly to the learning of the children.

Physical development

71 National expectations for physical development are mostly met by the time children are five years of age. Children make good progress across the age range. The newly developed outside environment has allowed a more structured and imaginative approach to teaching and provision. Safer surfaces such as bark chipping and smooth flat surfaces have increased children's confidence. Further developments in this area are planned but teachers provide many activities outside. The use of wellingtons means that wet or cold weather does not keep children inside for long.

72 The children use apparatus in P.E. lessons safely and competently and use their outdoor apparatus and toys with confidence. They can dress and undress independently and use a variety of apparatus with some skill. Foundation Stage children climb, run, build, ride, scoot, slide and balance either in their structured P.E. lessons or outside. Language development is an important aspect of physical development and children are aware of safety and of effects on their bodies.

73 Teaching is good overall and very good in Nursery. Planned activities for physical development take account of the pupils' differing needs and the children are well supported. They are encouraged to become independent and to take controlled risks. As a result of very good relationships children are confident.

74 Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is good. Work is very well planned and teachers work as a team. The Effective Early Learning Project has had a very good effect on the organisation of the Nursery. There are very good relationships with parents. The co-ordinator acts as a mentor for the nursery nurses who feel valued in school, as their role has developed. The induction programme for children moving from Nursery to Reception or starting school from home is to be further developed. Assessment procedures are about to be linked more closely to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Creative development

75 Attainment in creative development is in line with national expectation. Children who have special educational needs make good progress. Children from one Reception class achieve standards well above national expectations in their musical development. This is as a result of excellent teaching by their class teacher who is also the music co-ordinator and specialist. A very good range of musical instruments from all parts of the world has also supported the learning. This aspect has fed very strongly into the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

76 Opportunities are offered for children to use a variety of media including paint, pastels, charcoal, chalk and crayon. They visit the Tate Art Gallery and link their work to

that of other artists. Trips act as a stimulus for creative work and in the playground the children take tree bark rubbings and collect leaves for printing. Nursery children paint pictures of different kinds of weather, draw pictures of the snails and make houses from boxes. They enjoy a permanent music table with a variety of instruments.

77 Teaching is good overall and in some areas it is very good and excellent. Children in one Reception class enjoyed an excellent lesson that very successfully built on prior knowledge. Children were very aware of dynamics and tempo and can follow a rhythm. They had selected suitable instruments for weather sounds and skilful teaching conducted the children to produce a composition of parts that they were able to repeat. They were encouraged to evaluate their lesson.

78 Dance is taught using tapes in the Reception year and, although at least satisfactorily taught, clearer demonstration of expectations and a reduction of noise levels at times would improve these lessons. Good support is given to children with special educational needs to enable them to participate in all activities.

ENGLISH

79 The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds were in line in reading and below in writing, in comparison with the national average and with similar schools. The indications of the results of the 2001 tests show a similar picture for the children in the current Year 2 class. However, this group of pupils had low levels of language and literacy skills when they started school and they have achieved well in relation to this prior attainment. The trend over the last two years has been one of notable improvement, which has enabled the school to exceed the targets it has set and successfully address the key issue from the last inspection of raising standards in English. This is as a result of the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the significant amount of good teaching that the children receive throughout the school. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

80 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good, with a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in reading and writing. Teachers plan thoroughly to follow the structure of the literacy hour, prepare and resource their lessons in an effective way and use questioning skilfully to find out what children know and can do before they start the activities. They make good use of the introductions and the plenary sessions to develop children's speaking skills, which are satisfactory and show improvement from when they start school. There are good opportunities for children to discuss and explain their ideas, as was seen in lessons in Year 2 when they were discussing how to turn statements into questions. In these lessons, the expertise of the teachers gave the children the confidence to take full part in discussions that effectively developed their communication skills. Though the children are confident when talking to others, they are limited in their ability to retell stories that they have read and to speak in a creative and imaginative manner. The school has identified this as an area for development and is developing a variety of strategies, such as providing more opportunities for role-play and drama activities, to improve this aspect of children's learning. The children respond positively and are eager to make contributions during their Literacy lessons. Most children are well behaved and have good powers of concentration, which enables them to have a high work rate and produce a good amount of work. The listening skills of most children are satisfactory, which helps them to make relevant answers to the teachers' questions and to gain a suitable understanding of the work that they are to do. Most teachers ensure that there are many opportunities for children to listen to the views and ideas of adults and other children and, consequently, there is good development of their listening skills. However, in

some classes the noise levels are too high and this adversely affects the children's concentration and their ability to listen to and follow their teachers' instructions in an appropriate way.

81 Children make good progress in their reading and, by the time they are seven, most achieve well in relation to their low skills on starting school and achieve average standards. Many children show suitable ability to read accurately and confidently from texts appropriate for their age and are able to use a range of strategies to determine unfamiliar words, including the use of phonics to identify the initial sound and other blends. This was evident in shared reading sessions, when Year 2 children were learning how to scan texts to locate specific information. The teaching in these lessons was good, with the challenging activities enabling the pupils to make good progress in their reading skills. All the children showed a lot of enjoyment in the lessons and the relationships between the pupils and the teachers were very good. The more able children are reading from a wide selection of books and can use information books well, to further their knowledge of topics studied. Children of average ability know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and are increasing in their confidence to read aloud in a large group. Lower attaining children have suitable mechanical skills to read unknown words but their comprehension skills are under-developed and, as a result, they find difficulty in retelling what they have read. The library provides a very stimulating environment for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading and, in classrooms, there is a very good variety of fiction and non-fiction books to enable teachers to develop pupils' reading skills. Each classroom provides a word-rich environment, with displays in all subjects being used very effectively to challenge and develop the children's reading skills.

82 The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing since the last inspection, with teachers now setting manageable targets for children to achieve. This has had a positive effect and pupils are now achieving well and standards are rising dramatically, though remaining below average. Many children are able to write a sequence of sentences and punctuate them accurately, with simple words spelled correctly, as was evident in a Year 1 lesson on sequencing the life cycle of a frog. The school has successfully targeted an improvement in spelling, involving daily practice sessions for each class, which has enabled most children to attain appropriate standards. Children are able to write in a variety of formats and, in Year 2, have produced some good quality poems about spring that have been well displayed by teachers. However, most children do not yet show a suitable ability to use an interesting range of vocabulary or demonstrate an awareness of the reader in their writing. There are not yet enough suitably structured opportunities for the children to develop their skills of writing, at length, in a creative and imaginative way. Handwriting is untidy and the standard of presentation of written work in most subjects is poor. In some classes, the expectation of teachers of children's performance is not high enough, which results in work of poor quality being accepted and praised. There is satisfactory use made of information and communication technology by children, to word-process their stories and poems. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, and achieve well as a result of the effective extra support that they receive from teachers and classroom support assistants. The school has identified further improvement in the standards in writing as a priority area for development

83 Children have opportunities to develop their literacy skills in a suitable manner in other subjects. In mathematics lessons, they are able to develop these skills when reading questions and then discussing and explaining their strategies for finding solutions. Teachers insist on the use of accurate subject vocabulary, as was seen in science and mathematics lessons. In geography and history, pupils record their ideas in a variety of written forms and make labelled drawings in science.

84 There is very good leadership by a co-ordinator, who has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and who has devised an effective action plan to further improve provision. Planning follows the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and is very thorough and used effectively by teachers to ensure progression and continuity of pupils' learning through the school. The procedures for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make as they pass through the school in English, are very good. There are very effective procedures in place to analyse the test results to identify areas of weakness and then set manageable targets for improvement for groups and individual pupils. This has resulted in the school targeting an improvement in the quality of writing for all pupils. The teachers use assessment information effectively to evaluate pupils' performance, so that they can plan future learning experiences accordingly. These procedures are used well by staff, to let their pupils know what they need to do next to improve. It is obvious that the National Literacy Strategy is being carried out in a successful way throughout the school and is having a positive effect on the progress made and standards achieved by pupils. The accommodation, in terms of the library provision, is very good. There is a wide range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books in classrooms and shared areas for pupils to foster an enjoyment of reading.

MATHEMATICS

85 The school's 2000 national test results for seven-year-olds were below average when compared to all schools nationally and well below average when compared to similar schools. The school acknowledged that these results should have been higher. A well-considered action plan for improvement was produced which has been very effective in bringing about the desired improvement. Scrutiny of work from the present Year 2 children, lesson observations, and the results from the 2001 National tests show that standards are better than those achieved by seven-year-olds last year and are now in line with the national average.

86 By the age of seven, children have made good progress in learning about basic number facts and operations, such as addition and subtraction, and the concept of place value, in terms of tens and units. Children can make reasonable estimates of the number of dots on a card. They are able to find halves and quarters of shapes and identify reflective symmetry in shapes. Most are able to apply their knowledge of number when solving simple problems involving money. They are able to tell the time, including half past the hour, when reading an analogue clock.

87 The school has been very successful in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). As a result, teaching is planned very carefully and lessons are organised in line with the recommended structure. This has contributed to the significant improvement in the quality of teaching since that reported at the last inspection. Teaching is now good in Key Stage 1 and results in good achievement for children. Teaching is almost invariably good, the one exception being a very good lesson in Year 2 where children were sorting shapes according to their attributes. A distinctive feature of this lesson was the teacher's skilful questioning. This evoked confident responses from children and was sufficiently probing to extend children's thinking and deepen their understanding.

88 Across all lessons in Key Stage 1, teachers begin lessons by ensuring that children are aware of the intended learning outcomes. Support staff and volunteers are similarly well briefed and deployed, therefore enabling them to contribute significantly to children's learning. Lesson plenaries often reinforce children's learning and, when teachers make reference to the original intended outcomes, children also become aware of how much they

have learned. Teachers justifiably place high emphasis on children's acquisition of mathematical vocabulary. A very good example of this practice was seen within a Year 2 lesson where children were encouraged to listen out for their peer's use of particular displayed words such as 'forward', 'turn' etc., During this lesson, children were seen becoming adept at providing precise mathematical language to guide a partner through a route on a grid. Teachers have good, and in most cases, very good control of lessons but occasionally tolerate a level of noise that is too high for productive learning. This does not detract from otherwise good teaching but does not promote good work habits.

89 In all lessons, children's behaviour and concentration are good. Children clearly enjoy mathematics and respond well both to the work they are set and to the adults with whom they work. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff, allied to very good relationships with children, provides a positive and supportive climate for learning. Children with special educational needs also achieve well as a direct result of this good quality support. Those children who have English as an additional language, of whom none is at an early stage of acquisition of English, achieve well and similarly to their peers. Children listen well and co-operate fully with the adults who teach them, showing eagerness and confidence to answer questions and to undertake collaborative tasks. Many opportunities are provided for children to work together, for example in using a laptop computer and when playing dice games. Such opportunities contribute well to children's personal development.

90 Children are able to use and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly in science, for example in 'calculating' the area of their hands. Other examples include use of measuring skills in design and technology.

91 Record-keeping systems are very good. Teachers mark children's work thoroughly and positively. However, greater emphasis should be given to the presentational aspects of children's work, in order to promote children's greater sense of pride in their work. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. Homework is set appropriately and supplements classwork.

92 Very good leadership of mathematics allied to teachers' commitment to changes in methodology have resulted in the very good improvements in the subject since the last inspection. A variety of textbook resources and worksheets are used judiciously. Test results are analysed in detail enabling the co-ordinator to determine where particular strengths and weakness arise in children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Teaching is systematically monitored by the co-ordinator and constructive feedback is given. The combination of all these factors has raised standards this year and provides a firm basis for continued improvement.

93 Teachers work very hard to present good quality wall displays that celebrate and reinforce learning. The school is well resourced for mathematics. There is some very good use of ICT to support mathematics, for example in Year 1, where children shared the use of laptop computers in order to play a game that was highly relevant to the planned outcomes of the lesson.

SCIENCE

94 The school's 2000 teacher assessment for seven-year-olds indicates standards are average when compared to all schools nationally. Scrutiny of work from the present Year 2 children, and lesson observations, indicate that standards are broadly average. There have been improvements in several aspects of science recently. These include children's

standards of attainment, teachers' planning and especially clear lesson objectives, the learning of potentially higher achieving children and in opportunities for children's independent learning. The results of teacher assessment for 2001 indicate a further improvement on the school's previous results.

95 In a Year 2 lesson investigating the melting point of ice and the effect of conditions on the melting rate, children were beginning to understand the principles of fair testing and the need for accurate recording of their observations. Children are actively involved in the investigations and have sound organisational skills and knowledge and understanding of the topic. The majority of the class know what is meant by prediction and are able to clearly say what they have found and explain what they expect to happen.

96 Children's attitudes to their work are good. They are well behaved and enjoy their lessons, listening well to their teacher and to each other. Children in all classes are confident when asked to explain why they think something is about to, or has, happened and they make good use of appropriate scientific vocabulary. They are able to apply their previous scientific knowledge and understanding to new contexts and most make good and effective links between topics and different areas of science. In all classes children make appropriate use of their literacy and numeracy skills.

97 All children have equal access to the science curriculum. Those children with special educational needs are well catered for and as a result make good progress. They are able to take a full and active part in lessons and are provided with additional resources, where these are required to meet their needs.

98 The teaching of science is good throughout the school. In both key stages teachers plan their lessons in detail and ensure that the content excites and challenges children. Teachers plan in pairs thus ensuring that the scheme of work is completely covered and that children in both classes in each year learn about the same topics. Teachers have a good scientific knowledge of their topics. For example, in a well-taught Year 2 lesson, the good level of the teacher's planning and her clear expertise in the topic allowed her to present the lesson content in a very clear and unambiguous way. As a result children had a very good understanding of the topic and were very involved in the lesson. Questioning is well used in most classes to develop children's understanding, to involve them in the lesson and to check out what they know and can do. Relationships between teachers and their children are very good and this considerably enhances children's learning, allowing them to be confident when asking questions and putting forward ideas. Classroom support assistants play an important and very good part in children's learning. They are an integral part of the lesson structure and as a result considerably enhance children's learning.

99 Science is very well co-ordinated by a well-qualified and experienced teacher. She has ensured that the scheme of work provides clear direction for colleagues, has reviewed what is taught in all classes and has carried out an evaluation of all aspects of the subject and especially standards. There has been some observation of lessons and the co-ordinator has demonstrated her teaching and expertise to colleagues who have observed her teaching. The co-ordinator also sees colleagues planning as well as providing them with support and advice. Through these strategies the co-ordinator has gained a very accurate view of standards, of what works well and what needs to be improved and as a result has been very instrumental in bringing about change and raising standards. The co-ordinator has developed a very good planning and assessment structure which allows children's levels of attainment to be recorded on "I can" sheets.

100 Resources are good for science, and especially for investigations. The use of computers in science is an area for development, partly because the school is currently reviewing and increasing the software provision. The school is aware of this situation and has plans to improve it.

101 There has been a very good improvement in science since the last inspection. Much of the work has centred on developing a relevant scheme of work, lesson planning to ensure that the lesson objectives meet the scheme and ensuring the resources are available to match the scheme. The monitoring of standards and coverage of the science curriculum is having a significant and positive effect on the development of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

102 The week of the inspection presented only a small number of opportunities to observe art being taught. However, from these and from a review and analysis of children's work, mainly on display, it is possible to judge that attainment is average overall, with a significant amount of above average work and that children make satisfactory progress in their learning. As so few lessons were observed there is not enough evidence to base a secure judgement of the quality of teaching in the subject. The subject is, however, securely covered in all classes and is an important and prominent part of children's education. Evidence of good quality artwork is to be found in work done in history and geography as well as in topics such as the studies of canal boat art.

103 Throughout the school pupils learn about a range of artists and their work. In the Reception class children can effectively use a variety of media to communicate ideas. Classes in Year 1 have done some very interesting work based on canal boats and canal boat art. Their work showed confident use of a variety of techniques including marbling, the use of sprays, weaving and the making and decorating of paper plates using traditional patterns. By the time they reach Year 2 children have learned to use a pencil accurately to produce different line and shade textures for observational drawing. A very good example of this was seen in the children's drawings of St Mary's Church. These contain much detailed and careful work and showed how well developed the children's observational skills are.

104 The co-ordination of art is good. This has been a strong subject in the past and has continued to develop. The creative arts have a high profile and the school intends to develop the area further. The use of the 'I can' sheets to assess what children can do is a useful tool enabling the co-ordinator to measure standards and coverage of the curriculum in all classes. The school is well resourced for artwork and the co-ordinator ensures that the resources are matched to the scheme of work and to what teachers want to teach.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105 Children aged seven attain standards that match those expected nationally. This means that standards have been sustained since the last inspection.

106 Year 2 children have studied a range of commercially produced puppets that were introduced to them by a puppeteer. This provided a valuable stimulus for children to observe the structure of various types of puppets and then to plan and design their own. Children's designs show an appropriate level of detail, including their choice of materials to be used and their chosen method of construction. Finished puppets have a good quality of finish indicating that children have exercised appropriate skill in cutting and sticking, using

card, cloth and wood joined together by staples, glue and sellotape. Children then made sensible and, in some cases, perceptive evaluations of their artefacts and suggested ways in which they might be improved.

107 Due to timetable constraints, it was possible to observe only one lesson and therefore there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching overall. However, on the basis of this lesson, children's work on display and teachers' plans, it is evident that the National Curriculum requirements are met. It is also clear that design and technology activities are usually planned as part of work arising in other subjects. For example, following a trip to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, as part of history work, children were involved in the production of a canal boat, enhanced by appropriately chosen decorative features. Such examples provide children with appropriate contexts for design and technology tasks and bring additional relevance to their work.

108 Good teaching, in the one lesson seen, enabled children to make good gains in learning how to make horse heads with moveable features, to complement the canal boat work. The lesson was well planned and prepared and underpinned by the very good relationships between adults and the children. The teacher organised groups successfully and her effective deployment of good support from the teaching assistant and the school secretary contributed significantly to children's learning. As a result, all children worked conscientiously, behaved very well and showed pride when demonstrating their work.

109 Effective leadership of the subject has resulted in satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' plans are monitored and there is a whole-school system for record keeping. The school's policy document and good teamwork amongst staff ensures a commonality of approach to the subject.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

110 In both subjects, the children attain standards expected for their age by the time that they are seven and make suitable progress in their learning as they pass through the school.

111 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both subjects, with teachers having secure subject knowledge and being able to organise and manage their classes well. There is appropriate use of time and resources, and effective use of questioning to find out what pupils know and understand. The teaching is well matched to the needs of all pupils so that all abilities are suitably challenged. There is clear explanation of the ideas to be taught and emphasis is placed on pupils using correct historical and geographical vocabulary when answering questions and talking about their work. In their history work, the children are helped to develop their understanding of time by listening to stories about the past and of famous people. Previous learning is consolidated by the use of books, photographs and historical artefacts, and pupils are taught how to use evidence to find out about the past and how things change over a period of time. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson, in which pupils were using a good selection of postcards and photographs to find out how holidays have altered since Victorian times. During this lesson, they used the very good artefacts in the role-play area, set up as a Victorian Kitchen, to bring the period to life and help them understand how things were different then, compared to today. The work of pupils in Year 2 shows a suitable knowledge and understanding of the life and times of historical characters and events such as Guy Fawkes, Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London. In geography, the pupils in Year 1 make appropriate progress in developing their mapping skills, by planning a route from home to school. They learn about transport and communication and the different uses to which land can be put. On a visit to Liverpool, the

pupils in Year 2 look at and discuss the main features of buildings on the waterfront and then use their literacy skills to write a guidebook about the city. When they were planning these books, the pupils were able to make effective use of their information communication technology skills to use the Internet to research information. As in history, there is good use of artefacts to stimulate children's interest and capture their imagination in geography lessons. The pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their response in lessons is good. They are well behaved, polite and courteous and relationships are good. Pupils show interest and enjoyment in their work and handle historical and geographical artefacts and resources with care.

112 The curriculum ensures that all children have access to a wide range of historical and geographical experiences. The school makes effective use of visits to provide further learning experiences for pupils in both subjects. These have included trips to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, the City of Liverpool and also the immediate surroundings of the school to find out about the different kinds of houses and their history. There is effective leadership of both subjects, with the co-ordinators being able to suitably advise and support their colleagues. Resources have been improved for both subjects since the last inspection and these are adequate, with some good historical artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

113 This is an area of considerable strength. The attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with that expected nationally, while the attainment of a significant number is above and even well above. In the Nursery, children confidently use computers, listening to talking books. They are able to use the mouse to select areas of the screen and to click on buttons to move to the next part of the story. In the Reception classes children using a control program know how to move the cursor left, right etc., can change colours of the pen, make a good attempt at estimating distance and have good mouse control. In this lesson attainment was above average. By the time they are in Year 2 children are becoming confident with a variety of ICT applications including word processing. Using a high-level word-processing program (extensively used by adults) they are able to log onto the network and select the programme, accurately input text, know how to highlight sections they want to change, alter font style, size and colour, and can print their work. A significant number of children in this lesson were working within level 3, above average for their age.

114 Most of the children's work with ICT is done in the ICT suite. Here they work with considerable enthusiasm and concentration and are well behaved, having good attitudes to their work. Co-operation between children is good and they share well, making supportive and helpful comments to each other. They confidently apply previously learned skills and knowledge to new tasks. On a few occasions children became quite animated in their discussions with each other and with the teacher and as a result the noise level rose to a point where it was difficult for some children to concentrate and certainly made it difficult for them to listen to the teacher. This hindered learning and slowed progress in this lesson. Overall however, children's learning in ICT lessons was good with the vast majority making good progress. The support and good relationships provided for all the class and especially those with special educational needs ensure that they are confident in class and respond well to inspections.

115 Teaching is good overall with some lessons being very well taught. Planning and lesson preparation is very well done with teachers ensuring that all children have access to the lesson content through carefully matching the tasks to children's individual levels of attainment. Introductions are clear and well paced with teachers making very good use of

the ICT suite's facilities. The interactive whiteboard is an excellent resource, well used, enabling teachers to clearly demonstrate what children are to do and how to do it.

116 The co-ordination and management of ICT is very good and a significant factor in the high and successful profile of the subject throughout the school. Two members of staff very successfully share the co-ordination role. The policy has been re-written, there is a new scheme of work which includes identifying, for teachers, where there are opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum and the school is developing an excellent assessment strategy to enable children's progress and levels of attainment to be assessed and recorded. Both co-ordinators have had release time from their classes to enable them to plan the further development of the use of ICT, as well as to monitor and evaluate standards of work.

117 The physical provision of hardware and the suite has been accompanied by several other essential developments. The school has been very active in addressing teacher confidence and expertise and there has been a series of training sessions for all staff. The Speke Garston Education Action Zone has been very supportive and has been involved, not only in providing further resources, but also in providing much valued technical support for the school. The school has a valuable link with a college in the area, with students helping the school by developing a website which includes children's work.

118 Resources are very good with the ICT suite being excellent. Considerable thought and detailed planning have gone into the development of the room with the school managers being very successful in using a range of available funding and resources very creatively to provide a first class facility. The whole school benefits from this provision. All areas of the school are networked and there are computers in all classrooms. During the inspection there was limited use in some classrooms and the school recognises this as an area for development.

119 There has been considerable improvement in the provision and use of ICT and in children's standards as well as the coverage of the National Curriculum since the last inspection and the school is determined to take this even further.

MUSIC

120 Attainment in music is in line with national expectations. However, attainment of pupils in one Reception class is well above expectations for their age. This is as a result of excellent teaching by their class teacher who is also the music co-ordinator and a music specialist. Children learn to sing and play instruments showing awareness of other performers. They can select and explore sounds made by musical instruments and create patterns, sequences and compositions. Pupils from Foundation Stage to Year 2 are using symbols to denote instruments and dynamics or timbre. They listen to and evaluate a range of music and use music in dance.

121 Although a limited number of lessons were observed, teaching overall is good. Very good and excellent teaching was seen. Specialist knowledge, good pace, enthusiasm and well-prepared lessons result in very good and excellent learning. Very good relationships, clearly stated objectives and insistence on good behaviour and attentive listening ensure children are well motivated. They know how to handle instruments and are learning musical vocabulary well. Work was gradually built onto prior knowledge and teachers continuously seek improvement. A lesson, which met all the requirements, could have been improved if children were more aware of rules for listening and did not play instruments at inappropriate times. Singing throughout the school needs to be developed. Children enjoy singing but

need to develop a greater awareness of the voice as an instrument. Lessons link to literacy as when sound effects are composed to accompany a story and when children listen well and describe sounds or music heard. It would be in the interest of the school to develop the specialist teaching of music to raise standards throughout the school.

122 The school has a wide range of high quality tuned and untuned instruments from around the world. This enables every child in a class to choose an instrument. They can explore a variety of sounds and can experiment with many ways of making music. The quality of the resources has made music lessons exciting and increased confidence in teaching.

123 Co-ordination of the subject is good. The successful application for matched funding has enabled the school to raise the profile of music. The areas for improvement now include the assessment of pupils' work and development of teaching through demonstration lessons, in-service training and teaching of other year groups by the specialist teacher.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124 Children in Year 2 attain standards expected for seven-year-olds. This means that standards have been sustained since the last inspection. They can move their bodies imaginatively in response to musical stimulus and co-operate in pairs, for example when mimicking the action of a mother and baby elephant. Children make sensible comments when called upon to evaluate their performance.

125 Teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 Planning is very good in all lessons and leads to well-structured teaching. Learning intentions are clear and central to the activities that are presented. Lessons begin with a warm-up phase, which in best practice, for example in games lessons in Year 1, places an appropriate level of demand on children's cardiovascular system. Children's awareness of the effect of exercise on the body is also heightened when it is explicitly referred to by teachers. All teachers give clear instructions when directing children to activities. Nevertheless, occasionally it becomes necessary for teachers to rightly insist on the need for all children to give full attention. Enthusiastic teaching in a Year 1 lesson, taught by a teacher with specialist expertise, ensured that the pace of teaching was brisk and rapid learning occurred. In this lesson the tasks demanded a good degree of physical effort from children. The result of this very successful teaching is that children make very good gains in their skills. As a result of very good support children with special educational needs are fully integrated within lessons and almost all achieve at a similar level to their peers.

126 On the evidence of all lessons in Key Stage 1 it is clear that there are very good relationships between adults and children. This underpins the good control teachers have of their classes. In these lessons, good contributions are made to children's social development, especially when they collaborate with others. A very good example of this feature of learning is the Year 2 dance lesson where children worked successfully and sensibly in pairs. Children demonstrate sensible behaviour, good attitudes and achieve well. They make safe use of equipment and are aware of the needs of others. Good use is made of children's demonstrations as a means of enhancing the performance of others. These are particularly effective when children are also given opportunities to evaluate the performance of their peers.

127 Good subject leadership has led to good improvements in the subject since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching, lesson planning, and resources. Planning documents provide evidence that National Curriculum requirements are met.

128 The school's good equipment for physical education promotes good learning. Provision for extra-curricular football is well attended and contributes well to children's personal and physical development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129 Attainment in religious education is in line with expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Children are aware of all the major religions and of their important people, places and festivals. They understand different beliefs and can relate these to their own lives. They link concepts such as friendships to Christianity and the disciples. Year 2 children are allocated a little more time within their classroom collective worships to learn more about religion.

130 Links to literacy are beginning to be made within the written work. Children write letters as if they lived in Jerusalem or as a Jewish child relating their experience of Sukkot. They think about their own special places and promises made.

131 Displays, photographs and work around school demonstrate the importance of religious education in school. There are close links with churches and people from other faiths have talked to the children. Local clergy take assemblies from time to time and have encouraged children to use the church as a resource. They have also visited a Hindu Temple. Children take part in special assemblies such as Harvest and Easter, making their own Easter gardens.

132 Due to timetable restrictions no lessons were observed except for a short class collective worship which contained a planned element of religious education. It was therefore not possible to make a judgement about teaching. Year 2 teachers often teach religious education to each of their year group classes for a term. This has helped to develop subject knowledge and to increase teacher confidence. Work in books is well presented, reflecting a good attitude to the subject.

133 Co-ordination of the subject is good. Religious education has a high profile and displays and resources are of a high quality. Artefacts from four major religions including Christianity are very attractively displayed in permanent positions beneath very informative displays. Children's work, photographs and information are often read and admired by visitors, parents and children. The children's work is changed at regular intervals. Teachers have worked hard to find out more about the religions and their confidence has increased. The present Agreed Syllabus is under review and formal assessment procedures are awaiting the new syllabus. At present assessment is carried out informally by class teachers.

134 Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.