

INSPECTION REPORT

BLACKMOOR PARK INFANTS SCHOOL

West Derby, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104592

Headteacher: Mrs E A Staddon

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 4th-7th February 2002

Inspection number: 221384
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:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	45/65 Leyfield Road West Derby Liverpool
Postcode:	L12 9EY
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Killeen
Date of previous inspection:	January, 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E. Jackson	Registered Inspector	Special educational needs; English as an additional language; English; Geography; History; French.	What sort of school is it school? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught; How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
A09593	B. Sinclair	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?
29504	S. Herring	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; mathematics; art and design; design and technology; music.	
17767	S. Power	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity; science; information and communication technology; physical education; religious education.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment of pupils' progress.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Blackmoor Park Infants is a large school for its type, with 303 pupils on roll. There is a 30 place nursery, with separate morning and afternoon groups. There are more boys than girls, and the Year 1 classes have 55 boys and only 38 girls. There are 17 pupils from minority ethnic groups, most of Chinese heritage. Thirteen of these pupils learn English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. There are 35 pupils on the school's register of those with special needs, one of whom has a statement of special needs. These needs vary from minor learning difficulties to emotional and behavioural needs, and physical needs such as hearing impairment and dietary concerns. Attainment at entry is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Blackmoor Park Infants is an improved and improving school. It has recovered from having serious weaknesses in its last report in aspects of leadership and management, and in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1. It maintains high standards by the end of Year 2, because the teaching and learning are good. Results in national tests at seven are now well above the national average, and well above those in schools in similar circumstances. The staff create a good atmosphere for learning, and the pupils respond very well to this by working hard and behaving well. The school provides rich learning experiences, so that all pupils enjoy coming to school. The parents think well of the school, but a number of them are rightly critical of the way they are sometimes dealt with when they approach the headteacher with concerns or complaints. Leadership and management by the headteacher, the Governing Body, and key staff are now satisfactory, although the headteacher and governors do not yet provide clear enough direction to the school's work and development. The school gives good value for money, because it uses average funding to provide high standards of attainment and good teaching, ensuring that the pupils make good progress in their learning, have very good attitudes to their work, and behave very well.

What the school does well

- It maintains high standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics, and in teachers' assessments of science, which compare very well with results in similar schools.
- It provides a good quality of education for children in the nursery and Reception classes.
- The teaching and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work-rate, leading to their having very good attitudes to learning and behaving very well.
- The quality of teaching is good, based on very good relationships between staff and pupils, leading to good progress in pupils' learning.
- The school provides good learning opportunities for all its pupils, enriched by such activities as French and drama.
- It promotes pupils' personal development well, with strong development of their moral understanding.

What could be improved

- The effective use of information gained by the headteacher and governors through their evaluation of the school's work to provide clear educational guidance for its further development.
- The clarity and implementation of role descriptions for all staff, including an understanding of how these roles combine to deliver efficient school management.
- The school's relationship with parents.
- The use of the computer suite.

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 January 2000, when it was found to have serious weaknesses in teaching, and in leadership and management. Good improvements have been made in a number of

areas since then, and it no longer has serious weaknesses. This is because the headteacher and the chair of governors have worked closely and in most cases effectively with local education authority staff to make important changes. Although there were three temporary teachers during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved from being unsatisfactory to being good in all year groups. A new and potentially influential deputy headteacher has been appointed recently, and the Governing Body is now established and working effectively. This has helped to improve management and leadership so that it is now satisfactory. Other key improvements include the number of pupils achieving high levels by the end of Year 2, wider learning opportunities, including in ICT, and improved subject information to help teachers plan their lessons. There have been good improvements in the standards attained, and in pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour. Staff are now more involved in development planning, and subject co-ordinators take a more active role in overseeing standards and teaching. However, there are significant areas of improvement in management that still need attention. Chief amongst these are the requirements to provide clear direction for the school's development, and to work more closely with parents.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	B	A	A	A
Writing	B	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Attainment at entry to the reception classes is broadly average. Due to the good teaching and progress in learning, by the end of the Reception year the children attain above average levels for their age in language and mathematical development, and in personal, social, emotional and creative development. They attain average levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical development. Good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, so that by seven pupils attain well above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics in national tests. The improving trend in the school's results is above the national trend. The number of pupils achieving above average levels is much improved in the last two years. Although the school is not obliged to set targets for improvement, it does so. These are demanding year-on-year, and have been achieved. Pupils attain above average levels in art and design, geography and religious education. They attain as expected in the other subjects, although there are weaknesses in skill development in design and technology. Pupils also attain well in oral French for their age. Pupils with special needs make similar progress to their peers, as do those learning English as an additional language. In general, pupils achieve levels above those that might be expected, based on their attainment at entry to the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, and to all the school's activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well: their calm, well-controlled acceptance of wet weather preventing outside play reflected their response to the school's high expectations of them.
Personal development and relationships	The staff foster very good relationships, and the pupils respond very well. Personal development is good, although there are insufficient opportunities for independent learning.

Attendance	Below average, and improved since the last inspection: systems to promote better attendance are in place, but the parents' response is variable year-on-year.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly to be at least satisfactory in all 57 lessons seen. It was good or better in two thirds of these lessons, and very good in almost one in five. In the nursery and Reception classes, the children have good opportunities to experience all the areas of learning recommended in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well across the school, so that pupils make good progress in acquiring and using them. In Years 1 and 2 literacy skills are reinforced well in other subjects such as science and geography, and numeracy skills are satisfactorily promoted. The teaching of science, information and communications technology (ICT), art and design, physical education and religious education is good. In most lessons the good relationships established give all pupils confidence to answer the teachers' questions and to attempt the tasks prepared for them. There are insufficient opportunities, however, for pupils to decide for themselves how they might solve problems, or take the initiative in their own learning. Those teachers on temporary contracts made a good contribution to the pupils' learning during the inspection. Support staff also support pupils' learning well in the main, including those pupils with special needs, or learning English as an additional language. Occasionally, support staff are not deployed effectively during whole class work in literacy and numeracy lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The learning opportunities provided are broad and varied, and the curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. It is enriched by such activities as French, drama, and tennis.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: it is good for pupils withdrawn for extra support by the special needs co-ordinator. Support for pupils with special needs is less effective in lessons other than literacy and numeracy, however.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Those few pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support, particularly that given by a bilingual teaching assistant to pupils of Chinese heritage. Occasionally, some of these pupils are grouped inappropriately for extra language support with pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: it is very good for pupils' moral development. There are good opportunities for pupils to grow in understanding of themselves and others, and to work in varied social groups and settings.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Health and safety and general care procedures are good. The assessment of pupils' progress and the use of the information gained to plan new work for them are satisfactory.

A significant group of parents feels that the school does not work hard enough to involve them. New initiatives to improve this situation have begun recently, such as seeking 'Investors in People' status.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: all the staff work hard to maintain the high educational climate. Further improvements are needed in determining clear direction for the school's work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory: all statutory requirements are fulfilled, and governors have overseen good improvements since the last inspection. They do not yet provide sufficiently effective evaluation of the management of the school, however.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Improved to be satisfactory overall, and good in the evaluation of teaching and pupils' standards of attainment. Results of monitoring are not used with enough determination to set development priorities.
The strategic use of resources	Staff and learning resources are generally used effectively. The school's finances are generally deployed to meet agreed priorities.

Above average number of teaching and support staff to meet the pupils' needs. The accommodation has been improved, although the library and ICT suite are very small. The playground is oddly shaped and poorly surfaced. The school has begun to compare its results with other similar schools, and to check that its resources are purchased astutely and used effectively for their purpose. However, they have only recently begun to consult parents and pupils for their views on the school's provision.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school, and it has high expectations for them. • That the teaching is good and leads to good progress in learning for their children. • That behaviour is good. • That children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The headteacher's approachability. • How closely the school works with them. • The range of activities provided outside lessons.

The inspection results support the parents' positive views of the outcomes of the school's work on behalf of their children. Inspection findings are that the information provided is satisfactory, as is the range of activities outside lessons. However, the inspection findings in part support some parents' concerns about the headteachers' approachability, and about the closeness of the school's links with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. After the last inspection, in January 2000, the school needed to raise the number of pupils achieving higher than expected levels by age seven in speaking and listening, reading and science, and to raise standards in general in ICT. This has been achieved. Indeed, in reading the school's results are now well above the national average in national tests, and well above average when compared to those in schools in similar circumstances based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. Drama classes taken by a skilled teacher have also been effective in improving the pupils' confidence in listening carefully to others, and in speaking out in front of a group, so that standards in speaking and listening are above average.
2. In the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics in 2001, the school's results were the highest achieved so far, well above the national average, and well above the average in similar schools. Based on teacher assessments, the results in science were in the highest five per cent nationally. However, pupils need more opportunities to plan and carry out practical scientific experiments and investigations. The number of Year 2 pupils achieving higher than the expected Level 2 is well above average currently in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. It is above average in writing. However, in all except mathematics, fewer Year 2 pupils are on track to reach the above average Level 3 than last year's average. As the pupils enter the Reception class with average levels of attainment in general, these levels of attainment represent good achievement for the current Year 2 pupils since entry to the school.
3. Children achieve well in the nursery through good teaching and careful monitoring of their progress. The standard assessments administered by the staff towards the end of the Reception year, together with inspection evidence, indicate that pupils are likely to exceed the nationally expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical development and creative development by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils are likely to reach the expected level in their knowledge and understanding of the world. This also represents good progress in these classes, and across the Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. Those children with special educational needs are identified early and make good progress alongside their peers. Children learning English as an additional language also achieve well through the good level of individual support from staff.
4. The achievement of pupils with special needs is generally satisfactory. They make steady progress towards the targets set for them, particularly when supported by the teacher who manages this aspect of the school's work. Pupils in both Year 1 and Year 2 are withdrawn in groups during literacy and numeracy sessions for specific support. This is generally well-planned to follow the same pattern of learning as that for the rest of their class. The best work takes place in withdrawal sessions led by the special needs co-ordinator, and in group early literacy sessions led by specially trained support staff. A large group of pupils with special needs in Year 1 works in the library with a support teacher during some sessions, but the group is too large for the teacher to provide effective support in the small space available.
5. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language are involved in all the school's activities. In general they achieve well in all their lessons. A

Chinese-English bilingual support worker helps many of these pupils to develop their language skills effectively. This was very effective, for example, when she translated from the book of a boy of Chinese heritage the English phrase, 'Look out!', into Cantonese, so that he could read the English phrase with good expression, which he then did. However, some of these pupils are withdrawn from some lessons for extra help alongside pupils with special educational needs. This is not appropriate unless they also have special needs beyond their need for support in learning English. One Year 2 girl, for example, learning English but without special needs, worked in a withdrawal group for pupils with special needs. She coped very well with the mathematics tasks, making progress at a rapid pace, far speedier than the rest of the group who needed more time and practice to secure their learning.

6. Standards in literacy and numeracy are high, and reflect the concentration the school places on teaching them. The last inspection report found that this often had a detrimental effect on pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects. There has been an improvement since then, so that the balance between subjects allows pupils sufficient time to reach at least satisfactory levels across the curriculum, and to achieve well in art and design, geography, and RE.
7. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average currently for pupils in Year 2. Almost all of them are engaged in tasks and activities at the levels expected, and about twenty-five per cent at above average levels. They listen well to their teachers and each other, helped by such activities as drama sessions with a professionally trained teacher. In discussions at the beginning and end of lessons, they are increasingly confident in stating their views and opinions. They read a variety of texts with good concentration on the meaning, particularly when finding out information. Because the staff focus on developing the pupils' skills in sounding letters and building up letter and sound patterns, the pupils often know how to work out how to read unfamiliar words for themselves. Most of them use their knowledge of the alphabet successfully in finding words in a dictionary, although some higher attaining pupils have not been shown how to speed up their search. Almost all pupils use the contents page of non-fiction texts well, and some use the index effectively. Most of them read regularly at home, although the quality of the books they take home is unsatisfactory. Year 2 pupils have not used the school library since September, and see it as a place where younger pupils go for extra reading help. This is unsatisfactory, and results in their book search and retrieval skills being underdeveloped. Pupils write for a number of purposes, including writing letters, retelling stories, making up poetry, and composing lists, titles and captions, sometimes using ICT. Most of them write in complete sentences when required, and higher attainers include good character descriptions in their stories, such as in retelling 'Cinderella'. Spelling is about average, although is often careless. Handwriting improves in Year 2, and most pupils write with reasonable style and fluency, although the staff do not remind the pupils sufficiently about correct pencil grip and posture when they write. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively in other subjects such as history, geography and RE.
8. In mathematics, by age seven, most pupils have a good understanding of place value to a hundred. Higher attaining pupils are confident in using numbers to a thousand. Attainment is well above average, and all pupils in Year 2 are working at least at the expected level with nearly half working beyond the average. They gain a good understanding of the meaning of multiplication tables, and link this well to number patterns on a 100 square. Lower attaining pupils learn to double through counting the number of wheels on sets of bicycles, and the good use of counters and bricks helps pupils to work out different ways of making 12. The vast majority reach the level expected in their understanding of shape, space and measures, though few of them

exceed this average level. Most pupils tell the time accurately using o'clock and half past and solve simple time problems. They measure competently in centimetres, but there is little evidence of weighing or measuring capacity. Most pupils correctly identify and describe simple two-dimensional shapes but many have difficulty in naming three-dimensional shapes or in identifying their properties. They have a sound understanding of right angles through programming a floor robot to perform quarter, half and full turns.

9. In science, by the end of Year 2, the pupils have good understanding of how humans grow, and seasonal change and its effects on growing plants. They use the appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe which materials are suitable for different purposes, such as glass for windows, bricks for walls, and different fabrics for clothes. They show very good levels of understanding about the changes they observe in heating such things as chocolate or bread, and record their observations well. In their scientific investigations, they make predictions about what they think will happen but are not often asked by staff to explain their predictions. However, their understanding of fair testing is not sufficiently well developed.
10. Standards in art and design are above the expected level by the end of Year 2, maintaining the high standards identified in the last inspection. Pupils achieve well through the systematic teaching of skills and through the good opportunities to experiment with colour and materials from the earliest age. Standards in ICT are much improved since the time of the last inspection and are now in line with those expected for the ages of the pupils. Pupils at all levels of ability make satisfactory progress in developing their skills but the small size of the computer suite impedes their progress, and pupils do not use ICT sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum. Standards in RE exceed the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and are better than at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2, the pupils show a good understanding of the basic beliefs and traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism.
11. In geography, pupils' standards of attainment are above average, and Year 2 pupils not only know the countries of the British isles and their capital cities, but point out all the continents accurately on a world map, and locate the village they are studying on a map of Mexico. Standards are as expected in history, and some pupils retell the life stories of such famous people as Helen Keller well. In one class, pupils have made a good study of the Second World War, and their writing evokes some of the characteristics of the period well for their age. In music and PE, pupils achieve average standards. Standards in DT have improved to be average, although there is no systematic development of pupils' skills in designing and making models and artefacts.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Since the last inspection, the school has consistently provided a learning environment that enables pupils to benefit from sustained concentration and interest in their work. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into the routines of school life because of the good induction procedures that are in place. All adults within the school seek every opportunity to increase and develop the pupils' social skills. The large majority of them listen attentively to their teachers and carry out work and tasks purposefully. They try hard and seek constantly to improve. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take initiative in deciding for themselves what they wish to find out, or how to solve problems in their own way.

13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around all areas of the school is very good. They settle into their morning and afternoon sessions in a bright, lively but orderly manner. They behave very well during lunchtimes and playtimes, and show high levels of care and concern for each other. They are developing good social skills and enjoy talking about their work and interests, with many showing a high level of articulate speech and a widely developed vocabulary. Most parents expressed the view that they had no concerns about the behaviour of pupils and if, on rare occasions, incidents of unacceptable behaviour occur, they are dealt with quickly and sensitively by the staff.
14. Pupils' personal development is good. The mutual respect between pupils and adults supports this personal development effectively and consistently. The pupils show enjoyment and enthusiasm for the routines of their daily school life, such as collecting and distributing fruit and milk during breaks. However, although the pupils accept such responsibilities willingly, they have limited opportunities at present to use their initiative. Pupils are made to feel valued and their achievements, both in and out of the school, are acknowledged and celebrated on a regular basis in class and whole-school assemblies. There have been two exclusions within the last year. There are seldom exclusions, but in this case the school took appropriate action to ensure other pupils' safety.
15. The attendance rates have improved from well below to just below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absences is below the national average. Since the last inspection the school has instigated and tried diligently to maintain effective systems of monitoring the attendance rates. The headteacher acknowledges that this is an area for further development. Registration periods are carried out in a pleasant and purposeful manner and all lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school, founded in the whole staff's expectations that the pupils will work hard and behave well. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when teaching and learning in Year 2 in particular were unsatisfactory. The shared teaching in the nursery provides a good start for those children who transfer to the Reception classes. In Reception, the children continue to make good progress in their learning in most areas of experience, because the teaching is good. This good teaching continues in Year 1, and is strongest in Year 2, where children make rapid progress in a number of areas of learning. Homework is usually based on reading and number work, and supports pupils' learning effectively. However, the quality of the home reading books is often unsatisfactory.
17. The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with successfully in the main. This is in part because there have been significant staff changes, but also because measures are now in place to allow key staff to influence the work of their colleagues across the school. Performance management has been successfully introduced for the headteacher and other staff, and subject leaders monitor the standards of attainment and teaching in their areas of responsibility. This has led to improvements in the use of assessment data, and in teachers' confidence in using and teaching ICT. There are plans for the continued improvement of classroom delivery, and staff make better use of assessment data in planning further learning for the pupils.
18. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are generally well supported, particularly by the bilingual support worker. Occasionally, some of them are inappropriately withdrawn from class lessons to work with pupils with learning

difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs are included in the full curriculum. In class lessons, the teachers often give them specific support and tailor the tasks and activities to help them make appropriate progress. When they are withdrawn from English and mathematics lessons, they make better progress when working with the special needs co-ordinator than in the group led by a support teacher working in the library.

19. The quality of teaching is good overall in the Nursery and Reception classes, with examples of very good teaching in the morning sessions and in the Reception class taught by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. Relationships are strong and supportive, led well by the co-ordinator, and the strong teamwork is effective in ensuring that the children make good progress. In the very good lessons, teachers used their knowledge of how young children learn to provide a range of interesting, first hand experiences which excite and interest the children, motivating them to work hard and make good progress in their learning. Occasionally, however, the pace of lessons is too slow and children are insufficiently engaged in active learning. In one Reception class, for example, the teacher's management of children's activities and behaviour allows a high noise level that disturbs many children's concentration. Teachers plan to cover all the Foundation Stage curriculum areas of learning and support staff are suitably deployed, enabling them to give the children good support. There is a good balance between direct teaching and allowing the children the freedom to learn through play. Nursery Nurse students in training make a good contribution to the quality of education provided, as do the parents who help in the Nursery.
20. Teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good overall, though it is generally stronger in Year 2. A strong feature of all lessons is in the teachers' good questioning skills, which encourage pupils to think and explain their answers, improving their understanding, particularly in mathematics. In most classes, good routines have been established for the literacy and numeracy sessions. These allow the pupils to work independently, choosing resources for themselves when they need them. In literacy lessons, teachers use very good texts to interest and enthuse the pupils. For example, the teacher used a 'big book' dictionary to illustrate how word meanings are explained. The format was replicated in the pupils' resources, and as they worked, a number referred independently to the model prepared by the teacher. However, the choice of stories for Year 1 and 2 pupils to retell drew heavily during the inspection on the traditional fairy stories of princesses and girls lost in the woods. This narrow range does not appeal equally to all pupils, and more variety is needed to ensure that all pupils, and particularly boys, are motivated to work and learn.
21. An important feature of the teaching and learning is the good relationships fostered by the staff. These give the pupils the confidence to ask for help when needed, and encourage them to try hard without worrying about making mistakes. During one literacy lesson, for example, members of the Liverpool Football Club arrived, bearing the FA and UEFA Cups, and the Charity Shield. After a short but exciting opportunity for pupils to appreciate and be photographed with the trophies, the teacher allowed them sufficient time to talk about the experience and calm down. She then used refocusing techniques skilfully, and because of the strong teaching-learning relationship between her and the pupils, they returned to the original lesson focus with concentration and renewed interest.
22. In the lessons which are less than good, activities are not always well matched to the age and understanding of the pupils. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the problem-solving activity was too abstract and insufficiently practical. The pupils lost interest and concentration, which slowed their progress. Similarly, the work in

pupils' science books shows that there are variations in the quality of teaching across the classes and year groups, including too much reliance on commercial worksheets.

23. In the best science lessons, however, good teaching sets the learning within contexts that have meaning for the pupils, and the lessons include good opportunities for them to develop their scientific enquiry skills. In a lesson about the strength of materials, for example, pupils had to find a suitable material to protect a compact disk, by finding their own ways of testing the different materials' strength. The teacher supported them effectively to decide appropriate criteria for their choices.
24. The staff know their pupils well, and their day-to-day decisions based on their understanding of pupils' progress help them set appropriate tasks to continue their learning. However, the marking of pupils' recorded work is inconsistent. Some teachers make good use of written comments to note pupils' achievement and progress but most marking makes little direct response to the work and does not always say what pupils need to do to improve. Consequently, the pupils and parents do not always have a clear idea what progress is being made in the subject.
25. The quality of teaching in art and design lessons is good, as at the last inspection, with a good emphasis on the direct teaching of skills. Good use is made of sketch-books for pupils to practise and learn different techniques. Sound use is made of ICT to enhance pupils' learning by using a paint program to design Mexican masks for their geography topic. In ICT, the teachers have worked hard in training sessions to be able to support their pupils well in all aspects of the subject. However, most of the teaching of ICT takes place in the computer suite, where there is insufficient room for more than half a class at a time. The school has not yet worked out how best to allow the pupils appropriate access to this resource, and to continue to make good use of the classroom computers. Music lessons are delivered through a programme of taped lessons in order to support staff who are not musicians. Pupils often become restless in these lessons, and many lose interest when the teacher does not intervene to emphasise the musical language and to move the lesson on.
26. All teachers ensure the safety of their pupils in PE lessons, and manage the pupils well. They ensure that the pupils value exercise, and have a good range of activities to strengthen and improve their skills. However, in some lessons, the teachers do not have high enough expectations of the pupils' performance.

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

27. The school provides a good curriculum. It is broad and balanced and emphasises sufficiently the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes is well planned to support the children's progress towards the nationally agreed early learning goals for each area of learning, with appropriate emphasis on personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 and 2, the school provides a good quality curriculum, which provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to make good progress in most areas of the National Curriculum programmes of study. However, in ICT, the opportunities offered to the pupils are restricted by the way in which the computer suite is used. In PE, the curriculum has some imbalance and provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the large apparatus. Design and technology is still a low priority, as it was at the last inspection, although pupils' standards have improved.
28. The school has made considerable improvements to curricular planning since the last inspection but there are still deficiencies in some subjects. The planning systems for

literacy and numeracy work well to provide appropriate breadth and balance to meet all pupils' needs. Although a nominal scheme of work exists for all subjects, the schemes of work in subjects such as science and PE are still not specific enough to ensure that pupils in all classes receive the same opportunities to help them build on previous learning. This is because there is no overview of the whole curriculum structure to ensure that all pupils cover all subjects and skills consistently.

29. Since the last inspection, the school has done a great deal to improve and enrich curricular provision. Drama workshops are of good quality and greatly enhance the pupils' speaking and listening skills. In a dramatic interpretation of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', for example, the pupils learned very effectively how to narrate, and how to vary their voice level and tone to create dramatic effects. The introduction of French lessons throughout the school has had the effect of broadening the pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures. Tennis coaching in Year 2 has extended the breadth of experience provided in games, and has given the pupils access to good quality equipment.
30. The curriculum now places more emphasis on challenging higher attaining pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. The improvement in standards of reading, writing and science, particularly in the number of pupils reaching higher than expected levels, owes much to the improved curriculum provision. At the time of the last inspection, the National Numeracy Strategy was still not satisfactorily implemented. This situation has now been rectified and both the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place. Literacy skills are promoted well in other curriculum areas, but there is still scope for improvement in the promotion of numeracy skills, particularly measurement and data handling, through subjects such as science, design technology and geography. The school makes satisfactory provision for health and drugs education. The policy for sex education has now been completed and submitted to parents for approval, receiving a largely positive response.
31. The committed and hardworking teaching staff give much of their own time to provide the pupils with a good programme of extra-curricular activities which appropriately complement learning in lessons. These activities are planned in response to the interests of the pupils and provide an appropriate balance of music, science and computer groups. The school goes to great lengths to provide access for all pupils who wish to be involved, creating extra sessions as the need arises.
32. The school extends pupils' learning very effectively through a comprehensive and well-balanced programme of visits. The visits to a Synagogue and St Paul's Roman Catholic Church successfully promote a better understanding of contrasting belief systems. Year 1 pupils visit Alder Hey Children's Hospital 'Well Teddy' clinic; this makes a very strong contribution to their personal and health education. Pupils in Year 2 gain greatly from their visit to the John Moores' University 'PE day' and the whole school's visit to the Formby Squirrel Sanctuary makes a valuable contribution to their awareness of environmental concerns. In addition, the wide range of visitors invited into school gives the pupils a broader social and cultural view of their world. These have included police and fire personnel, railway safety promotion and a puppet theatre group.
33. The links with other schools in the area are productive in supporting the pupils' personal and social development. A satisfactory relationship exists with the junior school and this ensures that transition from Year 2 to Year 3 is as smooth as possible for the pupils. Good links have been developed between the special needs co-ordinators from the two schools and this facilitates the effective transmission of

information about pupils. The good links that exist with local secondary schools contribute well in areas such as sport and culture.

34. The school is successful in implementing the governors' policy for equality of opportunity. All pupils, regardless of gender, race, ability or background, have equal access to the curriculum, although full access to ICT still needs careful monitoring to ensure that all pupils have opportunities for direct access to computers. In lessons, teachers are particularly sensitive to equal opportunities issues. For example, in question and answer sessions they ensure that all pupils have opportunities to make a contribution, and are particularly careful to ensure that both boys and girls are equally involved in lessons. Pupils for whom English is not the home language are given good opportunities to share their ideas and the needs of pupils with special needs are taken into account.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. This is provided through personal, social and health education lessons, and through subjects such as science, healthy eating and religious education. The school handles the subjects of sex and drugs' awareness sensitively and within a moral and social framework appropriate to the level of the children's maturity. Assemblies and incidental opportunities that arise during the course of the day enhance and reinforce pupils' personal development. The school has continued to work hard with some success since the last inspection to improve the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly provision for moral development, which is very good. Pupils' spiritual development is very effectively promoted through assemblies, and some lessons, most notably English, science, music, PE and RE. There are good opportunities in lessons and assemblies for pupils to focus and reflect upon aspects of their own lives and those of others, and to consider things that are special to them. Pupils show very good levels of respect in collective acts of worship, and join in the singing of hymns and the recitation of prayers with thought and sincerity. A particularly sensitive occasion was observed when pupils were invited by their class teacher to choose the theme for the prayers and explain why these were important to them.
37. Pupils' social and moral development is successfully promoted in a number of ways. The school has a clearly stated code of behaviour that provides a useful framework to guide pupils' actions. Most pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong, and occasional instances of unacceptable behaviour are handled in a firm but understanding manner: pupils are encouraged by the staff to acknowledge the consequence of their actions. Pupils in Year 2 are expected to look after younger pupils, and they generally respond very well.
38. The school successfully raises pupils' self esteem and this pride in achievement is evident when pupils receive either individual or class merit awards during assemblies. Pupils take responsibility from an early age in performing small tasks around the school, such as returning the registers to the office. Pupils support a wide range of charities and learn the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves.
39. Provision for cultural development is steadily improving. The school is aware of the need to prepare the pupils for life in a multicultural society, and every opportunity is used effectively during lessons to make pupils aware of cultural diversity. The school ensures that there are displays and artefacts available in classes and communal

areas. A particularly attractive display of multicultural development was illustrated by the wishing of a Happy New Year to pupils in a wide range of languages including French, Urdu, Chinese and Hebrew. The curriculum is extended to incorporate some very good examples of teaching pupils French, and learning dramatic techniques such as how to create sound effects and effective narration.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. This is a very caring and supportive school where pupils' development is nurtured in a positive manner. There is a strong, positive ethos of care throughout the school. It is a high priority with all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, that pupils are known and valued as important individuals. These levels of care and guidance have been maintained and, in some instances, improved since the time of the last inspection.
41. Good arrangements are in place for child protection. The named teacher responsible undertakes this role in a professional, dedicated and sensitive manner. Clear systems are in place and all staff understand the procedures to be adopted as required. Regular health and safety audits are carried out throughout the year. Two members of staff hold first aid certificates which are updated on a regular basis. There is an appropriate, active and well documented procedure for contacting parents and carers in the event of accidents or pupils becoming unwell whilst at school. This was put into action smoothly and effectively during the inspection.
42. Pupils' personal development is monitored satisfactorily on an informal basis, as teachers know their pupils well. However, the school does not have formal measures in place for monitoring and tracking pupils' personal development, unless their behaviour or attitudes are a cause for concern, in which case they are carefully monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and teachers make very good use of praise and sanctions in class. Pupils respond well to the system of merit points which are awarded for achievement, good behaviour or acts of kindness to others. The school's system of rewards and sanctions is used consistently in all classes. This means that pupils know exactly what is expected of them, and what constitutes preferred or unacceptable behaviour.
43. The school provides good general levels of support for pupils with special educational needs, although targets in some individual education plans are not sufficiently precise, and this sometimes makes it difficult for teachers to match work closely to pupils' individual needs.
44. The school's overall rate of attendance is below the national average. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory, and have led to improved attendance levels since the last inspection. The school is aware of the fluctuating rates of attendance and is treating this aspect of school life seriously.
45. Satisfactory procedures are in place for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress. The arrangements for assessment in the nursery and reception classes, and in the key areas of literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2, are good. A carefully planned programme of statutory and non-statutory testing yields useful information about the effectiveness of curriculum provision and the progress made by individual pupils and groups. The results of statutory testing in English and mathematics are analysed carefully and used to set whole school targets and to make adjustments to the curriculum. However, there is scope for further improvement in the way assessment information is used, particularly in providing for pupils of lower ability.

The school has recently begun to use individual target setting in reading, writing and mathematics. Although these targets are shared with parents, they are not yet consistently shared with the pupils. This reduces the impact of the targets as the pupils do not have sufficient understanding of what they need to do to move forward. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' marking is effective in recognising what pupils have achieved, but is less consistent in identifying areas for improvement and setting new challenges. In the core subjects, good use is made of information gathered from the lesson evaluations to inform the next stage of teaching and learning, but its use is inconsistent in other subjects.

46. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has recently begun to explore the use of a computerised tracking system in order to monitor the progress of individuals more efficiently. There are satisfactory systems in place in some of the other subjects, notably science and information communication technology. However, there is scope for strengthening the current arrangements for recording pupils' progress in the other subjects of the curriculum, where arrangements are not sufficiently systematic at present.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Overall, the partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory, and improved since the last inspection. Parents expressed their appreciation of the standards reached by pupils and the progress that is made. Views expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire, at the meeting held prior to the inspection and discussions with parents during the inspection all support the view that there is a high level of appreciation for the dedication and effort shown by the teaching staff and support staff. However, many parents feel that whilst class teachers are easy to approach at any time, the headteacher is less approachable or accessible to them. This was investigated thoroughly by the inspection team and their findings support the views of those parents who feel that they are not listened to. This is an area that has still not been fully addressed since the last inspection.
48. Parents' involvement in their children's education is satisfactory, and there are instances where this has a positive impact on their attainment and learning. Many parents help in classrooms throughout the school and provide valuable support. Class teachers appreciate this commitment and parents confirm that they are well guided and supported in their efforts, and feel confident in the work they undertake. Many have undertaken 'Parents as Educator' courses within the school. These are popular and well organised. Parents feel that these courses help them in the work they carry out in school and at home with their children.
49. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. The school keeps them informed of activities, news and general information by means of regular newsletters. The governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements. Meetings for parents are held twice during the academic year and provide the opportunity to discuss their child's progress. The end-of-year reports offer basic factual information on pupils' progress. However, some of the comments are very general and could be improved to reflect individual children's progress more specifically and include targets for improvement.
50. There is a home-school agreement in place, which has been accepted by the majority of parents. A high proportion of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting held to discuss their views of the school felt that the school provided a satisfactory level of homework, although a small number of

parents voiced the opinion that they would appreciate more guidance about how to support their children at home.

51. There is a very good Parents' Council which has only recently been formed and to date has held three meetings. However, the Council has been extremely active and productive, and has established a valuable resource for the future in linking the concerns and requirements that parents present to the school. It is intended that these will all be given equal consideration and prioritised for discussion at each meeting. The results and actions will be published, in the initial stages, by means of an information from the Council sheet to all parents. This will eventually involve information technology in the access network for parents who may wish to gain updated information by means of the school's website. The parents on the Council and the headteacher have done well to take this positive lead to improve their mutual understanding of important issues.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The school had serious weaknesses in leadership and management at the time of the last report in 2000. There were five key issues for improvement overall, and four minor points for governors to consider. In the issue for management and leadership, nine separate points for improvement were given, and additionally to fully institute the new Governing Body, separate from the junior school, which had not been constituted at the time of the inspection.
53. The school no longer has serious weaknesses in leadership and management, which are now satisfactory. Many of the areas identified previously have improved to be at least satisfactory, and some of them are now good. The headteacher and the Chair of Governors have worked closely with a local authority Project Group, which includes the school's adviser, to implement often difficult changes to deal with the serious weaknesses described in the last inspection report. This has been effective, and may still have a useful role to play in overseeing the continuing improvement in overall leadership in the school.
54. There are strengths in the management of the school:
- in the way that its aims and values shine through in the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and achievements, based on the good quality of education provided;
 - in the governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, particularly through its experienced chair;
 - in the recently reformed senior management team, including a newly appointed deputy headteacher, and the shared commitment of the whole staff team to improvement and development;
 - in the strength of the teaching and support staff;
 - in using financial resources to support determined priorities.
55. The whole staff deserve credit for the improvements in management recognised here, and in particular the headteacher and governors who have overseen and implemented them.
56. However, there are still weaknesses in leadership in the headteacher's and governors' strategic planning, and in the school's relationships with parents. Whole school development planning has improved since the last inspection. It includes appropriate priorities for the maintenance and sharing of good practice, and further improvements in standards and quality, particularly in subject action plans. It is not

yet sufficiently clear and focused, however, so that governors can monitor and evaluate progress towards the key objectives, or keep a perspective on the general direction the school wishes to take. There is insufficient reference to the previous year's plans, and what has been achieved or remains to be done. There is also no clear statement of the main priorities to be implemented, nor of the future aims and direction of development and improvement.

57. Two good initiatives have been instituted to develop the school's relationship with parents further: an application for Investors in People status has been submitted, and a Parents' Council with representatives from each class group has recently been formed. These have the potential to reform the view amongst many parents that the Headteacher is unapproachable, and does not listen carefully to their comments or complaints. Whilst most parents find the staff friendly and open, a substantial number of parents currently echo the feelings expressed at the time of the last inspection that the head will not accept criticism from them, nor deal with their concerns in a constructive manner. This was an area for improvement from that inspection which has not been fully dealt with.
58. There have been significant staff absences in the last two years, and there are currently two key members of staff on long-term absence due to illness. This pattern of absence has undoubtedly had an effect on the school, although the replacement temporary staff performed their duties well during the inspection.
59. The school is managed well to provide a good quality of education for its pupils. The whole staff team works hard and effectively to maintain the efficiency of the working day, and to ensure that all the pupils receive their educational entitlement. Those teachers with management responsibilities perform their duties well, keeping themselves and their colleagues up-to-date, and monitoring standards and teaching in their subjects. This is improved since the last inspection, but is not yet consistent. This is because role descriptions are not sufficiently focused, and it is not always clear who is responsible for the overview of different aspects of the school's work. The staffing structure based on clear and agreed role descriptions still needs to be reviewed and clarified, in order that the key responsibilities for monitoring and improving teaching and learning are unequivocal.
60. There is a recently appointed deputy headteacher, who is currently establishing herself with pupils, parents and staff. The governors have high expectations of her effect on school improvement, but it is not yet sufficiently set out how this will operate in practice. She has made a good impact already on staff morale because of her lively manner and approachability. There is also a newly appointed special needs co-ordinator, who has begun to take stock of her role effectively. She is due to attend training this term, and here she should be guided into making good decisions on behalf of the pupils and their parents in this important area. Her action plan is good, as she intends to use the training to update school policy and practice for special needs.
61. The teachers plan the curriculum for the pupils together in Year teams, led well by Year team leaders. Support staff are kept well-informed through this process of the tasks and activities that they will undertake to support different pupils. Staff new to the school receive effective help to induct them into its expectations and practices, although the staff handbook requires improvements to make it effective. The informal communication system amongst staff works well to keep everyone informed of day-to-day events and developments. There are also recent improvements to the recording of decisions taken at different staff and management meetings. However, it is not always clear how information from the Year team meetings will affect senior

management team decisions, or how whole staff meetings have an impact on the formation of development plans. This requires clarification in order that leadership has direct and measurable impact on the direction of the school's work, and the quality of education offered.

62. The governors are fully aware of the need to implement the four principles of best value. They compare themselves with other similar schools through close analysis of the pupils' attainment, and are keen to maintain and improve the positive view of the school locally. They seek the best services to give value for money when making spending decisions, and ask the staff to respond to the challenge of maintaining and raising standards, both in attainment and in the quality of education offered. They have not yet fully developed systems to consult parents about the school's work, but key initiatives are underway to promote this. Financial planning and control are generally efficient, and funds are satisfactorily directed to the appointed areas of the school's work. In the last audit by the local authority, it was recommended that an asset management register be maintained, and regularly checked. The school has gone some way to putting this in place, but further improvements are needed in keeping it up-to-date, and in making regular checks.
63. The accommodation is satisfactory overall for the delivery of the curriculum. Most classrooms are of adequate size for the current needs, although in such areas as the Computer Suite, there are cramped conditions and ventilation is poor.
64. The school is welcoming and examples of pupils' work are attractively displayed. The hall is used effectively for assemblies, physical education and as a dining room. The library and Information Technology resources are not used effectively to develop pupils research skills. The playground, despite its poor surface, is used well for outdoor play by the Foundation Stage pupils but is only just adequate for the whole school during breaktimes. There is a grassed area adjoining the playground but it is understood that pupils are not allowed to use this for play, even in times of better weather.
65. The standards of caretaking and cleaning throughout the school are very good and standards of cleanliness are maintained consistently throughout the day. These contribute to the high standards expected of all staff and pupils.
66. Resources for all subjects are adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school has ensured that the Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been well resourced. However, books throughout the school are poorly stored and many are old and in poor condition, particularly in the home reading stock. The library is well-stocked, and the school has a new agreement to extend these resources through block book loans from a library service. However, the library is not used sufficiently by Year 2 pupils. There is insufficient use of ICT resources across the curriculum. There was very little use made of classroom-based computers during the inspection week. The work on classroom computers and in the suite does not have sufficiently strong links to classroom work. When there are clear links between ICT and other subjects, the learning is more effective.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to continue to raise pupils' standards of attainment and the overall quality of education offered by the school, the headteacher, governors and staff, continuing to work with the local authority, should:
1. a. set out an achievable development plan for the next year to include those priorities agreed by the staff and governors, in consultation with the parents and pupils;
b. outline plans for the foreseeable future for developments that take account of the governor's reasonable long-term projections for the school.
(Paragraphs 56, 59, 62)
 2. Agree with all staff who have subject or other responsibility in the school:
 - a. an acceptable description of their roles and responsibilities;
 - b. an effective system for school development planning that includes consultation and discussion with all those who legitimately have a part in the process;
 - c. planned opportunities for senior staff to oversee the work of the school, in order to provide staff, governors, parents and pupils with clear targets to steer the educational direction of the school along the path outlined in the school development plan.
(Paragraph 28, 59, 61, 83, 103, 123, 132)
 3. a. hold the headteacher accountable for the health of the school's relationship with parents.
b. support the headteacher in developing effective working relationships with parents by such means as further professional training and the guidance of the local education authority;
c. ensure that the newly instituted Parents' Council represents the whole of the parent body as a consultative and planning group, to inform the governors and staff of parents' views about the school and possible improvements and developments, in consultation with parent governors;
(Paragraph 24, 47, 56, 57, 62)
 4. Ensure that the ICT suite is used efficiently and that computers throughout the school are used to support learning in all subjects.
(Paragraph 66, 90, 94, 117, 119, 121)

In addition, governors may also wish to consider these further minor issues:

Creating further opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning, so that they are more involved in deciding how to tackle problems, and in choosing the resources they need to do this for themselves.
(Paragraph 2, 19, 22, 97, 99, 101)

Improve home reading books, and resources for design technology.
(Paragraph 7, 16, 87, 111)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	29	18	0	0	0
Percentage	0	14	53	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	273
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	28

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	49	41	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	45	49
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	87	86	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	96 (94)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	49	49
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	87	90	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	100 (99)	100 (99)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	7
White	0
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	3	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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22:1
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	647,816
Total expenditure	640,328
Expenditure per pupil	2,164
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,968
Balance carried forward to next year	28,456

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	303
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	29	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	39	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	12	1	9
The teaching is good.	65	30	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	39	13	10	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	17	9	12	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	30	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	35	38	13	13	1
The school is well led and managed.	48	29	4	14	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	32	4	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	16	26	16	22

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

68. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage, maintaining the high standards identified in the last inspection. 60 children attend the Nursery part-time, either in the morning or afternoon. Children are gradually admitted in small groups during the September of the year in which they become four, enabling them to receive a high level of support and encouragement to settle quickly into Nursery routines. Children spend three terms in the Nursery before starting full-time in one of the three Reception classes, in the September before their fifth birthday. There are a total of 90 children in the Reception year, with some children joining the school having attended other Nursery settings. Nursery children and their parents are invited to visit Reception for a morning in the summer term. However, it is hoped that there will be more opportunities for Nursery children to become familiar with the Reception as these two years are now planned as the Foundation Stage.
69. The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching seen in the morning nursery and in the Reception class of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. Throughout the Foundation Stage, relationships are strong and supportive. The strong teamwork between teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants, and the good leadership of the co-ordinator makes the best use of everyone's skills to help children's progress. Where teaching is very good, the teacher uses her knowledge of how young children learn to provide a range of interesting, first hand experiences which are clearly focused and enthuse children to learn. When teaching is less than good, the pace of lessons is too slow and children are insufficiently engaged in active learning. In one Reception class, the management of children falls short of that in other classes and the high noise level hinders children's concentration. Teachers plan well together to cover all areas of learning and support staff are suitably deployed and briefed, enabling them to give good support. There is a good balance between direct teaching and the freedom to learn through play. A good contribution is made by the high number of Nursery Nurse students, and also by the parents who now help in the Nursery. Resources are satisfactory and well used, with good improvement in the provision of large outdoor equipment, leading to an improvement in the quality of learning in this area. However, some equipment, such as the large wooden bricks in the Nursery, is past its best and needs replacing. The Foundation Stage does not have its own budget allocation to plan for the replacement of such large equipment.
70. The majority of children enter the Nursery with skills which are average for children of this age. Through good teaching during the short sessions in the Nursery and careful monitoring of their progress, children achieve well. School assessments at the beginning of the Reception year show that attainment is as expected for their age. The standard assessments together with inspection evidence indicate that pupils are likely to exceed the expected Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical development and creative development by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils are likely to reach the expected level in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
71. Children with special educational needs are identified early and make good progress alongside their peers. They are fully included in all areas of learning and are well supported in small groups. Those children who are learning English as an additional language achieve well through the good level of individual support from staff and the good use of demonstration to help understanding.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

72. Teaching is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and reflects the considerable emphasis rightly placed on this area. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted through all aspects of school life. Good social skills are developed in snack time as children take turns to pass the fruit round and are expected to say please and thank you. Nursery routines are well established and children respond well to the high expectations of tidying up equipment when they have finished and of sitting on the carpet when it is time to come together. Adults treat the children with care and respect and this provides a good example for the children, who co-operate well in shared activities. This is seen in the outdoor play area as children pedal together when sharing a tandem. When teaching is very good, such as in a music and movement lesson in the hall, the excitement and pleasure generated by the well-structured session promotes very good attitudes to school and to learning. Children are made well aware of what is expected and the Nursery rules displayed on the wall are applied consistently by all staff, giving children a sense of security. Judicious use of praise builds up self-confidence, and success in activities such as tying shoe laces is acknowledged on a chart. Discipline is gentle but firm and the calm purposeful atmosphere fosters a good level of concentration in all areas.
73. In Reception, a good range of ongoing activities encourages children to co-operate and to share. This was seen in the Post Office when four children organised themselves to take turns at being a customer or the shopkeeper. In the best lessons, the classroom is well organised to give children a good level of independence. For example in a maths lesson on measuring, when children had finished their initial task they knew that they could then choose another activity such as putting the post office parcels in order or painting a longer snake. In the less successful lessons, children are unaware of what to do next and have to interrupt the teacher for the next task. Children are expected to concentrate for increasing amounts of time and most stay on task when working independently, though a small number find it difficult to sustain concentration when not directly supervised. When joining in a whole school assembly, children show great confidence when explaining about their good work. Good behaviour and hard work is encouraged through a reward system of stickers and certificates, which are greatly prized by the children. Children are beginning to understand the needs of others and in their New Year wishes they ask for real and toy trains for Africa and for an end to fighting in Afghanistan. Children are given regular occasions to talk about their feelings such as in a class assembly when they talked about how it might feel to be the best loved toy. They are given good opportunities for cultural development when performing in the Nativity play and also in their weekly French lessons. The quality of work in children's books and on the walls shows a good attitude to learning and a pride in what they do.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Teaching is good overall and leads to good achievement for all pupils over the Foundation Stage. The good range of specific activities and the high priority given to language development in all aspects enables children to develop good speaking and listening skills. In the Nursery all adults interact well with the children and stimulate good discussions about the way to fit bricks together or about changes in colour as different coloured cellophane strips are overlaid. Planned activities such as identifying sounds on the listening centre help to encourage children to listen carefully. The mobile phones available in the imaginary play area promote speaking skills well, with one child holding a long conversation with an inspector about what to have for tea. Children are taught a good range of rhymes to help them remember

days of the week or to identify rhyming words. These good opportunities for speaking and listening continue in Reception where good questioning by the teacher encourages children to explain their thinking. Good use is made of the specialist drama lessons for children to recite and act out rhymes and to listen carefully to instructions. Speaking and listening is also promoted well through role play such as the puppet theatre.

75. Children are encouraged to make a connection between the spoken and written word from the earliest age, with attention drawn to their names, days of the week and to the text in the story. In sharing a book, Nursery children hold the book carefully and can talk about the contents from the front cover. However, there are insufficient good quality storybooks throughout the Foundation Stage and those that are there are not attractively displayed to encourage children to choose to sit down with a book. Where books are attractive and available, such as in the listening area in the Reception, children enjoy following the story of "The Bear". In their sessions in the library, children in Reception are developing an understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction and in listening to a story most children can predict what may happen next. All Reception children have a reading book, which they take home, and in school they read to the teacher regularly. Higher attaining children are already reading at the level expected for a six-year-old whilst the majority are reading at the expected level. Phonics are taught on a planned and regular basis, with sounds of the week, and there is a programme for teaching key words, enabling children to make good progress in reading.
76. Handwriting patterns are practised in the Nursery through painting and following the dots on the page. However, the writing table itself is uninspiring and during inspection week no child was seen to choose this activity to make marks on paper. In Reception handwriting is taught regularly in specific lessons. There are good resources such as white boards for children to practise and the teacher gives clear demonstrations to help children form letters correctly. In the best lessons the teacher keeps a careful check on what children are doing to give extra support where needed. Lots of practice in children's books on pencil play activities helps children develop good letter formation. There is some attempt at independent writing with most children able to use the word wall or make their own attempt at writing words such as went, whilst higher attaining pupils can write their own recognisable sentence to explain that "My teddy is cuddly". In recording activities in other areas of learning, such as classifying toys which you need to push or pull, there is an over-reliance on cutting and sticking pictures rather than attempting to list some of the words.
77. Pupils in the Reception classes also receive short French conversation sessions each week. They learn to say 'bonjour' and 'au revoir', and simple nouns, such as 'garçon' and 'petite fille'. They enjoy the session, and respond to the visiting teacher's use of a puppet without inhibition. This helps them to develop correct pronunciation. They join in the games, and this aspect adds to their language development, and to their personal development.

Mathematical development

78. Teaching is good overall. In the Nursery every opportunity is taken to count, such as in taking the register and counting the numbers of children present. This daily practice enables most children to count up to quite high numbers, such as 25, and higher attaining children know that this number has 2 digits. Very good use is made of stories such as the Three Bears to compare size, and in a very good activity with the whole class, the teacher emphasises different lengths by showing a range of baby and toddler clothes. In a good follow up activity, children work with the Nursery

Nurse to choose the correct set of clothes for each teddy. Through regular opportunities to explore shapes, most Nursery children can recognise the main two-dimensional shapes.

79. In Reception appropriate elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated into the daily mathematics lesson. All activities are suitably practically based to help understanding. Good use of simple resources such as the counting stick and the puppet pointer promotes counting skills well. The vast majority of children are confident in counting forwards and backwards to 20, and teachers take the opportunity to extend understanding through silent counting and also by using the counting stick to help children count in tens to a hundred. Teachers give children good strategies for counting such as putting the finger on the starting point when counting random sets of objects, and thinking of the next counting number when adding one more. Higher attaining pupils then apply this when finding two more or less than numbers to 20. The effectiveness of some lessons is reduced by the high level of noise and in other cases by some children spending too much time sitting on the carpet. In one very good measurement lesson, good use was made of the children to place them in order of size and to ask questions which encouraged them to think, such as who is taller than one child but shorter than another. Problem solving at this very practical level promotes greater understanding of mathematical ideas. All the follow up activities were well matched to children's level of understanding, enabling all children to achieve well. Opportunities for other teachers to observe this good practice would lead to an overall improvement in the quality of teaching.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Whilst achievement is satisfactory, it is less marked than in other areas of learning. This is because some aspects, such as information and communication technology, are at an early stage of development. Also, there are insufficient opportunities for children experimenting to find out how things work. However, the school is already taking steps to address this through the recent introduction of a good range of outside activities, including watching what happens to balloons in the wind and blowing bubbles. There is a good range of ongoing activities in both Nursery and Reception to enable children to have first hand experiences of water and sand, though these sometimes lack a clear focus to extend children's learning. Children have daily opportunities to use a good range of construction toys and to change their models after consideration. Children are developing a sound understanding of technology through using the listening centres and the programmable robot. Recently the Nursery Nurse has been teaching basic skills to small groups of Reception children in the computer suite. This is enabling children to improve their mouse control and to paint pictures using the paintbrush icon. They are gaining a sound understanding of the passing of time as they compare their own toys with those of their parents, who help by completing a homework sheet about their favourite toy.

Physical development

81. Teaching is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is due in part to the improvement in equipment, and planned time for outdoor play in Nursery and Reception with good interaction between adults and children. In steering the wheeled toys around the playground course, children develop good control. All children in the Foundation Stage develop a good sense of space as they use the large hall. They can skip, run and jump without bumping into each other and younger Nursery children are supported well by the Nursery Nurse and students to

give them confidence. Physical development is extended well in Reception as children balance and move along the large apparatus with increasing skill. In the Nursery they have a healthy snack and learn that fruit is good for them, and they also know that exercise makes them feel warm and makes their heart go bump. Children are taught how to hold pencils and paintbrushes correctly and there are regular opportunities to develop their manipulative skills when using jigsaws and small construction kits.

Creative development

82. Teaching is good overall enabling children to achieve well in all aspects of creative development. Children in the Nursery have good opportunities to explore colour through free painting and through focused activities such as doing "colour sums", adding yellow to blue to make green. In Reception, children experiment with clay, thinking of words to describe how it feels. One boy says it is "oozing," because it is squeezing between his fingers. They also create a good variety of collage using different textured paper, leaves and seeds. Imagination is stimulated through drama lessons, led by a visiting teacher, when children act out a poem about toys coming alive at night and extend the idea by creating their own poem. In a very good dance lesson for Nursery children, they moved well in time to the beat of the tambourine. Reception children interpret music sensitively to make spiky movements like Jack Frost or move floatingly round the room like a snowflake. Children have very good opportunities to express their feelings and ideas through role play in the Nursery, where they dress up and also use the phone box. This continues in Reception as children put on their own impromptu show in the puppet theatre or play in the post office.
83. Since the appointment of the co-ordinator, the school has made good progress in combining Nursery and Reception to form the Foundation Stage. However, there is some lack of awareness by some subject co-ordinators about the discrete nature of the Foundation Stage. This is confirmed by the school allocating monies to subject co-ordinators to include expenditure for the Foundation Stage, leading to some confusion about roles and responsibilities.
84. There are good assessment procedures in the Nursery, through close observation and recording of individual progress, and the school is considering extending this throughout the Foundation Stage. In Reception children's work in books is well marked to assess progress and this is used to match the work in literacy and numeracy to children's needs. The school is developing a system for assessing progress in other areas of learning.

ENGLISH

85. Standards of attainment have improved well since the last inspection. In national tests at seven, standards in reading and writing were well above the national average, and well above the average in similar schools in 2001. This is due to the good quality of teaching in both Year 1 and Year 2, and the effective help for the pupils from support staff. Those pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support so that they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set out in their individual plans, but make better progress when working with the special needs coordinator. Currently, standards for the Year 2 group are above average, representing good progress since entry. Boys and girls equally attain above boys and girls nationally, although girls attain higher levels than boys, as is the national pattern.

86. Standards in speaking and listening are above average, improved since the last inspection. The staff make good use of the different elements of the National Literacy Strategy, encouraging pupils to listen carefully, and to make effective oral contributions during whole class introductions and end-of-lesson feedback sessions. Coupled with good drama lessons led by a visiting teacher, these help the pupils to increase their spoken vocabulary and their confidence in using it effectively. For example, the pupil announcing the play 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' was quiet and hesitant. After positive encouragement from the drama teacher, he projected his voice well, and could be clearly heard. Higher attaining pupils describe and explain what they want to say using a good range of vocabulary and lively images. For example, when asked to explain the difference between a label and a caption, a Year 2 girl gave succinct definitions, "A label uses two or three words, but a caption needs a full sentence." Another boy referred to the comic 'The Beano' to explain how he knew what 'soot' meant in the story he was reading.
87. Reading standards in Year 2 are above average, built well on the good work in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly during guided reading sessions in English lessons. This is lower than the results attained in national tests in 2001, and reflects the lower attainment of this cohort in general. Teachers and support staff help the pupils to develop good skills in sounding and building words, and in working out the sense of a text from picture clues and the general context. Pupils in Year 2 generally enjoy reading, and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors, and why they like their work. Higher attaining pupils read fiction and non-fiction texts with good expression, and are beginning to use reference books and dictionaries effectively. For example, one girl quickly found a suggested topic in the index, and located the right page immediately. A boy looked up the word 'migrate' in a dictionary, using alphabetic understanding to find the word. He read out the meaning, and then explained it in the context of the book: "It means that the birds are flying to another place to find food." Some pupils are reluctant readers, however, and they are not helped by the quality of the reading books that they take home. Whilst the school has invested wisely in good texts to support work in the classrooms, the home reading stock has become out-of-date, and shabby. Coupled with a home reading record book that is not always checked by the staff, this diminishes the effectiveness of parental support for their children's reading development.
88. Standards in writing by seven are above average currently, including the number of pupils attaining higher than expected levels. The most able rewrite fairy stories with good style, and show good understanding of sentence structure, the story sequence, and spell most common words including 'princess', accurately. One higher attaining girl wrote a lucid, coherent account of a Christmas visit, with good control of grammar and syntax. She concluded neatly, 'When we got home, Santa had been.' A lower attaining pupil also wrote in a lively manner about a trip to 'Blak Pool'. 'The jihen (journey) home was grat and I fell all asleep.' Year 1 pupils make their own 'Big Books', giving instructions on how to make party masks, paper lanterns, or a cup of coffee. These are very well presented, and include very good use of ICT. The Year 1 work is also of a good standard.
89. Handwriting standards have improved since the last inspection, but are still variable. In handwriting lessons, letters are usually neatly formed, although teachers do not introduce joined script until quite late. However, some of the basic requirements for good handwriting, such as good posture, comfortable pencil grip and sharp pencils are insufficiently reinforced. This is in part because the staff feel under time pressure to constantly move on.

90. The quality of teaching and learning are good, with very good features. In all eight lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning were at least good, and in three of them they were very good. Teachers understand the structure of the Literacy Hour well, and adapt it as required to meet their pupils' needs. They plan their lessons very effectively, and provide tasks and activities that are based on their good understanding of the pupils' current levels of attainment. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work, and the pupils respond well by working hard and making good progress. A strong feature of the teaching is the quality of the working relationships established between staff members and pupils. For example, Year 1 pupils are withdrawn from class for extra support with classroom assistants. Because the school expects the pupils to behave well, and because the quality of relationships is so good, these sessions proceed at a good pace, and contribute well to pupils' learning and progress. The staff stress the use of literacy skills in other subjects such as geography and science, and use ICT well to develop pupils' word-processing skills in dedicated ICT lessons. However, during the inspection, classroom computers were not used during English lessons.
91. The subject leader has been on maternity leave recently, but has monitored teaching in every class, and keeps a close eye on standards and resources. She is working closely with the deputy headteacher, who has previously worked as a literacy advisory teacher in the local authority's advisory team. New books bought to support the Literacy Hour are of good quality, and staff and pupils use them well to develop reading and writing skills. Whilst there are good books in the school library, the pupils in Year 2 seldom use them. This is unsatisfactory use of a potentially good resource. However, the school has recently paid for a library service agreement which has the potential to improve considerably the quality of the book stock available to the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

92. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards well above the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be above average. This is due to an improvement in teaching, which is related to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and its associated staff training. The previous inspection reported that standards in number were better than in other areas. Whilst this remains the case, there has been some attempt to address the imbalance, particularly in the area of problem-solving, and this has helped to improve pupils' understanding.
93. Through careful marking of pupils' work teachers have a good understanding of their progress. This knowledge is used well to plan work which is well related to pupils' understanding, enabling all pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are usually withdrawn from class lessons and taught in a small group, enabling them to learn well. The teacher uses a good range of strategies, including practical counting resources to improve arithmetic skills. However, the differing needs of the two groups are not always suitably distinguished, for example one girl needed more support with the language of mathematics rather than the process of addition.
94. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive effect on the standards of teaching and learning. The introductory mental sessions are generally brisk, leading to a good improvement in arithmetic skills. Explanations are generally clear so that pupils know what is expected and are able to start their individual work without delay. Resources are readily available for pupils to use, addressing a difficulty identified in the last inspection. Activities are generally interesting and well planned to motivate pupils and promote a very good attitude to

their work. The time at the end of the lessons is used well to reinforce the main teaching points, assess pupils' learning and to identify difficulties. In a good lesson seen, the pupils themselves identified the difficulty they had experienced in working out the change from their shopping. The use of numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum is limited; little measuring or graph work was seen in science or design and technology. Little use is made of computers to extend learning in mathematics, though this is improving as further resources are acquired. There are good links with literacy as older pupils write explanations of patterns and how they have worked things out, which also deepens their understanding of mathematics.

95. By the age of seven, most pupils are developing a good understanding of place value to a hundred with higher attaining pupils confident with numbers to a thousand. All pupils are working at least at the expected level with nearly half working beyond the average. Through good opportunities to relate multiplication to repeated addition, they are gaining a good understanding of the meaning of tables, and they link this well to extending patterns on a 100-square. Lower attaining pupils are gaining an appreciation of doubling through counting the number of wheels on sets of bicycles, and the good use of counters and bricks helps pupils to work out different ways of making 12.
96. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority are attaining the level expected in their understanding of shape, space and measures, though few pupils are working beyond this average level. Most pupils can tell the time using o'clock and half past and solve simple time problems, such as working out the flight time from take off to landing. A careful analysis of last year's statutory tests, indicated that many pupils had difficulty in this area, and the school is now taking steps to address this from an early age. They can measure in centimetres but little work was seen in weighing or in capacity. Most pupils can identify and describe simple two-dimensional shapes but many have difficulty in naming three-dimensional shapes or in identifying their properties. They have a sound understanding of right angles through programming the robot to perform quarter, half and full turns. Pupils can construct a block graph but they have limited opportunities to classify information and display their findings in diagrammatic form.
97. Teaching is good overall, though it is generally stronger in Year 2. A strong feature of all lessons is in the teachers' good questioning skills, which encourage pupils to think and explain their answers, improving their understanding. In most classes good routines have been established so that pupils can work independently, choosing resources when needed. The good relationships give the pupils the confidence to ask for help when needed, and also encourage them to try without fear of making a mistake. Good use is made of resources such as the hundred square or attractive shapes, to help understanding, though in some classes the number line is a little too high to be useful. In the very good lesson seen in Year 2, pupils were challenged to extend their patterns and to predict what would come next. In the lessons which are less than good, activities are not well matched to the age and understanding of the pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the problem-solving activity was too abstract and insufficiently practical, consequently, pupils became noisy, and failed to sustain concentration.
98. The subject is well led by an effective co-ordinator. The good quality of leadership, and the regular monitoring of lessons and teaching plans has contributed to the high standards. Pupils are assessed on a regular basis through close observation and effective marking, though more formal assessments are used for those pupils causing concern or showing particular aptitude. Though targets are set for classes,

there are as yet no small individual targets for pupils to help them check their own improvement.

SCIENCE

99. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements for science, it was only possible to observe one lesson in each year group during the inspection. However, evidence from the lessons observed, the work in pupils' books and discussion with pupils, indicates that attainment is above average. This is lower than the 2001 statutory teacher assessments, which showed the school to be reaching levels that were very high in relation to the national average. This is a much better picture from the time of the last inspection when too few pupils were found to be reaching the higher levels. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, in building up their scientific knowledge and understanding. Progress in the development of science enquiry skills is satisfactory but some of the more able pupils are capable of better progress in this area of the subject.
100. By the end of Year 2, the pupils know about the importance of diet and exercise in keeping healthy. They know about seasonal change and can describe the different stages of human growth. The pupils' understanding of the properties of different materials is very good. They are able to use the appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe materials and can explain why different materials are suitable for different purposes, such as glass for windows and bricks for walls. In a good lesson about which material would make the best rain-hat for Teddy, the pupils were able to carry out systematic testing of different fabrics and draw appropriate conclusions about the best one, based on their observations. In their exploration of the effects of heat on materials such as chocolate, bread and pasta, the pupils show very good levels of understanding about the changes they observe and are able to record their observations in appropriate ways. They are able to name household items that work by electricity and most pupils know that a bulb will light if connected correctly in a simple circuit. In their scientific investigations, the pupils are able to make predictions about what they think will happen but are not often asked to give reasons for their predictions. They are able to record their observations in charts and tables, when supported by their teachers, but their understanding of fair testing is not well developed. Their ability to collect data and interpret their findings is not sufficiently well developed because they are not given enough opportunities to practise these skills.
101. The teaching in the lessons seen was good but the work in pupils' books indicates that there are variations in the quality of teaching across the classes and year groups. However, teaching in science is satisfactory overall. The good teaching sets the learning within appropriate contexts and the lessons include appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific enquiry skills at a sufficient level of challenge. In a lesson about the strength of materials, the learning was set in the context of finding a suitable material to protect a compact disk and the pupils were challenged to find their own ways of testing the strength of the available materials. They were shown appropriate ways of recording their findings and steered skilfully towards interpretation of the results in terms of the question they were investigating. In the less effective teaching there is too much reliance on the use of commercial worksheets to support the learning. The pupils do not learn effectively enough about the process of scientific enquiry, and too much time and effort is wasted on unproductive activities such as drawing or colouring, without a clear emphasis on the scientific learning required. The marking of pupils work is very variable in its effectiveness. Some teachers make good use of written comments to note pupils'

achievement and progress but most marking makes no response to the work and does not indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Consequently, the pupils and parents do not know what progress is being made in the subject. All teachers make great efforts to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons regardless of gender, ability or home language. Particularly good attention is paid to this aspect in questioning and in enabling pupils to express their ideas in discussions. Occasionally, too little attention is given to the needs of some higher ability pupils in the levels of written and intellectual challenge in the tasks they are given, and there is less scope for them to make good progress in the development of science enquiry skills.

102. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills, especially when the teachers have designed their own pupil response sheets, and high demands are made for finished written work of good quality that sufficiently practises and extends writing and spelling. The subject makes insufficient contribution to the development of numeracy skills, particularly in the use of measurement and in the construction and interpretation of graphs. Too little use is made of information communication technology to support the subject.
103. Since the time of the last inspection, the subject leader has done much to move the subject forward. Considerable staff development has taken place and the teachers are now much more aware of the levels of achievement expected of their pupils. The establishment of a satisfactory system of record keeping gives teachers and the subject leader the means of monitoring the progress pupils make. This has enabled teachers to match the learning more closely to the needs of the pupils and has improved the rate of progress made. There is still some inconsistency in what is taught in parallel classes and the school's adopted approach to planning does not provide a sufficiently secure basis for ensuring that there is progression in learning, particularly in the area of scientific enquiry. The subject leader has insufficient opportunity to monitor what is being taught but is aware that she needs a better overview of what is planned and taught in all classes. The resources, books and equipment are sufficient and accessible and there are plans to extend the range of topic boxes available to support the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Standards in art and design are above the expected level by the end of Year 2, maintaining the high standards identified in the last inspection. Pupils achieve well through the systematic teaching of skills and through the good opportunities to experiment with colour and materials from the earliest age.
105. From Year 1, pupils learn a good range of techniques such as shading pastels to blend colours and using pencils in a variety of ways to show texture. They develop their skills in colour mixing by adding black or white to make varied shades of blue. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a good level of skill in illustrating their history topic and in religious education they use collage effectively to record episodes of Bible stories. They extend their range of techniques in mixing colours to show subtle shade differences in their watercolours of the Rainforests, blend colours to produce seascapes in the style of Van Gogh and combine magazine pictures and sticky paper to produce a surreal effect.
106. The quality of teaching is good, as at the last inspection, with a good emphasis on the direct teaching of skills. Good use is made of sketch-books for pupils to practise and learn different techniques. These are well organised and the marking shows that a good level of individual support is given to improve pupils' skills. A good record of

achievement, containing photographs of pupils' work, provides a good assessment and record of pupils' progress. Sound use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning by using a paint program to make patterns and pictures and to design Mexican masks for their geography topic.

107. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed, but she has not yet had the opportunity to review the scheme of work to take account of the changes to the National Curriculum required from 2000.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. By the end of Year 2, the standards of pupils' work is about average. This is an improvement since the last inspection where standards and progress were found to be unsatisfactory. This improvement is due to teachers using some units from the nationally recommended guidelines, leading to an increase in their confidence and a consequent improvement in the quality of teaching, which was judged to be unsatisfactory in the last inspection.
109. Achievement is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve as expected, through individual support and appropriate use of demonstration.
110. Pupils in Year 1 gain experience of the design process as they design and make a mobile suitable for a young child, after which they evaluate the finished product to see what improvements could be made. They understand that it has to be big and bright to attract the child's attention. They know how to use a hole-punch to enable them to thread wool through the card. In Year 2, pupils design a pattern for Joseph's coat and incorporate this into their coat design, and show the front and back view. They use a pattern to cut out the garment and staple the pieces together to produce the finished product, which they evaluate to suggest improvements. They use the techniques of folding and sticking to make a mezuzah to hold the Jewish shema in their religious education lessons. The quality of the finished products is generally good, reflecting a pride in their work.
111. Teaching is satisfactory, though the range of work is limited. Teachers meet in their year groups and choose and plan individual projects well. However, a co-ordinator has only recently been appointed; consequently there is no overview of a scheme of work to indicate which topics should be taught and when, and there is no programme for the systematic teaching of skills. This reduces the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and hinders progress. Resources are inadequate, with a limited range of equipment such as dowelling and wheels, and a limited range of tools to improve children's skills.

FRENCH

112. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have short lessons in French conversation weekly. These are led by a multilingual teacher, who gives an excellent model of the spoken language in both French and English. He has a very amusing and instructive interactive style that captures and keeps the pupils' attention. Using good resources, he illustrates new vocabulary well, and uses a good variety of techniques, games and songs to promote the pupils' learning. They respond well, are confident in speaking in French, and pronounce the words and short sentences with good accent, modelled on what they have heard.

113. This is a good opportunity for the pupils to experience a different European language, and to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, during the inspection, the timetable arrangements for these sessions were not clear, and the rest of the staff had to hurriedly curtail what they were doing to accommodate the activity.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

114. Standards in geography are above average for pupils in Year 2, improved since the last inspection. In history, they have been maintained at average levels.
115. In pupils' books, in displays, and in teachers' planning, it is clear that both subjects have a satisfactory place in the overall curriculum. Indeed, in both subjects, pupils learn to apply their literacy and ICT skills effectively. All pupils, including those with special needs and those learning English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress, and many make good progress in both subjects.
116. In Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of the locality, and how this relates to the city of Liverpool. During a lesson, the pupils showed above average understanding of the world map, most of them knowing that Liverpool is in England, part of Great Britain in Europe, and learning the continents so that they could accurately place the country of study, Mexico, in North America. Higher attaining pupils have well above average knowledge of the globe, being able to name and locate all the continents readily. They also link places with events in the past successfully in history work. Through the study of famous people, for example, they gain some understanding of what conditions were like in London at the time of the great fire, and compare it with London now, as the capital city. In both subjects, they make good progress in using different source materials, such as maps, photographs, visits to museums and places of current interest in the locality and further afield. They also learn in history that some of the sources, such as Samuel Pepys' diary, should be treated with caution, as they contain opinion as well as facts. In one class, pupils have studied the Second World War, and have written interesting accounts of how people at the time might have felt.
117. The quality of teaching is good, leading to pupils making good gains in their learning. Good links are made with other subjects and between these two, but the distinct nature of the study is also made clear. Teachers often link their work in these subjects to work in the ICT suite, so that pupils learn that this is a good tool for both locating information but also for manipulating it on screen for presentation and recording. For example, one Year 2 class used the 'Paint' program to illustrate their work on the Great Fire. Pupils in Year 1, following the progress of Barnaby Bear in geography, used ICT to plot his progress, and to learn how to write addresses in a standard format. The teacher successfully led on to means of travel, passports, and distance. This was work at a high level for these pupils, although the constraints of the ICT suite made concentration difficult. Teachers' planning is very thorough, and covers all the subject requirements.
118. The geography co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject from monitoring the teaching and learning, and teaching in Year 2. She has ensured that there are good quality resources available to support the curriculum, and has a good action plan for the maintenance and further development of the subject. The history co-ordinator was absent during the inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards in information communication technology (ICT) are much improved since the time of the last inspection and are now in line with those expected for the ages of the pupils. By the end of Year 2, the great majority meet the national expectations but only a small proportion of pupils exceeds these levels. Pupils at all levels of ability make satisfactory progress in developing their ICT skills but the limitations imposed by the size of the computer suite impede the progress that the pupils are able to make, especially for those without access to computers at home.
120. From an early stage, pupils quickly develop confidence in using the mouse to operate various computer programmes. All have good control of the onscreen cursor and click accurately to select the appropriate icon. Pupils in Year 1 showed that they could access software with help and were confident in using the 'Paint' software to make choices about the creation of a picture. They were able to select and use the appropriate icon to paint, draw or colour their pictures. They know how to make changes to the onscreen image and how to save their work. With help, they are able to add simple text to their pictures and know how to delete errors. By the end of Year 2, they are confident in opening programmes and go successfully through the various stages to access the software they need. They can access saved work with help and can generate and amend text with reasonable confidence. When given the opportunity, they can incorporate pictures into their work and are developing an understanding of how to use a digital camera. The pupils are still in the early stages of developing their expertise in using the Internet but are making satisfactory progress in locating and interrogating a website. They are given good opportunities to develop their skills in control technology and develop appropriate understanding of how to enter a set of prepared instructions to program a robotic toy to travel certain distances and change direction.
121. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. The teachers have developed appropriate levels of expertise to be able to support their pupils well in all aspects of the subject. They plan the learning carefully and are alert to the individual needs of pupils when they encounter difficulties in their learning. This promotes good levels of interest and positive attitudes to the subject. Most of the teaching of ICT takes place in the computer suite. Whilst teachers do their best to manage large numbers of pupils within the small space, there are many shortcomings in the use of the suite. There is insufficient capacity for more than half a class at a time and attempts to cater for whole classes result in at least one third of pupils in any lesson unable to have hands on access to the computers. This causes boredom and disaffection and seriously inhibits the progress the pupils are able to make.
122. There is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum. Although all classrooms are equipped with good quality hardware there was very little use made of classroom based computers during the inspection week. The work on classroom computers and in the suite does not have sufficiently strong links to classroom work. When there are clear links between ICT and other subjects, the learning is more effective. For example, pupils in Year 2 made very good use of ICT to support their work in religious education following their visit to a Synagogue. They made good use of a digital camera to take their own photographs and combined these with captions to communicate information about their visit.
123. Teachers and support staff have worked hard to increase their personal expertise in the subject and this is an important factor in the increased rate of pupils' progress. The subject leader has done much to move the subject forward since the last inspection, when there were many shortcomings in the way the subject was taught

and the standards that were achieved. He has worked hard to set up organisational systems and support colleagues in developing their ICT proficiency. A comprehensive sampling of the pupils' work gives him a good overview of the standards achieved throughout the school. However, his monitoring role is not yet developed sufficiently to enable him to have a full picture of the effectiveness of teachers' planning in providing for the breadth of subject requirements. He has already identified and begun to address the organisational problems created by the size of the computer suite. There is no system for keeping track of those pupils who have not had direct access to computers in lessons and until this problem is resolved the school is failing to provide for full inclusion for all pupils in ICT. Resources for the subject are adequate but more software suitable for this age group is needed to support learning in ICT across the curriculum.

MUSIC

124. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain an acceptable standard in music. This is similar to the finding of the previous inspection report and satisfactory improvement has been made.
125. Pupils enjoy singing and know a range of songs and rhymes. Very often in class pupils sing along with taped music and it is noticeable that the quality of singing is improved when they are accompanied by a guitar played by a visitor. Pupils can name a range of percussion instruments and know whether to shake or bang them to make a sound. Through listening to a variety of music, they can identify some instruments such as the flute from the sound they make. They also learn to appreciate the different effects instruments can make, for example pupils in Year 1 choose the recorder to imitate the sound of a seagull. Some older pupils have the opportunity to learn how to play the recorder in a lunchtime club to improve their musical skills. There is no evidence of pupils composing their own music or of using symbols or pictures to record different sounds.
126. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In order to support staff who are not musicians, lessons are delivered through a programme of taped lessons with which they feel comfortable. Whilst these cover the required elements of listening, appraising and performing, the reliance on recordings can lead to an imbalance, with pupils spending too much time listening rather than making their own music. Consequently, pupils become restless and many lose interest. In the better lessons, the teacher makes appropriate interventions to emphasise the musical language and to heighten the pace, keeping pupils involved. Teaching has been enriched through an opera workshop in the local High School, attended by pupils in Year 2.
127. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development as they discuss music used in celebrations and contrast traditional and electronic music celebrating Chinese New Year.
128. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed. She is monitoring teachers' planning but as she is part-time she has been unable to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. The previous inspection reported that some instruments needed replacing. This has been done and resources are sufficient to deliver the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to see dance or large apparatus gymnastics being taught during the inspection week. Evidence from

the lessons seen indicates that the standards achieved in physical education are broadly in line with those expected nationally and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is a similar situation to that existing at the time of the last inspection.

130. By the end of Year 2, the pupils demonstrate increasing body control and coordination in practising games skills. They are given good opportunities to develop good ball control and are able to throw, bounce and catch with reasonable accuracy. They use space well when moving across the floor and are able to vary the speed of movement. They know about the effects of exercise in increasing heart rate and the importance of warming up their muscles ready for exercise. In tennis lessons, provided by a neighbouring secondary school, they are developing good hand and eye co-ordination and are able to hit a ball with reasonable accuracy. They work well with partners and in small teams, and understand that rules are important when playing games. The pupils' evaluation skills are not sufficiently developed due to the lack of opportunities to appraise and evaluate their own and others' performance.
131. The quality of teaching is generally good but there are shortcomings in some lessons that slow the rate of progress made by pupils. All teachers ensure the safety of their pupils and levels of pupil management are usually good. In the better lessons the pupils are engaged in a range of activities designed to develop specific skills and promote co-ordination and control. The teachers give sufficient emphasis to warm up and cool down activities at the start and finish of lessons. The benefits of exercise are suitably emphasised and pupils are encouraged to use evaluation to improve their performance. In the less successful lessons, the teachers' planning does not have sufficient focus on what is to be taught. Confusing instructions are given to pupils and teachers are not clear about what they are teaching. There is insufficient emphasis on the use of evaluation to improve performance and expectations of what pupils can do are too low.
132. The subject is supported by a commercial scheme of work to provide the required breadth and range of learning. However, the use made of the scheme is not monitored sufficiently closely and there is evidence of some imbalance in the provision for the subject. In discussion with the pupils, it was their perception that they did not have sufficient access to the large apparatus. During the inspection, little use was made of the large apparatus and the opinion of the pupils seems justified. The subject has undergone a recent change in leadership and the new subject leader has had little opportunity to have an impact on provision or standards. The subject is well resourced with sufficient quantities of small apparatus and an adequate range of good quality large apparatus. Good care is taken to ensure that all pupils, regardless of gender, race, background or ability are fully included in lessons. The school plans to extend the range of the subject beyond that required by providing swimming lessons for some pupils in the summer term.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and are better than at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
134. By the end of Year 2, the pupils show a good understanding of the basic beliefs and traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. They understand the importance of personal prayer and express ideas about the nature of God. They have a good level of knowledge about symbols associated with Baptism and Communion, and know

bible stories such as The Good Samaritan. In their studies of other faiths, pupils in Year 2 develop very good levels of knowledge about Judaism and the traditions of Jewish daily life. They are able to compare aspects of Judaism and Christianity and realise that stories from the Old Testament, such as those of Abraham and Isaac, are common to both religions. They can name the Ten Commandments and recognise the need for rules in their own lives. Younger pupils are developing a sound understanding of the important festivals associated with different belief systems. They know that Diwali is the Hindu festival of light and compare it with Hanukkah as the Jewish festival of light. In Year 1, the pupils understand the need to have rules in order to co-exist with each other and develop good levels of awareness about the way in which their actions may affect others.

135. The teaching in the lessons seen was consistently good. The teachers use very good teaching strategies and make good use of religious artefacts to bring the learning alive. The learning is set in relevant contexts. For example the pupils in Year 1 designed and made Diwali lamps as part of their topic on light and in Year 2 the pupils made their own Jewish mezuzahs and scrolls. The teachers have good personal levels of subject knowledge and this contributes to the high levels of interest shown by the pupils, especially in learning about other religions. The pupils are encouraged to be reflective in their responses and teachers provide good role models. As a result, pupils learn tolerance and respect for other faiths and develop appropriate levels of spirituality within themselves. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in the lessons, but the timetabling of mathematics withdrawal groups in Year 1 meant that, in two classes, some pupils missed the religious education lesson. However, the school ensures that the same pupils do not miss the RE lessons every week.
136. The subject is well managed and the subject leader has a good understanding of the areas for development. The need for a means of monitoring pupils' progress in the subject has already been identified. The Liverpool Agreed Syllabus is at present undergoing revision and will not be available until later this year. The subject leader is already using the draft version to prepare the school for the expected changes. Visits to places such as a Church and a Synagogue, do much to promote the good levels of understanding in the subject. In Year 2, very good use is made of links with other subjects. For example, ICT is used very effectively to enhance and communicate learning, while design technology skills are exploited in making the Jewish Mezuzahs and Joseph's coat. Resources for the subject are adequate but, as at the time of the last inspection, more and bigger artefacts are still needed to meet the needs of whole classes in lessons.