

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST CECILIA'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL**

Tuebrook, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104677

Headteacher: Mrs M H Buckley

Reporting inspector: Mrs P K Parrish  
22380

Dates of inspection: 30 October – 2 November 2000

Inspection number: 224987

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Snaefell Avenue Tuebrook LIVERPOOL
Postcode:	L13 7HB
Telephone number:	0151 220 2153
Fax number:	0151 259 0365
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M I Bechka
Date of previous inspection:	24 June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
P K Parrish 22380	Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
J Acaster 9970	Lay inspector		Attendance & community links How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
M Bowers 17907	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment procedures
A S Herring 29504	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Cecilia's is a voluntary aided Catholic infant and nursery school, providing for boys and girls aged three to seven years. It is an average sized school, situated in the Liverpool suburb of Tuebrook, an area of lower than average social advantage. It has 177 full-time pupils and 39 part-time attending its nursery class, 23 each morning and 16 each afternoon. A wide range of attainment is represented when the children start the nursery but, overall, attainment is lower than that found nationally. Fifty-one pupils are identified as having special educational needs (mainly moderate learning difficulties); a figure which is higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils (31 per cent) entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage and none has English as an additional language. The school is over-subscribed in Key Stage 1 but a small number of places are available in the nursery and reception classes.

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

St Cecilia's is a very good school. It is popular in the locality and provides for the needs of all its pupils very well. The pupils make very good progress during their four years in school, from the nursery to Year 2. By seven years of age, standards in literacy and numeracy are well above the average for schools with a similar background. Leadership and management are strong, under the guidance of a dynamic and forward thinking headteacher, supported by an efficient governing body. Expectations of all in the school community are very high and the school constantly strives to move forward. Although expenditure is higher than average, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards reach higher than average levels in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good, overall, and very good in the nursery. Teachers are well trained and up to date on national initiatives.
- The nursery provides a high standard of education as the children start school. This establishes a strong interest in learning and a confidence in achieving that is maintained through the school.
- Leadership and management are very good and the school's aims and mission statement are reflected in its work to an excellent level. The values of the Catholic faith flow through the whole-school community.
- The care shown for pupils is of a high standard, resulting in very good relationships and behaviour.
- Links with parents are very effective and contribute to the very good progress made by pupils.

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

- The school recognises that standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations for the age group and has taken appropriate action by installing a computer suite to improve the pupils' progress. The benefits of this improvement are still to take effect.
- Although standards in science are high with regard to the investigation of plants and living things, the curriculum lacks breadth and depth with regard to materials and their properties, and forces and motion.
- Handwriting is not joined by the end of Year 2 and a high proportion of pupils are working at a level where this is required by the National Curriculum.
- The school's provision for developing pupils' cultural awareness is limited and does not fully reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

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

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When it was inspected last in June 1996, St Cecilia's was found to be providing an education of good quality. Since then, good improvement has been achieved. The school constantly endeavours to improve the effectiveness of teaching and the achievement of pupils and, due to the commitment and expertise of the staff team, has a very good capacity to continue to improve. Results in national tests have generally got better each year, with an increasing proportion of pupils reaching a high level by the end of Year 2. The school has successfully integrated the national strategies for improving literacy and numeracy, and this has brought good improvements in the pupils' appreciation and understanding of literature and their speed and ingenuity in making calculations. Good quality continuous training for staff is a high priority and this work has earned the school the prestigious Investors in People Award.

Action points from the last inspection relating to the development of the role of the subject co-ordinators and assessment strategies have been tackled very well and the management of the school has improved significantly as a result. Teaching in science has improved and standards are now much higher but there remains a need to broaden the curriculum, as was noted in the last inspection. Due to the priority placed on National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the attention given to improving information and communication technology has been insufficient to raise standards to the level currently expected nationally. In addition, the co-ordinator for the subject has unavoidably changed three times since the last inspection. This work is now the priority of the school and a new computer suite has been installed to enable more rapid progress for pupils.

## **STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	B	A	A	A*
Writing	D	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	B	A

**Key**

top five per cent	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Learning gets off to a very good start in the nursery, the children make very good progress and by the end of the reception year, most at least reach the Early Learning Goals set nationally. Speaking and listening skills develop particularly well through the school and are above average by the time the pupils reach Year 2. Inspection evidence confirms the high attainment detailed above. Compared to schools with similar backgrounds, the results are very high and in the top five per cent in reading. Results for 2000 are a little lower, as was expected when targets were set for the year group by governors and the local education authority in relation to baseline assessment. However, the overall trend is upward and the school enables an increasingly high proportion of pupils to reach a higher than average level in literacy and numeracy. Standards in writing are rising fast but further progress is held back because the school has yet to develop a consistent programme for joining handwriting.

Standards in science are average overall for seven year olds, with good achievement at the higher levels of learning about living things. Pupils' understanding of materials and forces is less strong. Attainment in ICT is below the levels expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and this is the school's current priority for development. In all other subjects, except music, standards are in line with those required by the National Curriculum for the age group. In music, standards are above average, helped by good teaching and the pupils' confidence in performance. There was insufficient evidence to judge overall attainment in design and technology. Standards in religious education are the subject of a separate inspection.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have a very good attitude to school. They generally enjoy lessons and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of a very high standard both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are good-humoured, polite and show a thoughtful respect for others and their environment.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are confident and self-assured, enabling high achievement. Relationships are very good, with a good sense of community existing in the school.
Attendance	Good, and monitored very well by the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good and enables the high standards of achievement evident in the school. All lessons seen were of at least satisfactory quality and 69 per cent were good or better. In 33 per cent of lessons, teaching was very good. In the nursery, teaching is consistently very good, and in almost every other class, a significant proportion of the teaching is very good. In English and mathematics, the quality of teaching is good overall, and very good in half of lessons seen. The quality of teaching is rising due to good monitoring procedures and the effective introduction of national initiatives. Literacy skills are included successfully in most lessons, enabling very good progress between the ages of three and seven years. Numeracy skills are not so frequently included, but are taught well overall. Skills in ICT are not routinely included within lessons and are given insufficient attention. However, teaching is improving significantly, due to the recent installation of a computer suite. Teaching in music is good. The methods of teaching the youngest children, in the nursery, are very successful. The many strengths in the teaching throughout the school include very high expectations of the pupils; good subject knowledge; and good strategies for questioning pupils and promoting discussion. In English and mathematics, however, practice exercises are sometimes used too often and insufficient time is given to writing or calculating for specific purposes. This limits the breadth of pupils' skills and gives too few opportunities to put their skills into real use. Pupils with special educational needs



are taught with a great sensitivity to their needs and make at least good progress in relation to targets set.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and relevant to the pupils' needs. Activities planned for the children aged up to five are good, and very good in the nursery.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Staff are sensitive to the needs of these pupils in all lessons and clear individual targets are set. Day-to-day assessment of progress towards these targets is the next step towards improving provision, to enable more specific planning for the practice of skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Strong provision is made for moral development and results in a high standard of behaviour and a conscientious approach to work. Provision for spiritual and social development is good and pupils show a very thoughtful approach to life. The provision for cultural development is less effective.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for promoting pupils' welfare. Pupils feel safe and relaxed in school and, should problems arise, they are confident of the staff's readiness to support their needs. Assessment systems are good and generally used effectively as a basis for planning lessons.

The school has very effective links with parents and offers a partnership which is very productive in enabling parents to support their children's achievements.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher sets very high standards for the school and gives very clear educational direction to its work. The staff team is well informed and conscientious in planning an education of high quality for the pupils. Subject co-ordinators are generally successful in ensuring high standards of learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The newly appointed governing body is dedicated to supporting a school of high quality and is well aware of the school's strengths. Communication with the staff of the school is good and governors fulfil their duties in a professional manner.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed a good system for self-evaluation since the last inspection. The school's 'Investors in People' project has led to a close review of staff's training needs. Standards of teaching and learning are monitored well. Annual assessment results are analysed thoroughly and any weaknesses noted generally result in adaptations to the curriculum or methods of teaching.

The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of all financial resources available to the school and spending is fully linked to appropriate educational priorities, identified within the school improvement plan.
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The school is staffed by suitably qualified teachers and support staff, and there is a strong commitment to professional development. The accommodation is spacious, bright and exceptionally clean. Learning resources meet the needs of the curriculum. The principles of best value are applied in all expenditure.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable and effective in dealing with problems.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and the children make good progress.</li> <li>• Their children like school and are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and the school helps the children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like to see more activities provided outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team supports the parents' very positive views and feels that they are justified in being proud of the school. With regard to activities outside lessons, inspectors judge the provision to be similar to that in most infant schools, where interesting educational visits are organised to extend learning but few after-school clubs take place.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to the nursery class, a wide range of attainment is represented but, overall, attainment on entry is below average for the age group. The children make very good progress in the nursery and good progress, overall, in the reception classes. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children reach the nationally set Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage has only recently been introduced but it is evident that since the last inspection high standards have been maintained for the youngest pupils.
2. By seven years of age, standards in English and mathematics are well above the average for similar schools. Compared to schools nationally, standards in mathematics are above average and in English, well above average. In science, art and design, geography, history and physical education, standards are as they ought to be for the age group, and in music, attainment is higher for seven year olds than in most schools. In ICT, standards are below expectations nationally for this key stage. In design and technology, insufficient breadth of evidence was seen to make a judgement. Since the last inspection, good improvement has been made in English, and sound improvement has been made in mathematics and science. High standards have been maintained in music, and satisfactory standards maintained in all other subjects except ICT, where improvement has been less than satisfactory. In the last inspection, standards were judged to be good in design and technology but an overall judgement was not possible in this inspection.

#### *Standards for seven year olds*

3. The 1999 results at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that:
  - compared to all schools nationally, standards were well above average in reading and writing, above average in mathematics and average overall in science; and
  - compared to schools with pupils from a similar background, standards were well above-average reading, writing and mathematics, and above average in science. In reading, standards were in the top five per cent of similar schools.

The results for 2000 are a little lower, but in line with the suitably challenging targets set for the year group. However, they remain in line with national averages and well above average in comparison to similar schools in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. This indicates that high standards are being successfully maintained.

4. The evidence of the inspection indicates that standards are similar to those in 1999, being well above average nationally in reading and in writing, above average in mathematics, and average, overall, in science. The trend is for further improvement as developments continue in the teaching of English and mathematics, linked to national strategies and in science as a result of an improved scheme of work.

*Standards in the core subjects*

*(English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology)*

5. A feature of the school is the high level of achievement in speaking and listening, which provides a successful means of learning in all subjects. Pupils enter school generally lacking confidence and with below average skills in speaking and understanding others, but very good progress is achieved due to a culture of language and discussion in the school. In the great majority of lessons, good strategies for questioning pupils lead to meaningful discussions. Pupils thus get frequent practice in speaking and listening and enhance their learning in all subjects. Although some classes are large, the appointment of support staff, and sometimes parent volunteers, means that discussions are often part of small group activities too. The headteacher is frequently present around the school and this adds to the communication opportunities available to pupils. Pupils are confident and ready to share their views. By the time they reach Year 2, and sometimes earlier, their speech is fluent and informative. Questions initiate thoughtful responses, and stories and books provoke pertinent comments. Sharing books with pupils is generally a delightful experience, due to the interesting conversations that accompany the text.
6. Reading skills are very well advanced for most pupils in Year 2. A strong interest in books is evident throughout the school and the good, and often very good, teaching around texts within the Literacy Hour builds good reading habits. A thorough approach to teaching and checking the learning of letter sounds and blends provided a good foundation for tackling unfamiliar words. 'Words of the week' and similar strategies underline the importance of recognising more and more words, and careful record keeping tracks the pupils' successes and areas for more attention.
7. Writing is approached with increasing confidence and once the concepts of word spacing and conventional spelling are grasped, the pupils' confidence leads them to become increasingly adventurous in their written work, adding more and more punctuation as they reach the end of Year 2. The purposes for writing are somewhat limited, however, as at the time of the last inspection, and this restricts achievement. The redrafting process does not always take pupils as far as they are capable of achieving at these higher levels of attainment. For example, alternative time words are sought to link the action in stories and more interesting words substituted for 'said', but few adjectives or adverbs are added before the final draft of written work. Handwriting also stops short of development to the higher level required by the National Curriculum for high attaining pupils. Pupils are not systematically taught to join letters and this is reducing standards at the top of the school. Nevertheless, standards of literacy are high at the end of the key stage, and the teachers in Year 2 are now focusing on addressing these issues.
8. Mathematics has been consistently successful in past years but has not kept pace with the very good improvements in English. However, standards remain high and many pupils exceed the national requirements for the age group. Appropriate priority is given to numeracy skills and counting gets off to a good start in the nursery. By the end of Year 2, the great majority of pupils calculates proficiently to a suitable level for their age and an above average proportion exceed this level. Shape, space and data-handling skills are given due attention and the challenge of pupils' work is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can already collect data from a sandwich preference survey using a tally chart, before converting the results into a block graph.

9. In science, the curriculum is not fully balanced and priority is given to finding out more about living things than characteristics of materials or physical processes, such as forces, light and sound. However, during the inspection the focus of work in Year 1 was light and dark; and in Year 2 was electricity and making simple circuits. Overall, standards of knowledge and understanding are suitable for the age group and pupils develop appropriate investigational skills to a suitable level, finding out by using their senses to observe change.
10. In ICT, attainment is below what is expected nationally by the end of Year 2. Computer skills are not fully incorporated into most subjects, although Year 2 pupils produced good artwork through electronic means during the inspection. This area of the curriculum is a current focus for development by the school and a significant boost to resources has been provided by the recent installation of a computer suite. With ICT the priority for development this year, combined with new resources and expertise available from the local education authority, the impact on standards is expected to be rapid. This represents a clear improvement in provision since the last inspection, but standards are currently low for most pupils in Year 2.
11. Religious education is taught according to statutory requirements and the judgement on standards is the subject of a separate inspection.

*Standards in non-core subjects (art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education)*

12. In art and design, geography, history and physical education, overall attainment reaches suitable levels by the end of Year 2 and progress is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes better in relation to previous achievement. In music, standards are above average. In design and technology, an insufficient range of work was seen to make a judgement on attainment or the success of learning at the end of the key stage. Since the last inspection, national expectations have changed in these subjects but, overall, similar standards have been maintained. The school is in a good position to reinstate these subjects fully, as is required by Curriculum 2000.

*Specific groups of pupils*

13. For pupils with special educational needs, achievement is good, overall, and sometimes very good, in relation to previous attainment and the targets set within individual education plans. All pupils are included in all activities and given the required support. Pupils with specific needs, such as hearing loss, are never forgotten when extra help is needed. All classes benefit from extra support from a nursery nurse or classroom assistant, at least for lessons in literacy and numeracy. This enables lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, to take a full part in lessons and receive support with individual work, enabling similar progress to others in the class. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs identify clear and specific short-term targets, but assessments are not completed on a day-to-day basis, waiting rather for half-termly reviews. The availability of support staff is not fully focused upon regular assessment of these pupils with regard to their specific targets and this reduces progress for some pupils. The school has no pupils who are using English as an additional language.
14. The school very successfully challenges all pupils, including the higher-attaining pupils. Many average pupils reach high attainment levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and this is a strength of the school. The school occasionally identifies pupils who are exceptionally gifted, and these pupils' specific needs are met

to a high level, by adapting class work to a more challenging level and providing a good level of homework to increase their independence.

15. There is little significant variation in attainment between boys and girls, although books selected for use within the Literacy Hour show a response to national research that identifies the greater interest boys tend to have in non-fiction books and factually based stories.

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

16. Pupils have a very good attitude to their work and this has a positive impact on standards and the quality of learning. It is particularly evident in the pupils' enthusiasm for books, which has a very good effect on reading throughout the school. Parents confirm their children's enjoyment of school and say that their children are unhappy if they have to miss a school day. From the very earliest stage of the nursery, pupils come happily into school; they settle quickly at the beginning of lessons and work conscientiously to complete their task. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other and are keen to share their experiences during the summary session at the end of the lessons. Pupils respond well to praise and are proud to receive stickers for good work or to be acknowledged as prefect of the week.
17. Behaviour in lessons, in the playground, and in the school hall at dinnertime is very good, maintaining the high standards identified in the last inspection. This has a very good effect on standards, as pupils co-operate easily and no time is wasted in lessons. Pupils are very polite and this was noticeable in their welcome for visitors, in the passing round of apples at snacktime, and in the pleasant conversations heard over lunch. All pupils work and play well together; in activities, in lessons and at playtimes. No hint of bullying, racism or sexism is evident, and at playtimes, no child was seen to be alone or unhappy. The school has never needed to exclude any pupil.
18. The pupils' personal development is good and parents are happy that respect is taught and that good Catholic values are upheld. Pupils accept responsibility readily, be it tidying away in the nursery, taking the registers to the office after registration or undertaking duties as a prefect, such as collecting in equipment. Through regular homework, pupils are developing initiative, though opportunities for independent research in school, for example, in designing their own investigation to answer a problem in mathematics or science, are limited. When the teacher tells the pupils exactly the objective of the lesson, they are able to judge at the end of the lesson how successful their learning has been; for example, in drawing and measuring a straight line accurately. This makes pupils more aware of their own learning, but this good practice is not evident in all lessons.
19. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. The very good teamwork demonstrated by adults working together, for example, in the Foundation Stage, provides an exemplary role model for pupils in showing mutual respect. Two pupils with physical disabilities are valued members of the school and are fully included in all activities. The nursery booklet for parents welcomes them to "Join our team!" and this attitude permeates the work of the school. All pupils feel much appreciated by the headteacher, who takes every opportunity to tell them they are "gorgeous!".
20. Attendance is good, being better than the national average, and only minor incidents of lateness occur. This supports the very good achievement noted in the school.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is good. In more than two thirds of lessons, it is at least good and in a third, it is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, but with 17 per cent of lessons unsatisfactory. In that inspection, half the lessons were good but none was very good. Improvement has been achieved through monitoring lessons and responding to areas noted for development and, over the past two years, the adoption of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Staff report that the national strategies have also helped to unify teaching methods throughout the school, enabling greater continuity for pupils and more opportunities for all members of the staff team to contribute, through discussion, to the quality of teaching across the school. Staff have also attended a good quantity of appropriate training courses, some at post-graduate level.
  
22. For the children in the Foundation Stage, (the nursery and reception classes), the quality of teaching is good, overall, and consistently very good in the nursery, enabling a most successful start to school. In the reception classes, 67 per cent of the teaching is good or better and this includes 17 per cent of very good teaching. In the best lessons for the three to five year olds, teachers show a very good understanding of how young children learn, and there is clear evidence of the benefits gained by the 'Effective Early Learning' research project undertaken by staff in the nursery. Activities are well focused and planned assessment opportunities provide a clear indication of progress. Assessment information is used to indicate to the staff whether to plan to extend or to reinforce children's learning. Planning is meticulous in the nursery and one of the reception classes, ensuring that all activities run smoothly and maximum teaching is achieved. In the other reception classes, learning is sometimes less successful because the organisation of activities lacks rigour. The children require over-frequent support and this prevents the teacher from concentrating fully on the group she is teaching. Very good records are kept in the nursery and this method is now being developed in the reception year. In both the nursery and the reception classes, the children are suitably tracked through activities that are self-selected and this helps to ensure that they experience the full range of the available curriculum. The teachers and nursery nurses have a very sensitive awareness of the children with special educational needs, they are suitably supported and make good progress. The child with a statement of special educational need is able to take full advantage of all learning activities and, supported by a special educational needs assistant, is making very good progress.
  
23. In Key Stage 1, (Years 1 and 2), teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and in 63 per cent of lessons, it is good or better. In 30 per cent of lessons, it is very good. It varies, however, between the classes and in one of the classes more than half of the teaching is very good, and in another, a significant proportion is very good. The evidence of pupils' work over the past year indicates that teaching is good in the core subjects of English and mathematics. However, in the lessons observed, teaching was frequently very good, which indicates a further rise in standards. In all other subjects, taking the evidence of teachers' planning and pupils' previous work into account, in addition to lessons observed, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and sometimes better, except in music, where it is good. Due to timetable arrangements, it was not possible to make an overall judgement in design and technology.

24. Basic skills are generally taught well throughout the school. Teachers understand the requirements of the Literacy Hour very well and all sections are strong in most classes. Key features of the best lessons are the very high expectations of pupils, the full and varied involvement of literacy skills in every activity, and the skilled use of questions in taking pupils' learning forward. Good teaching enables the development and frequent practice of pupils' speaking and listening skills, providing an efficient basis for all other skills in literacy, as well as other subjects. In less successful literacy lessons, opportunities for practising or extending learning are missed. For example, the teacher does not encourage the involvement of pupils when reading a big book with the class; some small group activities do not include a sufficient element of literacy, such as making masks according to instructions in a book without giving the written instructions sufficient emphasis.
25. The use of the National Numeracy Strategy is well established, resulting in very good teaching in most lessons observed, building improvements in learning throughout the school. Standards of learning are rising as a result of this improved teaching as pupils move through the school. The level of attainment of most pupils in early Year 1 and Year 2, are higher than at the same time in the previous year. Teaching in science includes frequent suitable opportunities for experiment and investigation, resulting in more successful learning than during the last inspection, although the curriculum is still not fully balanced between the different areas of learning. The teaching in ICT is satisfactory overall. The recent acquisition of a computer suite and access to training for staff indicates that improvements are imminent. The range and frequency of work are significantly improved since the last inspection.
26. Planning for teaching is good and generally carefully structured through the school to provide appropriate learning within each age group. Not all teachers use a large enough format to accommodate the detail required for very good planning for the Literacy Hour. This reduces opportunities to track the activities and levels of learning achieved within small group work. Clear learning objectives are set for all lessons, but these are not always shared with pupils before the lesson begins, missing the opportunity to really focus concentration and to provide pupils with the means of assessing their own success. However, plenary or summary sessions are a regular finishing point and these are usually very good in reviewing teaching points and learning within the lesson.
27. The management of pupils is very good, with a positive approach to all, which encourages full involvement in their work. Imaginative ruses are employed to gather the attention of pupils whose concentration has wandered, such as was heard in Year 2, "Let me see, A, what the best boy in our class looks like – that's just how I like to see you!" In the best lessons, pupils are made to feel proud of knowing, and this enables more learning to accumulate. The appointment of classroom support assistants helps teachers to concentrate fully on teaching, especially when the class is working in small groups to accommodate the differing needs of pupils. In the nursery, the supporting nursery nurse records the contributions of pupils within class lessons, which enables both assessment and future planning. However, the contribution of support staff is not always fully extended. For example, they are not sufficiently involved in most classes in tracking the day-to-day successes of pupils with special educational needs. Time is generally used well and lessons are well paced to maintain pupils' interest and to cover a good amount of learning in the time available.
28. Homework is provided throughout the school, with parents involved as partners in providing practice in the basis skills for their children. This work is a valuable



contribution to the high standards of reading in the school and includes literacy activities in addition to the provision of books. Likewise, parents themselves organise numeracy activities for use as homework, targeting specific year groups at different times of the year. Gifted pupils are further challenged through very useful extension homework, taking their achievement to high levels.

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

29. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum, relevant to infant pupils. Its quality is better than was noted in the last inspection. Compared to most schools nationally, the curriculum has remained broad when in other schools it has become more restricted as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been put into place. All required subjects are taught and an appropriate emphasis given to the core subjects of English and mathematics. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, although coverage of the specified curriculum in science is limited in some aspects of the subject. In ICT, work has until very recently been infrequent. The curriculum for religious education appropriately follows the syllabus outlined by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool.
30. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage for children under five is good overall, and very good for the children in the nursery, where a rich curriculum is based on activities closely related to how young children learn. The planning throughout the Foundation Stage appropriately follows the six areas of learning specified nationally.
31. The curriculum has several strengths. Teaching of high quality ensures that literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and included wherever possible in other subjects. The provision for the development of speaking and listening is very good and is instrumental in raising standards throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to use spoken and written language to discuss, share their feelings and communicate. In history, the good emphasis on the use of evidence, and in geography, the good use of fieldwork promotes pupils' enquiry skills. Mathematical skills are applied to other subjects, such as geography, when pupils in Year 2 identify places on maps using co-ordinates. They also use block graphs to analyse food preferences. However, opportunities to develop mathematical skills in science are not always identified, for example, when observing the growth of plants, measurement is not used.
32. Equal opportunities are successfully provided for all pupils. The planning for lessons takes into account the needs of higher and lower-attaining pupils, and all activities are planned for both boys and girls. However, the discrepancy in the time allocation between the morning and afternoon sessions in the nursery is an area for adjustment.
33. Provision for the pupils identified as having special educational needs is good throughout the school and these pupils are enabled to take part in the full curriculum and make good progress. The requirements of the national Code of Practice are in place and the progress of these pupils is formally reviewed on a half-termly basis by the class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The school has recently adopted a computer program to support staff in devising very clear and specific individual education plans. Support staff are effectively involved in providing extra help for these pupils but not sufficiently involved in supporting a day-to-day assessment programme to ensure that specific targets are part of everyday learning and assessment. This misses opportunities to maximise the effectiveness of their education plans.

34. The school has a satisfactory range of links with the community, centred on the close relationship with the parish priest and the church. Many pupils take an active part in the parish festivals and celebrations, and the school holds services for the major Christian festivals in the church. The parish priest regularly attends services held in school and pupils are thus regularly reminded of the centrality of the Catholic faith to the school. Examples of pupils' artwork are displayed occasionally in the church and in a local bank. Pupils perform songs for senior citizens, and make collections for a variety of charities. They also receive visits from community services such as the police and fire authorities. Satisfactory liaison is maintained with the nearby junior school. Carefully thought out educational visits within the locality enrich the curriculum, with visits to such places as Walton Hall. Visiting artists, such as storytellers, musicians and theatre companies visit the school regularly to add to the enjoyment and breadth of pupils' experiences.
35. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good. The governors have agreed that at this early stage, sex education will consist of pupils' questions being answered accurately at a level appropriate to each child. The school recently gained the 'Healthy Schools' award and pupils are well aware of healthy and unhealthy foods. Drugs education and personal, social and health education are incorporated into the religious education programme, 'circle' discussion times and the science curriculum.
36. The school's provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, maintaining standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils engage daily in collective worship and arrangements meet statutory requirements. Whole-school assemblies, which have a Christian message, follow the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar and include moments of silence, to enable pupils to reflect on the message or theme of the week. Good use is made of plainchant played as background music as pupils enter the hall. There are effective moments of awe and wonder, such as when a newborn baby is brought into school, and when the pupils create a portrait or landscape in the style of a famous artist. These moments are carefully planned for.
37. The school has taken great care in the promotion of moral development and it is very good. This is a major strength of the school and a vital element in maintaining the stability of school life. Of the parents who returned the questionnaire, 99 per cent agreed that the school expected their child to achieve his or her best. Pupils understand the school code of behaviour and clearly know right from wrong. They are actively encouraged to think about and agree class rules. They know that if they decide to break these rules, they also choose the sanctions incurred. All members of staff expect the pupils to be accountable for their behaviour. In lessons, pupils are reminded of how to behave. All staff are firm, friendly and fair and pupils respect them. There is a consistent application of the behaviour policy to the pupils. Famous saints and celebrities who offered their lives to help others are introduced to become positive role models. In this way, the school lives to the full the messages contained in its mission statement.
38. The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school is successful in developing a sense of personal and social responsibility in pupils, both to themselves and to others. Relationships are very good and all are equally valued. The school promotes social inclusiveness well and pupils with special educational needs take a full part in school life. Pupils willingly take part in daily duties that help in the smooth running of the school. The parents' association regularly involves families in dances, parties and visits to pantomimes. The Percy Pig Club, run by parents and supported

by staff, involves pupils in regular social events. Social responsibility is encouraged through the involvement of pupils in charity initiatives. These include Catholic based societies, and local and national charities.

39. Provision for the pupils' cultural development remains satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils learn about their own and other cultures through history, geography, art and religious education. There are some good displays around the school that capture the style of Van Gogh and the culture of the Scottish Isle of Struay. Pupils visit places of geographical and historical interest within the City of Liverpool and the immediate environment. Pupils learn about the celebrations linked to the Chinese New Year and the Hindu festival of Divali. However, opportunities are not sufficient within art, literature and music to give the pupils an insight into the wide variety of world cultures.

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

40. The school cares for its pupils very well. It is particularly good in ensuring their personal welfare and promoting good behaviour and attendance. Teachers assess pupils' work well. Arrangements for monitoring academic performance are good, and have improved markedly since the last inspection.
41. The school is very successful in encouraging good attendance and parents say their children very much enjoy coming to school. Registration is conducted promptly and registers are generally well maintained and there are class rewards for good attendance each week. The local authority's education welfare officer scrutinises the registers weekly and follows up concerns systematically. Pupils who have to make visits out of school are issued with authorised absence passes that can be shown, if necessary, to the authorities policing truancy. In cases of pupils' late arrival at school, parents are required to sign the lateness record. To enable parents to take a family holiday at a non-peak time without damaging their children's progress, the school has arranged for the summer half-term to extend to a fortnight by curtailing the main summer holiday by a week.
42. The school promotes good behaviour very successfully. An important element is the strong communal Christian ethos, with frequent moments for prayer and reflection. Teachers have very good, positive class management skills, which promote a friendly and co-operative atmosphere in classrooms. A good emphasis is placed on praise and the celebration of achievement.
43. Pupils in the nursery and the reception classes are carefully guided into good social and learning habits. There are many forms of reward available throughout the school. Pupils may earn an individual badge weekly, for instance the Perfect Prefect badge for the best helper. Collective recognition is also awarded, such as to the best class line, or to the lunchtime table with the most stars. A very good standard of behaviour is achieved with a minimum of formal rules, the hallmark of a good school. Any occasional instances of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively, with parents involved as appropriate. Parents are very pleased with the school's management of behaviour.
44. The school is very effective in ensuring pupils' welfare. Teachers are very caring and mindful of the needs of all pupils. The quality of relationships and co-operation throughout the school is very high, deriving from positive, purposeful leadership and strong professional commitment. The effectiveness, ethos and safety of the school

are sustained also by its light, modern premises, which are well maintained and kept very tidy. Pupils are supervised very carefully.

45. Health and safety awareness among pupils is well promoted through the curriculum and through a range of specialist visitors. The school has three certificated first aiders, ensuring a ready response if the need arises. The health and safety co-ordinator has succeeded in achieving a Healthy Schools Award for the school. Child protection arrangements are well established and staff are reminded at least annually about the care and procedures required. Fire practices and checks to the safety of equipment are appropriately carried out, and the headteacher and governors are aware of the need for further formal risk assessment.
46. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. Teachers are well aware of their pupils' needs. The school takes good care of pupils with special educational needs, although assessments of their progress towards specific targets are too widely spaced to be useful on a day-to-day basis.
47. There has been an improvement on the previous report in that the school's assessment policy is fully implemented in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school has identified a comprehensive range of learning objectives to help teachers assess and record the pupils' progress, firstly towards the nationally set Early Learning Goals and then towards the National Curriculum statements of attainment for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. These objectives are listed on individual record sheets and pupils' progress is usefully colour coded. This ensures that each pupil's progress is carefully tracked during their time in the school.
48. Assessments are made at the end of mini-projects and at the end of each half term. National test results are analysed fully and national guidelines used to help teachers identify pupils who progress further than the identified learning objectives and those who do not meet them. Whilst the implementation procedures are at an early stage in the non-core subjects, careful long-term planning has enabled teachers to easily identify the progression within the subjects and to plan accordingly. Teachers generally use this available information to include carefully levelled work in their lesson preparation.
49. The subject co-ordinators regularly monitor teachers' planning to evaluate its effectiveness before the next set of plans is drawn up. Teachers new to the school have their plans monitored as part of their induction and mentoring process. Targets have been set in English and mathematics for Year 2 pupils, although some of these are rather general. All assessment results are kept in pupils' individual assessment profiles and shared with parents each term.

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

50. Parents are very supportive of the school and what it achieves for their children. They very much appreciate its approachability and friendliness; they strongly approve of its leadership and management; they believe the teaching to be good and that their children are expected to work hard and to achieve well. They strongly support the school's ethos, which very much helps the development of maturity and responsibility. They think their children are making good progress and praise their behaviour. They enjoy the school's strong sense of community. They are pleased with the many improvements they have seen. The inspection team supports all these positive comments. A significant minority is doubtful as to whether the school provides a

satisfactory range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team considers that the school's arrangements for extra-curricular activities are satisfactory and broadly similar to those found in most infant schools.

51. The school strongly believes that partnership with parents is important. It has been very active and thorough in trying to promote this, focusing on equipping parents with knowledge of how to help their children's learning. Written communications to parents are clear and informative. The brochure issued to parents whose children are joining the nursery, for instance, sets an excellent standard. Letters are frequent. Parents are consulted from time to time by questionnaire, most recently concerning the supervision of children on arrival at school. Parents consider that the school responds positively to their suggestions and concerns. The 'open door policy' is strong.
52. Much communication takes place by word of mouth. Teachers are easily accessible to parents at the beginning and end of each day, and opportunities are frequently taken for face-to-face conversation. Information can thus be shared on an informal basis. A curriculum meeting for each year group is held every term, with an agenda clearly focused on the work ahead. It includes, for instance, not only curriculum plans but also expectations and targets for attainment, the range of work, literacy and numeracy, homework policy, and 'how you can help'. These meetings, though held in the afternoon, are well attended. Parents' meetings with teachers to review their children's progress are held every term and most take advantage of the opportunity. Almost all parents think that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.
53. For several years now, the school has provided educational courses for parents. 'Parents as educators' and early years workshops have been successful. Some parents have been sufficiently encouraged to go on to further and higher education. The school has benefited by taking on its own trained classroom assistants from this source. A range of local education authority Parent School Partnership (PSP) courses are offered for parents to enable them to help the children learn. For instance, parents are currently involved in providing games and activities to help the children in the reception classes extend their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils in other year groups have each taken a turn.
54. Parents generally are happy with the school's well-considered arrangements for homework. Story sacks (made by parents on a PSP course) are used in the Foundation Stage. A reading programme is well established, and parents have the opportunity to comment on progress in the homework comments book, though this could be more fully used.
55. Parents who attended the inspection meeting approve of the school's written annual reports on their children's progress. Those for children under five are well detailed. They give an assessment of the children's achievement against the components of the desirable learning objectives (now Early Learning Goals) and an indication of future targets. The reports for pupils in Key Stage 1 are not so comprehensive, with very little space available on the report form for teachers' assessments and comments. As history and geography are not listed (being referred to as 'humanities') they do not quite meet the statutory requirement to report on every subject of the National Curriculum.
56. Parents support the school well. Several assist within the classrooms or the library. Many support visits and social events. Parents run the very successful parents'

association, which is directed principally towards creating a warm social community within school. The hard work of a small team in planning a varied programme of events is backed well by parents and the community at large.

57. Overall, the school has developed very effective links with parents. Parents respond by making a good impact on the work of the school.

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

58. The school is very well led and efficiently managed. There is an excellent reflection of the school's aims and mission statement in its work. The headteacher's leadership is clear, dynamic and forward thinking; focused firmly on providing an education of high quality for young children. There is a climate of partnership within the school that involves all staff in a shared commitment to the highest standards of achievement for pupils. All in the staff team have a clear role, detailed in a job description and reviewed annually to include specific points for action through the year. Co-ordinators are focused on continuously raising standards of teaching and learning within their subject or other area of responsibility, and they are given good support and encouragement in carrying out their duties by the headteacher and governors. Due to the commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors, the school has a very good capacity for further improvement in its already high standards.
59. The school improvement plan is a clear and specific document, detailing suitable priorities for development over the next three years. Action is carefully structured and staff and governors are appropriately involved in its formulation. However, criteria identified for judging success are not sufficiently focused on the benefits intended for pupils, and this reduces their usefulness in helping staff and governors to evaluate action taken.
60. The school's potential for self-evaluation has improved significantly since the last inspection. The monitoring structure previously in place has become more rigorous in identifying areas for action within teaching and learning. The introduction of the recent national initiatives in literacy and numeracy has provided a useful focus for developing the school's teaching methods. For example, the English co-ordinator has monitored teachers' work on texts shared with their classes as part of the Literacy Hour, and has held demonstration lessons in guided reading as the school has adapted its practice. The staff team have discussed her observations and adjustments have been made accordingly to the school's teaching methods. The deputy headteacher has monitored teaching and learning in all classes and is to take responsibility for further developments in the school's approach, as a means to both recognising strengths and raising pupils' achievements further. Appraisal and performance management systems are in place and the school is ready to respond to the new legislation.
61. The governing body was reconstituted at the beginning of the year, due to changes in legislation, and this has invested a new enthusiasm in the school, with a renewed commitment to maintaining high standards. Governors are justly proud of the school and well informed on its strengths and areas set for development. They have a strong sense of duty towards the pupils and carry out their duties efficiently and conscientiously. Governors support the forward thinking of the headteacher and staff, and appreciate the high level of professionalism that the staff team invests in the school. All statutory requirements are met.

62. The school is staffed by suitably qualified teachers and there is a good balance between experienced and more recently qualified staff. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are ably assisted by qualified nursery nurses, and support staff in the rest of the school have received appropriate training. A trained assistant is appointed to support the pupil with a statement of special educational need and she also contributes well to the wider group.
63. The school has a strong commitment to the professional development of its staff, as exemplified by the receipt of the prestigious Investors in People Award. This has had a positive effect in raising the quality of teaching since the last inspection. In addition to the regular programme of in-service training, some staff have received support to study for higher level qualifications and all staff training is rigorously reviewed to judge the impact on standards. There is a good induction programme for newly qualified teachers and other new members of staff are given support through advice from the headteacher and through school documentation of good quality. The newly appointed deputy headteacher was given the opportunity to review teaching and learning in all classes during her first term in post to enable her to get to know the school in preparation for her role on the senior management team. Training needs are closely related to the school's priorities and there is also scope for developing teachers' personal training interests. All teachers have regular appraisal interviews and the headteacher has received training in preparation for performance management.
64. The accommodation is spacious, bright and exceptionally clean. Teaching bays are paired in year groups and are well furnished and comfortable. The adjoining shared areas are used well at snacktimes and for work in a small group. The school generally provides a quiet working environment, though noise sometimes carries between the open plan reception classes, and at times this can be distracting; for example, when one class is having a music lesson and the other is listening to a story. The large hall is used for school assemblies, physical education lessons and for serving school dinners for both the infant and the junior schools. There is a new computer suite with a new library adjoining, both of which are timetabled for regular class use. The former library is to be developed for use by the reception year as a role-play area. There are designated outdoor play areas for the reception classes and for pupils in Key Stage 1; there are agreed plans to develop a suitable outdoor play area for the children in the Foundation Stage in the near future.
65. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. The nursery is very well provided with equipment of a high quality, and there is a good range of resources suitable to the age group in the reception classes. There is a bank of new computers in the ICT suite, but there are insufficient computers available for use in the classrooms to ensure frequent use. Unfortunately a recent burglary robbed the school of further stock. There are some minor deficiencies in resources in that a greater variety of papers of different weights is needed for art, the tools available for working with wood need supplementing and more artifacts are needed to support the history curriculum.
66. Good use is made of all financial resources available to the school and spending is fully linked to suitable educational priorities, as identified within the school improvement plan. A high underspend, amounting to 16 per cent of the budget, has accumulated due to financial re-arrangements as the former budget shared with the neighbouring junior school was divided. An unavoidable delay in appointing a new deputy headteacher led to further savings. This surplus of funds has been allocated towards improvements in the accommodation for the pupils in the nursery and reception classes, by providing better outdoor facilities and constructing an extension

to the building by linking the reception classes to the nursery. This will further extend their partnership as is required by the newly established Foundation Stage of learning. Specific grants are appropriately allocated and the school's investment in staff training is managed very well. There is a draft policy in place to guide the school towards achieving best value, and the school's budget is carefully monitored and reviewed by the headteacher, the school secretary and the governors' finance committee. The school office procedures are good and very efficiently managed by the secretary. A recent audit reported financial systems to be operating extremely well. The school's use of new technology is effective in the office and for most staff as a means to efficient lesson planning and record keeping. However, within the school, computers are insufficiently incorporated into the pupils' learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to improve further the very good quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- a) work to improve the pupils' progress in ICT to raise standards to at least a satisfactory level, through:
    - developing a planning link between teaching in the new computer suite and the classrooms to enable pupils to practise new skills and identify opportunities for the appropriate use of ICT in all National Curriculum subjects; *[paragraphs 10, 123-128]*
    - ensuring that all staff have relevant computer skills to enable them to work with and support the pupils to the levels of progress achieved in all other subjects; *[paragraph 63]*
  - b) provide a balanced curriculum in science by:
    - ensuring the attention given to the Programmes of Study relating to 'Materials and their properties' and 'Physical processes' are given sufficient and equal attention to that given to 'Life processes and living things'; *[paragraphs 102, 104]*
  - c) develop the high standards in English further through:
    - establishing and putting into practice a policy and scheme of work to enable pupils to use joined handwriting; *[paragraph 89]*
  - d) improve the school's provision for developing pupils' cultural awareness by actively working to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society through subjects such as art, literature and music. *[paragraph 39]*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	33	36	31	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	177
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	63

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	2	49

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	33	31	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	30	29
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	57	59	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (89)	92 (83)	91 (98)
	National	82 (80 )	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	27	28
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	56	56	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	88 (92)	89 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*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	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	122
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	29.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	418,639
Total expenditure	404,352
Expenditure per pupil	1,840
Balance brought forward from previous year	58,240
Balance carried forward to next year	70,528

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	216
Number of questionnaires returned	79

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	22	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	70	28	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	28	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	38	5	1	5
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	37	6	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	13	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	18	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	68	27	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	14	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	23	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	37	14	4	14

## **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. At the time of the inspection, there were 39 children in the nursery, all attending part-time, with 25 attending in the morning and 14 in the afternoon. There were 53 children in the reception year, arranged into two classes. A qualified teacher and a full-time nursery nurse staff both sessions of the nursery and both reception classes. In addition, a qualified special educational needs assistant provides full-time support for a child with a statement of special educational need. Parents help organise snacktimes and provide additional support in class.
69. The nursery is housed in a bright, spacious classroom at one end of the school. Whilst there is currently no direct access to a specialised outdoor play area, plans are in hand and work is due to start in the immediate future. The reception classes are also spacious and share an adjoining open-plan bay. The children in reception have access to a designated play area, which is used well to support the children's physical development. Resources are good, overall, and of particularly good quality in the nursery.
70. The children are admitted to the nursery class at the beginning of the term following their third birthday and attend part time for either the morning or the afternoon session. The nursery staff work hard to provide similar activities and enthusiasm for the children in both sessions. However, the morning session is half an hour longer, leading to some inequality of provision. Activities in both the nursery and the reception classes are suitable and practically based. A very good start has been made in planning to take account of the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals, which have very recently been introduced for the age group. Planning for activities to suit the new curriculum is well advanced in the nursery and is developing in the reception year. However, some of the regular activities in one of the reception classes lack clear focus and are therefore less purposeful.
71. Parents are partners in their children's education from the earliest opportunity. They are given a very useful information booklet as their children join the nursery and are involved in compiling the initial assessment profile for their child. Assessments are made of the children's skills during their first term. These indicate that whilst a range of attainment is represented, overall, most children enter nursery with levels of attainment below those normally found in children of this age, particularly with regard to language and literacy skills and personal development. Good teaching in all areas of learning, informed by regular assessments of progress, enables most children to meet the Early Learning Goals set for the age group by the end of the reception year. The children develop a very good attitude to learning.

#### *Personal, social and emotional development*

72. Good progress is made in developing personal and social skills throughout the nursery and both reception classes, and the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning are achieved by the great majority of children. The children are happy to come into school from the very start, wanting to discover what the day holds. They quickly learn the nursery routine of putting their name card in the box at the start of the session and settling on the carpet with a book. The good teamwork and consistent approach of the nursery teacher and the nursery nurse provide a secure environment

in which children soon develop independence. The children are very attentive as the day's activities are explained and think carefully before deciding what to do first. They soon settle to their chosen task and concentrate well. The children respond well to the responsibility for choosing their own activities, and at no time during the inspection was a child seen to be uninvolved. They treat all the equipment with care and tidy away when they have finished. They develop good social skills during snacktime, when they sit calmly at the table and engage in social conversation with the parent-helper and with other children. The children continue to grow in confidence in the reception year and join in many whole-school occasions with the older classes, such as, sitting sensibly and joining in a long assembly time to celebrate All Saints' Day. Good opportunities are provided for the children to work together and they co-operate well in the sand and in building a house from large bricks.

73. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children are given good opportunities to talk about their feelings through imaginative play and in class discussions. They also have time to reflect during prayer time and collective worship. They share well, for example, agreeing between themselves to take turns at using the till in the Do-It-Yourself' shop, and sharing a helmet in the reception building area. The children are developing a good understanding of the similarities and differences between people, and the children with special educational needs are fully included in all activities.
74. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. Personal and social skills are suitably given a high priority. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce good behaviour and good use is made of the class rules of "Listen! Look hard! Be still!" to promote good work habits. Good opportunities are provided for co-operative learning activities, for example papering the wall in the nursery, or creating a den in reception. Resources are generally well organised and easily accessible to children, encouraging independence. The good teamwork between the adults in the nursery and reception classes provides a good role model for the children, and the consistent approach to procedures and rules provides a secure environment.

#### Communication, language and literacy

75. The children make good progress in developing their language and literacy skills and most are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Good opportunities are given for children to develop their speaking and listening skills throughout the Foundation Stage. Children in the nursery are encouraged to talk about their choice of activity and to describe what they have achieved at the end of each session. Similarly in reception, a child described how she made a butterfly using blue, fluffy feathers. In the nursery, children learn to make marks, as in writing, as they play in the office, and by the end of the reception year, most children can write a sentence to accompany their news, for example, saying, "I went on the slide!". Higher-attaining children can write a simple report of the school's Summer Fair. All children know a good range of rhymes and can retell a story. In the nursery, a group of children retell the story of 'The Three Pigs', using finger puppets. In reception, the children learn to read an increasing number of words, and the names and sounds of all the letters. Higher-attaining children can read all the key words appropriate to their age. It is a strong feature that all the children develop a love of books from the earliest age, through choosing a book at the start of each nursery session and through enjoying regular opportunities to hear and share stories. All the children are happy to choose a book to share with visitors and retell familiar stories with confidence.
76. The quality of teaching is generally good and activities are well planned. Every opportunity is taken in the nursery to encourage the children to speak; for example,

through adults joining in the imaginative play in the shop or leading a follow my leader game in the playground. The teachers in reception introduce the appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy. Good use is made of big, class-size books in story time and to introduce the 'Homes' topic, and the children are encouraged to retell the story of "Don't Forget the Bacon" through role play. Good opportunities are provided for developing writing skills through imaginative play, writing invitations and through over-writing and then copying words for their news.

### Mathematical development

77. Good progress is made and a suitable emphasis is placed on numeracy. Most children are on line to achieve the nationally set Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Every opportunity is taken to count. For example, everyone counts the number of children at the start of each nursery session, and in reception, the children count the number having dinners or packed lunches to find a total. The children in the nursery know a good number of counting rhymes, can name many simple shapes and are developing a good understanding of comparative language through well-planned activities. For example, they learn to describe stripes as thick, thicker or thickest as they compare brush sizes to stripes painted on wallpaper. By the end of reception, the children develop an understanding of simple addition and subtraction to ten, though higher-attaining pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to develop their skills beyond this level. The children can sequence what happens during their day and can recognise 'o'clock'. In one reception class, the children developed a good understanding of capacity as they predicted which container held the most water and tested this by filling small paper cups.
78. The teaching of mathematics is generally good. It is very good in the nursery, where activities are very well planned and the teacher or nursery nurse joins tasks to provide a clear focus, such as when measuring wallpaper to match the length of the board to be covered. Teaching is good in reception when activities are well organised and led by an adult, for example when counting the scores as children aim bean bags into a bucket. It is less successful in one class where some activities lack clear objectives.

### Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. The children make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world through a good range of practical activities. Most children meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. The children in the nursery have many opportunities of playing in the sand and water. As they use the sandpit as a building site, they learn that dry sand needs water to make it stick together, and observe the water changing colour as different vegetable dyes are added. The majority of children know their own address and know the difference between a house and a flat. The children in reception develop an understanding of homes as they learn about the job of an estate agent, and can name the different materials used to build a house. They can match animals to their young and learn about growth as they compare themselves now to when they were babies, and also to their grandparents, and in planting cabbage seeds in the school grounds. They gain a good understanding of their religion through prayers, assemblies and visits to church. The children understand that they are part of a 'healthy eating school' and why a snack of fresh and dried fruit is good for their teeth. Reception children are now having lessons in the new computer suite and are using the mouse with increasing control to dress Teddy. Whilst there are computers available in the nursery and in both reception classes, they are not yet sufficiently used to improve skills and aid learning in other areas.

80. The quality of teaching is good, with very good teaching in the nursery. Activities are imaginative and well organised. Assessment procedures in the nursery are well developed, with planned opportunities for the teacher and nursery nurse to observe children during their activities and record anything significant. This process is also being developed in one of the reception classes to good effect. This planned assessment of learning in those ongoing activities such as construction, water and sand has had a significant effect on learning. This is less developed in the other reception class where such activities lack a clear focus.

### Physical development

81. The children enjoy a well-planned programme of physical activities and most reach the nationally set Early Learning Goals at the end of reception. All children have the opportunity to make good use of the large school hall to develop their spatial awareness. The development of the grounds outside the nursery as a secure play area is imminent and in the meantime, good use is made of the designated play area to develop the children's physical skills. Co-ordination improves through using wheeled toys, balls and beanbags, and motor skills through running and skipping in organised activities and in free play. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children use a good range of writing implements, tools and construction toys with increasing control. They thread beads accurately and manipulate jigsaws of increasing complexity.
82. Teaching in this area is good. A wide range of activities is well planned and there is a good balance between instruction and the freedom to learn through play. The children are encouraged by the enthusiasm of the staff, who sometimes joins in the games. Supervision is always sufficient to ensure safety.

### Creative development

83. The children make good progress through a carefully planned programme of activities in all aspects of creativity, and most meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. The creative play areas are well developed in all classes and children enjoy buying wallpaper, visiting the estate agents, and working on the building site. The children regularly have access to a wide range of crayons, pencils, paint and collage materials to develop their creativity and skills. All children know a good range of songs by heart and have many opportunities to listen to music. The children in reception can play percussion instruments and keep in time with recorded music. They enjoy making music, and in a very good lesson seen, the children worked in groups to produce sounds with percussion instruments to match the hammering and sawing of the building site. In the final performance, the children kept the beat well when accompanying the building song.
84. The quality of teaching is good and the imaginative activities are well organised. The opportunities for role play are particularly well structured and make an important contribution to personal development and to speaking and listening skills.

## **ENGLISH**

85. Attainment in English shows good improvement since the last inspection and in reading and writing, standards are well above average for seven year olds. Standards have risen at a faster pace than nationally. Inspection evidence reflects the results of the 1999 national tests in reading and writing, which were well above both the national



average and that for similar schools. In reading, the results were in the top five per cent for similar schools. These high standards reflect the very high proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level (Level 3) compared to the average (Level 2) for seven year olds. In reading, almost half of the pupils achieved this level in 1999 and the indications are similar for the current year group. In writing, twice as many pupils as the national average achieve the higher level. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and support staff and achieve a keen interest in their work, resulting in good progress. Averaging the results of the past three years, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in writing but, in line with the national trend, slightly more girls than boys tend to reach a higher level in reading. In speaking and listening, teachers' assessments and inspection evidence indicates that attainment is above average.

86. The rise in standards has been achieved through improvements in teaching and the very high expectations of the teachers. Over the past two years, the school has adapted its curriculum to include the National Literacy Strategy. Practice is being reviewed and refined and, with additional English lessons, such as for extended writing, standards are improving further. However, the quality of handwriting is not keeping pace with the high attainment in other aspects of the subject.
87. Pupils enter the school with a range of communication, language and literacy skills but most are below average. As a result of good, and sometimes very good, teaching in the Foundation Stage, pupils move into Year 1 with an independent approach to their work and the great majority achieves the Early Learning Goals set nationally for the age group. Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. This skill is fundamental to the increasing success of achievement throughout the subject in Key Stage 1. The ethos of the school encourages a high level of confidence, and communication between pupils and their teachers is good. Teaching and learning are consistently based on two-way discussions between staff and pupils, and very successful dialogue between adults and pupils takes learning forward effectively and at a good pace. Pupils enjoy their lessons, have a very good attitude to learning and are confident in sharing their ideas and thinking on the subject in hand. Many examples were seen of teachers explaining carefully and leading discussion through sensitive questioning, building intuitively on the pupils' own level of thinking. This successfully results in the extension of the pupils' fundamental thinking skills, their rapid understanding of the communication of others, and an ability to express their thoughts clearly. Listening skills are developed as part of the ethos of the school, where the views of others are valued and responded to. Careful listening is reinforced through activities such as 'Circle Time' discussions within religious education and regular experience of listening to story tapes using headphones.
88. Reading skills develop very well through the school. Teachers provide regular and ordered attention to letter sounds, word-building and the development of a good sight vocabulary. Records are kept of pupils' progress as a basis for future plans. The pupils' enthusiasm is encouraged through activities such as 'words of the week'. Skills are taught at a good pace, with the blending of individual sounds included from the earliest stages in the reception class. Pupils are confident and at ease with letter sounds and word building by the end of Year 1, with the more able knowing common pairs of letters and some letter strings. Innovative teaching helps pupils to consolidate this understanding in Year 2 and to increase their range of correct spellings. For example, two differently presented prompt cards illustrate the sound difference between 'oo' within different words. Successful language skills mean that

pupils learn to discuss in good detail the events and information gleaned from texts and to empathise with characters in stories. Individual reading is generally characterised by very good expression and careful attention to the developing story. Older pupils learn to 'skim' read when appropriate, scanning texts for key words to locate information within both fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils are clear on the purpose of different books and know that some include stories, some include factual information, and some provide a reference point for spellings and word definitions. Older pupils are familiar with alphabetical order to aid their work. All pupils in Key Stage 1 understand how to use a 'contents' page.

89. Writing skills are developed to a good standard by a very high proportion of pupils. Pupils express their thoughts logically and spell words with rapidly increasing independence. Sentence punctuation becomes consistent for most pupils by Year 2 and they then work to include question, exclamation and speech marks. However, although spoken language skills are fluent for most pupils, their written vocabulary does not continue to expand at the same rate, particularly through Year 2. Relatively few adjectives, adverbs or descriptive phrases are included in the written work of pupils, although they work at a high level of independence for their age. Work is redrafted to include correct spellings and punctuation, but descriptive words are not added to enrich the text. Handwriting does not keep pace with the general standard of written work after an average level of proficiency is reached for the age group. The many pupils working at a high level for their age are not taught systematically to join their writing, thereby reducing the quality of their work.
90. The pupils' high levels of achievement reflect the good quality of the teaching. No teaching was of less than satisfactory quality and five of the eight lessons seen in the subject in Key Stage 1 were of at least good quality. Four of the lessons observed were of very good quality. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the Literacy Hour and each of the four sections is well planned and taught. In addition, teachers understand well how pupils learn, know their individual development levels, and generally target lessons appropriately to meet the differing needs of the pupils. The very good lessons are characterised by a very successful dialogue with pupils which affirms what they know and takes them forward to new learning at a good pace, maintaining pupils' interest well and promoting good achievement in the time available. Every opportunity is taken to extend learning in the subject by both teachers and pupils. Book covers are scoured for information, sounds or letter strings within words are noted, and stories are viewed from the perspective of all characters. Teaching takes place constantly, either in class, small groups or individually. The best lessons include very successful group teaching activities, with learning accurately pitched at a challenging level for the pupils. Less effective lessons miss opportunities to work on text, with, for example, pupils following instructions to make a mask through using pictures rather than words. The guided reading and writing within groups successfully meets the needs of pupils and moves them quickly towards independence. Guided writing for the lower-attaining pupils is particularly successful. Pupils with special educational needs are sympathetically supported, develop a good level of confidence and make good progress in relation to previous attainment.
91. Planning for teaching is generally good, and sometimes meticulous, but the small format used does not offer space to track individual groups in the long term to enable a careful review of levels achieved and the quantity of practice provided. Some pupils are engaged in too many repetitive exercises, with too few opportunities for more thoughtful writing for specific purposes, such as instructions, letters, and descriptions of characters and settings.

92. Management of the subject is good and is enabling a continuous focus on raising standards. The co-ordinator is actively involved in raising standards in English through setting a useful scheme of work for each year group, providing training and support for colleagues. The monitoring of lessons has been shared with the deputy headteacher and this has spread the expertise in the subject through the school. Standards are reviewed annually and new targets set for development in the ensuing year. The co-ordinator is well aware of the benefits available within the style of teaching advocated by the National Literacy Strategy and is working conscientiously with colleagues to realise these benefits. For example, teachers have been supported in putting the guided reading in groups advocated for use within the Literacy Hour through the introduction of a clear scheme of books for guided reading, complete with prompt cards to enable staff training as the method strengthens within the school. The co-ordinator has backed this with demonstration lessons of her own very good approach to guided reading.
93. Literacy is incidental to most subjects and opportunities for reading are included in, for example, music lessons, and good examples of writing were seen in science, history and geography. The use of ICT within English lessons is infrequent although some recent examples of word processing at a suitable level were seen.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. Pupils' results in the 1999 national tests for seven year olds were above average when compared with all schools nationally and well above average when compared to similar schools. A high proportion of pupils achieve a high level in the subject. Results for 2000 show some fall back, as anticipated by the school for that group of pupils, and as identified within targets agreed with the local education authority and governors. Taking the average performance in the subject over the past three years of girls compared to boys, the boys marginally outperform the girls.
95. Observation of lessons and analysis of pupils' work at age seven indicate that the overall standard of their work is above average, which indicates that good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The indications are that standards are set to rise further as a result of carefully focused teaching and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, with the grouping of pupils by ability during the practical part of the lessons. The pupils' numerical and computational skills are good because they have developed the mental strategies to manipulate numbers accurately and good emphasis is placed on the understanding of number concepts. However, opportunities to extend skills further are missed through insufficient emphasis on the application of mathematics through problem solving; and pupils are not taught to make considered guesses before they measure or calculate numbers. Information and communication technology is not fully incorporated into lesson planning.
96. Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of mathematical knowledge and skills, which is an improvement on the last inspection, when satisfactory progress was being made. By the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with number sequences and many work with numbers that include hundreds, tens and units up to 1000. The lower-attaining pupils work with more simple numbers and achieve best when under the direct supervision of a teacher or support assistant. By the end of the key stage, most pupils understand the value and equivalence of simple fractions. They calculate the areas of regular shapes by adding the number of centimetre squares. Pupils

develop a good understanding of place position. They complete multiplication and division calculations accurately and complete some problem-solving exercises by applying the four rules of number. This includes the subtraction of tens and units, for example 34 minus 17. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 1 accurately calculate sets of numbers in their heads to 22 and mentally solve subtraction sums. They form sets of odd and even numbers and quickly identify the connection between sets of twos and sets of fours. They calculate change accurately within money work. Lower-attaining pupils recognise two-dimensional shapes and understand that number digits and values to ten. Most pupils have a good understanding of mathematical language.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report. Of the lessons observed, 60 per cent were very good, 20 per cent were good and 20 per cent were satisfactory. Less successful lessons lacked of pace, with, for example, a whole-class activity used when a small group activity would be more suitable. As a result, pupils expected to wait their turn to place their model animal in the appropriate set became impatient, lost interest and missed learning opportunities. This was unfortunate because otherwise the teacher's subject knowledge was good and the activity was suitably challenging. This enabled some pupils to work out that an animal with stripes will also fit in the set for animals with two-colour markings, leading them to understand the idea of intersecting sets. However this development of learning was not carried into the small group activities, even though the opportunity was present when the pupils sorted and classified a range of large and small coloured counters.
98. Teachers generally demonstrate good subject knowledge and give clear, accurate and precise initial explanations. In the best lessons, they demonstrate very good questioning techniques which challenge the pupils to seek out answers that are then analysed to help the teacher to assess their levels of understanding. Very good use is made of picture illustrations, such as when Year 1 pupils are shown illustrations of seven rabbits that include different colours and younger animals. This helps pupils to understand, for example, that  $4+3=7$  and  $5+2=7$ . Very good use is made of innovative resources, such as when a coat hanger with clothes pegs was used to help the pupils sort and count out the various number bonds that total seven.
99. Work in small groups is effectively organised to enable pupils of all ability levels to make the progress of which they are capable. When groups of Year 2 pupils were using tally charts to count resources found in the classroom, the more able were challenged to identify and organise their own investigation. Below average pupils were given more structured work. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and make good progress. All pupils respond well to the teachers and relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff are very good. This results in pupils gaining confidence and self-esteem and being prepared to answer challenging questions. They eagerly volunteer to demonstrate, doing so with confidence and accuracy when, for example, pupils in Year 2 transfer the information from a tally chart to a block graph. The end of lesson summary, or plenary, sessions are carefully prepared. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, the teacher carefully adjusted the plenary session to respond to some aspects that were not fully understood by all pupils.
100. The subject is managed well. Standards are carefully monitored and national test results are scrutinised as the school continues to review its provision. There is an effective assessment procedure that identifies the various mathematical concepts and levels taught throughout the school. Good planning supports a useful scheme of work that is being continually evaluated and updated to respond to the National

Numeracy Strategy. Areas for development include a more systematic inclusion of using and applying mathematics in investigations and within other subjects; greater use of measurement for practical purposes; to include estimation within calculations; and an increased use of information technology. There are some examples of the overuse of work sheets and over consolidation of number operations. With the rationalisation of these elements, time will be made available to incorporate the improvements that will bring greater balance to the subject whilst maintaining high standards.

## SCIENCE

101. Teacher assessments in 1999 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected level was broadly in line with the national average and the number of pupils attaining a higher level was above average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be below average. The rise in standards is due to improvements in teaching, leading to an increase in the interest pupils show in the subject. Due to the school's understandable focus on the national priorities of literacy and numeracy, there was a fall in results in 2000 that took standards below those in English and mathematics. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher level remained above the national average.
102. A review of pupils' work for the last year shows that the quantity and range of the work covered were limited. The work demonstrates nevertheless that most pupils at the end of Year 2 have a good understanding of the process of scientific enquiry and can write a good account explaining, for example, how they made musical instruments make higher or lower sounds. They show a good understanding of how things grow, checking the growth of cress seeds and comparing how the plants fare with or without light and water. They investigate the conditions required for the habitats of different minibeasts. However, opportunities are limited for pupils to gain a good understanding of materials or of forces leading to movement. A similar pattern emerges from a review of pupils' work in Year 1. The school has taken steps to remedy the recent fall in results and the work seen for the current year, including the lesson observed in Year 2, indicates an improving picture due to the introduction of the national scheme of work and regular assessments of pupils' progress. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a sound understanding of the use of electricity to "heat up, light up, and create movement and sound." They are also becoming aware of its dangers. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 can make a simple circuit to make a bulb light and can explain why the bulb will not light if "something is hanging loose."
103. Pupils' work for the past year shows teaching to be satisfactory overall and good in Year 2, with higher expectations of presentation and constructive marking to help pupils' future progress. Due to timetable arrangements, it was possible to observe only one lesson. This was in Year 2 and the teaching was of good quality. The lesson was well planned and suitably based within practical activity, which built well on pupils' previous knowledge. All pupils found the work interesting and challenging. Some identified appliances that use electricity, some examined how electricity is used, and the higher-attaining pupils predicted which circuit would light a bulb. The teacher circulated well to support and extend learning and used time targets to good effect to keep pupils on task. Good use was made of the plenary session at the end of the lesson to discuss points of interest or difficulty and to share learning.

104. Whilst the work seen in books is of satisfactory quality overall, and is usually good in Year 2, the curriculum is insufficiently broad and balanced. The study of materials and of forces is limited.
105. The subject co-ordinator provides helpful support for colleagues. Planning is now more uniform through the school, based on the national scheme of work. Some useful monitoring of teaching and learning was undertaken by the deputy headteacher last term, and there are plans for co-ordinators to monitor standards of work in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT within the regular key stage meetings. The subject makes a good contribution to developing literacy skills through good written accounts of experiments. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to extend their learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

106. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in the subject are similar to those of seven year olds in most other schools and broadly in line with national expectations in the subject. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection. However, the achievement of pupils is limited by the scheme of work set for the subject. It does not make clear to teachers what should be taught each year and lessons are often based on illustrating other subjects without due attention to sequentially building on skills in art and design throughout the school.
107. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in developing their skills, techniques and knowledge of famous artists. Pupils in Year 1 learn to mix lighter and darker shades of colour in paint and to identify a wide variety of tones of colours using cut out printed paper from a variety of sources. Self-portraits in paint demonstrate good control and mixing of colour. Portraits are lively and detailed, and show accurate observation of the human face. This work is usefully built upon in Year 2, through adopting the portrait style of Van Gogh, but work on detail and proportion is not fully extended. One pupil found further examples of the work of Van Gogh available on the Internet at home. A computer art program has been usefully integrated into the subject, with pupils demonstrating confidence in learning the facilities of the program and applying them creatively to produce their own bold pictures and patterns of colour. Collage work linked to geography studies in Year 2 successfully produces work of interesting quality. Observational drawings, for example of irises in Year 2, make further links with the work of Van Gogh.
108. A review of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, enabling sound progress. In the two lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good, but disjointed planning through the school fails to enable pupils to take full advantage of the teachers' skills. In both lessons seen, the teacher generated a good working atmosphere based on the pupils' ready interest in painting and their good level of confidence in carrying out their work. Choices were available to nurture creativity, and sufficient guidance on skills was provided to take achievement forward. In Year 2, pupils were introduced to Monet's water garden paintings and attempted to produce their own work in his style, with guidance from the teacher. The whole-class lesson enabled the teacher to spend a high proportion of time on improving the pupils' painting skills and they were proud of their achievements at the end of the lesson. The teacher willingly and effectively demonstrated her own skills to the class, giving ideas without leading them to copy her work precisely. However, the pupils' choices of response were limited by the fact that water lilies, or photographs of them, were not made available to enable pupils to

bring Monet's style of direct observation to their work. The lesson in Year 1 developed a good awareness of shade and tone of colour in paint, but the next lesson in the series does not build upon this skill to produce a work of art that includes the pupils' new awareness of colour and their control over it.

109. Management of the subject lacks structure, and the scheme of work is not clearly linked to expectations for teaching and learning within each year group. Some examples of pupils' work at a good level are retained but not organised into a portfolio to demonstrate to staff the standards achievable for each year group within each of the main strands in the subject. This reduces the standardisation of assessment through the school and makes each teacher's expectations personal rather than objective. Resources are adequate, overall, but there are some shortages in the variety of materials available, such as paper of different weights and textures.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Insufficient evidence was available to make a clear judgement on standards in this subject. A review of teachers' planning, one lesson observed and a discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that the curriculum is broadly appropriate, standards are close to the national expectations for the age group and teaching is satisfactory. This shows a slight fall in standards since the last inspection when attainment was said to be good. The predominance of the school's recent focus on literacy and numeracy, as required nationally, has led to a reduction in the time spent on the subject.
111. Examples seen of work in the subject were the designs for 'healthy' drinks completed by pupils in Year 1, and the 'healthy' board games designed and made by pupils in Year 2. The designs for healthy drinks were appropriately preceded by a review of drinks that are popular, followed by an evaluation of their contribution to a healthy diet. Drinks were eventually made and sampled by pupils. The work on the board games in Year 2 shows a good basis of clear design work, which is reviewed and adapted, as necessary: for example to ensure ease of use of numbered squares in the games and a fair distribution of rewards and sanction. However, criteria for assessing the game's fitness for purpose were not set in advance, which limited pupils' understanding of the design process. Board games were duly made, successfully translating the designs into a finished product, made from card embossed with work in felt-tipped pen. The pupils worked in pairs, showing concentration, persistence and precision in making their games co-operatively. The finished product was completed a little too quickly in most cases, with insufficient time allowed to raise the quality of the finished product beyond a moderate level.
112. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory, overall, and had some good features. The design was thoroughly reviewed in a previous lesson and pupils were clear about the significant features of their own board game before attempting to make it. Useful links were made with science work to enable pupils to understand the purpose of the games. The teacher's manner was very encouraging and gave pupils the confidence to tackle the task without fear of making errors. Any errors made, such as in the sequencing of numbers, were successfully but sensitively used as teaching points for the class. Although a high level of accuracy was expected in putting designs into products, expectations were too low on finishing techniques.
113. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced and this clearly sets in place what each year group is to learn each term and is the next logical step in raising

standards through the school. When this is fully in place, it will provide a more balanced and progressive approach to teaching the subject. Work with wood is included to allow the pupils to build early skills in specialised cutting, smoothing and joining. Resources are adequate, overall, although there are insufficient tools for woodwork and their storage point is uncertain.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

114. Due to the organisation of the timetable, only one lesson in geography was observed and judgements made in this lesson were supplemented by a review of previous work and discussions with staff and pupils.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment is similar to that of most seven year olds and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils carry out geographical fieldwork in the locality, such as constructing maps in Year 1 to record journeys from home to school, incorporating roads and significant features. This map work is extended in Year 2 through drawings of maps of places of interest, such as the local safari park, and the Isle of Struay, which features within the story of 'Katie Morag'. This work shows good detail. The geographical aspects of the pupils' locality in Tuebrook are compared with those of the Isle of Struay. They consider the availability of amenities such as shops, leisure facilities and transport. Their fieldwork extends to listing features of the city of Liverpool and comparing these with their research into the physical features of a seashore landscape.
116. Pupils in Year 2 produce information books about Liverpool. This successful teaching technique reflects the influence of the National Literacy Strategy. They include contents pages and information about the city that is effectively supported by their own illustrations. Panoramas of the city of Liverpool and landscapes of the Isle of Struay, created from everyday materials, reflect the contribution made by work in art. This work is of good quality and indicates the pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the subject.
117. In the lesson observed in Year 1, the teaching was of sound quality based on the drawing of a map of the journey from home to school. Resources were useful and included photographs of features of the teacher's journey. Explanations included points of geographical interest, such as places where people work. There was, however, no requirement to label significant features and no encouragement for pupils who wished to do so, thus missing opportunities for further progress.
118. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced that supports teachers in making specific plans for lessons and the school is currently introducing an assessment policy in the subject, based on national guidelines. Older pupils practise mathematical skills as they use co-ordinates to identify specific places on their maps but ICT skills are not used to add support to learning in the subject. Geography makes a worthwhile contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development, through their studies of their own environment and that of a contrasting region. The subject is taught alternately with history each half-term and this arrangement is an effective use of time.

## **HISTORY**



119. The attainment of pupils by the age of seven is similar to that found in most schools. This is similar to the findings of the previous report. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed and this is an improvement on the findings of the last report.
120. Pupils soon realise that their own lives are different from people who lived in the past and by the end of Year 2, they know about important people and events in history, such as Boadicea and Guy Fawkes. Pupils in Year 1 compare seaside holidays at the present time with holidays taken in the past. They study information books about holidays taken in times beyond living memory. Pupils in Year 2 know about some of the famous events in history such as the Gunpowder Plot and they write informative documents about the times when they were born. They make good progress in gaining introductory knowledge about the Roman Invasion and the efforts made by Boadicea to defeat the Roman army.
121. The quality of the teaching is at least satisfactory and is sometimes very good. In a very good lesson observed in Year 1, the teacher encouraged pupils to bring in their own favourite toys. This promoted high levels of interest as pupils were asked to volunteer to talk about their particular choice. The teacher skilfully introduced key questions as she promoted the use of a structured questionnaire to organise and record information. The idea of 'comparison' is established as she introduced the favourite doll of her childhood. She carefully unfolded the story of its life, how it lost an arm, an eye and a patch of hair. All pupils were fascinated by the account and reflected on the doll's adventures, gaining very good insights into times gone by. There is appropriate pace as the idea of comparison is further developed through pupils comparing modern day dolls with the old doll on display to identify the similarities and differences. Pupils were keen to contribute to the whole-class discussion, doing so in an enthusiastic but sensible manner. The lesson concluded with the pupils identifying sources of historical information such as old people, grandparents and museums. They draw their toys and write out answers to the questionnaire as they practise important skills of enquiry. The lesson observed in Year 2 was less successful but satisfactory overall. Planning for the lessons was good and included the means to research events surrounding the Gunpowder Plot through photographs, paintings and stories. A time line was included to extend the pupils' concept of time over hundreds of years, and the differing views people at the time held of King James I were presented. However, opportunities were missed to extend the pupils' learning fully through more careful examination of the good resources made available.
122. The recently appointed co-ordinator has responded effectively to the Curriculum 2000 by introducing a temporary scheme of work, guided by national subject documentation. This appropriately emphasises the skills of enquiry in addition to the development of historical knowledge, and ensures that teachers know what to teach and when. The subject is taught alternately with geography and this ensures a productive use of time. Assessment procedures have yet to be introduced but plans are to follow the national guidance documents. Information and communication technology is not yet sufficiently incorporated into learning in the subject. History makes an effective contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

123. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are below those expected nationally for pupils of seven years of age. Until now, pupils have had insufficient experience of using

computers and they are infrequently used to support learning in other subjects. A new computer suite has very recently been installed and the school has adopted a good scheme of work which, when fully implemented, will progressively build up the operational skills required to match the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum.

124. A small proportion of pupils has sound experience of ICT through the use of home computers. In the new computer suite, pupils in Year 2 are being systematically introduced to simple controls, such as the use of the mouse to operate mark-making tools to produce drawings and patterns. Year 1 pupils are learning how to log on to a word bank to choose a word and attach it to a phrase. They are beginning to use arrow keys to place the cursor immediately next to a letter they want to delete. They quickly learn to type in words to complete a sentence. This is the immediate result of direct teaching and 'hands on' experience within the computer suite for only a short time.
125. Only a very small number of pupils were observed using a computer situated in the classroom. In assessing pupils' skills, a group of Year 2 pupils show that they can successfully operate a spelling game, accurately using the keyboard to set out the letters of a word to correspond with the illustration. Higher-attaining pupils successfully type information about themselves directly to screen. They confidently operate such command keys as the space bar, caps lock, delete and arrow keys. However, only one pupil used two hands to operate the keyboard and none were able to change a program or save and print.
126. The school development plan currently focuses on the introduction of the computer suite. Pupils already have some knowledge of word processing techniques and simulated art skills. The plan for the year indicates that all the subject applications will be taught.
127. Every class is now timetabled to use the computer suite each week. Only two lessons were observed and, quite rightly, the teachers were assessing the potential of the new suite and the optimum number of pupils that can be taught at any one time. Both teachers showed secure knowledge of the software being used and were well supported by an advisory teacher from the local education authority. Teachers gave confident demonstrations and circulated the groups effectively to help pupils learn. However, in the first lesson, in Year 1, when the machines were shared between two pupils, progress was limited overall given the time available. In the second lesson, in Year 2, pupils worked individually on one machine and good progress was made. One pupil guided the brush with the mouse accurately with very good control and style to create the image of a lop-eared rabbit eating a carrot. In both lessons, pupils showed interest and excitement, and a willingness to learn. Teachers confidently evaluated the lessons and identified adjustments for future planning. This analysis is proving invaluable in helping the school to identify the best use of this new resource for learning. The quality of teaching was sound in Year 1 and good in Year 2.
128. The school recognises that there is much to be done in the subject, but it has made a purposeful new start now that the computer suite is available. There are already the beginnings of a good assessment strategy. The school realises that more machines are required for classrooms to ensure the links between work in the computer suite and the use of information technology in the classrooms is successfully developed. Classroom computers are currently under-used and are infrequently used within other subjects. Recent thefts of machines have caused problems in respect of availability.

## MUSIC

129. The evidence at this early stage in the school year suggests that standards will exceed national expectations for seven year olds by the end of Key Stage 1. This indicates that standards are similar to those in the last inspection, when attainment was said to be above average. Since that time, a specialist music co-ordinator has left the school and been replaced only very recently.
130. Pupils in both Year 1 and Year 2 sing tunefully and with a confidence that improves their performance. A pupil in Year 1, for example, instinctively sang a line of a song to illustrate a point she was making to the teacher. Pupils are aware of the words of songs and are sensitive to the mood of the song. This was apparent within school assemblies, and when a pupil noted particular words in a new song which were the same as those read in a story. Games successfully interest the Year 1 pupils in remembering the names and sounds of percussion instruments, such as maracas, claves and the cabasa. In Year 2, pupils are able to change their style of singing for different verses of a 'Guy Fawkes' song from smooth to staccato and back again, and explain the difference. They learn to control the use of their voices through responding to the teacher as she points to word cards as the music proceeds. This work helped them to notice the difference in sounds made by percussion instruments and to use their knowledge and a good level of control in producing realistic and rhythmic firework sounds to accompany part of the song. Future work planned includes composition using instruments and graphic notation to record the order and length of sounds made.
131. Teaching is good, enabling the good achievement and progress. Both lessons seen were of good quality, with pupils performing at a high standard for their age and stage in the year. The atmosphere in both lessons was good, with pupils trying their best but also enjoying their own performance. The teachers provided good role models for singing techniques and this helped the pupils in both classes to achieve well. The pace of the both lessons was good and a lot of work was covered in the time available. The teachers' subject knowledge is good, enabling vocabulary extension and a clear understanding of the key points of playing different instruments. Both teachers used innovative techniques to aid learning, such as the arrow and 'stair' symbols used to denote change in pitch in Year 1 and the graphically explicit word cards to emphasise the quality of different words for firework sounds in Year 2. Pictures are used to help set the mood of songs and this helps pupils to interpret feelings through their music. Classes are managed very well and no teaching time is wasted. Relationships are very good, pupils are well motivated to learn and they take no interest in using percussion instruments for any other purpose than to make music. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all learning, achieve well and make good progress. A pupil with hearing difficulties sits where he can both hear and lip-read when necessary, and joins fully in all activities.
132. The new subject co-ordinator is setting good standards through the school, helped by the whole school sharing music during collective worship. Pupils generally enter the hall to music and listen whilst the rest of the school assembles, as well as joining in hymns and songs relevant to the occasion. A school performance planned for Christmas includes singing and percussion work. A published scheme of work guides lesson planning, supported by a good variety of compact discs. Some music and instruments from other cultures are available for use, and future plans for the year include music to accompany Divali and the Chinese New Year. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Standards in physical education are average at the end of the key stage, maintaining those identified in the last inspection, and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
134. Pupils throughout the key stage develop a good awareness of space and can move quickly about the hall, changing direction and avoiding others. Pupils in Year 1 develop ball control through practising dribbling around markers and passing to a partner. In Year 2, pupils show a good understanding of different ways of balancing and can hold a balance position for a sustained amount of time. They try hard to improve their body shapes in response to suggestions from the teacher and demonstrations of good movements by other pupils. They use the apparatus sensibly and co-operate to move larger equipment safely. In dance, pupils move imaginatively in response to percussion instruments, following a discussion on the quick, explosive movements seen at firework displays.
135. The teaching is generally satisfactory and in the gymnastics lesson seen, it was good. All lessons have a good structure, starting with a suitable warm up, followed by sustained activity and time to cool down. Lessons are generally well planned, based on a commercial scheme introduced since the last inspection. The games lesson seen was less successful. Time was wasted as the teacher had not checked to ensure that there was sufficient equipment for each pupil to have a large ball each, and as pupils took time to choose a partner. Following the last inspection, training was arranged which successfully improved teachers' confidence in teaching dance.
136. The subject co-ordinator ensures that all areas of the curriculum are covered and has introduced the new scheme to provide additional support for colleagues. Some teachers have developed a system for assessing pupils' attainment, though there is not yet a consistent approach through the school. Whilst some larger equipment is old, it is well maintained, and resources are well stored and generally sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum.