

# INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY AND ST PHILOMENA'S CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 131837

Headteacher: Ms Maria Michniewski

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Thomas  
17711

Dates of inspection: 26 February – 01 March 2001

Inspection number: 230462

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sparrowhall Road Liverpool
Postcode:	L9 6BU
Telephone number:	0151 5258552
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Philip Inch
Date of previous inspection:	18/11/96

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17711	J B Thomas	Registered inspector	English	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
19344	D W Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils? How well the school works in partnership with parents?
16041	O L Thomas	Team inspector	Science Art and design Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
22578	G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music	How well the school cares for its pupils? (assessment and educational guidance)
27326	D Frost	Team inspector	Geography History Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
30243	A Heakin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Our Lady and St Philomena's Catholic Primary School is situated on the Sparrowhall Estate in north Liverpool; an area of social deprivation and high unemployment. The school is larger than other primary schools and has been subject to amalgamation in the recent past. There are 323 pupils on roll, including the full-time equivalent of 29 children in the nursery class. A small minority of pupils have English as an additional language (below the national average). Forty two per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals (well above the national average). There are 63 pupils (19.5 per cent) on the register of special educational needs; this is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have statements of Special Educational Needs and this is below the national average. Twelve per cent of pupils are identified as being gifted or talented. The attainment of pupils is comprehensive but most are below average attainment on entry to the nursery, with a minority whose attainment is poor. Attainment is weakest in language and communication skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

Our Lady and St Philomena's Catholic Primary School is a very good school. Standards in comparison to similar schools are good and pupils achieve well overall. This positive picture is due to the excellent, well-judged leadership and management of the Headteacher and Senior Deputy Headteacher and the good quality teaching, which pervades the school. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils make overall good progress and this effectively supports them in achieving well at the age of 11 when test results compare favourably to similar schools.
- Teaching is good; it challenges and supports all pupils regardless of their ability and is most effective in helping pupils acquire the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- The first rate leadership and management by the Headteacher and Senior Management team, supported very actively by governors, have resulted in excellent judgements about priorities and how best to achieve them.
- All staff provide an outstanding level of care and commitment to pupils; supported by the excellent work of the Home/School Parish coordinator and links with the Church.
- The work of the assessment coordinator on target setting to support academic progress.
- Standards in swimming are well above average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength.
- Pupils have acquired great enthusiasm for school, very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology are below average and, in music at Key Stage 1 and design and technology across the school.
- The breadth of the curriculum for the younger pupils and the emphasis on language improvement.
- Pupils' progress in writing and its use, and the practical use and application of mathematical and scientific knowledge and skills.
- The extent and impact of the very good assessment work on planning and target setting.

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





## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

No comparisons are made against previous inspection reports because the school was formed in April 1999 following the amalgamation of St Philomena's Infant and Junior Schools. Since that time the character, staffing and governance of the school has changed considerably which makes any comparisons invalid. What can be said is that parents feel the amalgamation has been a very positive move and that they feel their children enjoy being part of one school and benefit from it. The governors and staff, very ably led by the Headteacher, have made excellent decisions about how the school should move forward and have worked tirelessly towards achieving their aims. The school has a good insight into its own strengths and the challenges that lie ahead. Our Lady and St Philomena's school is securely anchored with firm foundations and an ethos for success to go from strength to strength.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	N/a	B	D	A	well above average      A above average            B average                    C below average            D well below average      E
Mathematics	N/a	A	D	B	
Science	N/a	C	D	C	

The above table shows the school's average point scores when all levels achieved by pupils at the age of 11 are taken into account in comparison with all schools and similar schools. To explain further, the D scores for the Year 2000 Year 6 pupils belie the fact that most pupils attained at the expected Level 4 although fewer pupils, than other schools nationally, achieved at the higher Level 5. The results also mask the fact that the year group had a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The school's results compared with similar schools are positive and echo the inspection findings which show that pupils attain well in literacy and numeracy. Standards in science are average. The results should be seen in the context of the low attainment of pupils on entry and reflect the good progress pupils make. Pupils' performance in the national tests for seven year olds in Year 2000 were very positive and well above average in comparison to similar schools. Pupils make rapid progress in both classes at the end of the Key Stage 1 and this is a significant factor in their success.

The school's targets are realistic but challenging and based on detailed analysis of past performance at Key Stage 2. This good diagnosis of work is not as evident across the whole school.

During the inspection, standards were judged to be average in English, mathematics and science with a significant minority of pupils on target to attain above national expectations and about an equal proportion are slightly below average. Standards are low in information technology; in Key Stage 1, most pupils just about attain as expected but this is not the case in Key Stage 2 where the recently adopted scheme and direct skills' teaching has not yet had time to impact on improving standards.

In the other subjects, standards are broadly average with some good quality work in art in both key stages and physical education in Key Stage 1. Standards in swimming at both key stages are higher

than usually found. However, there are evident weaknesses in standards in music at Key Stage 1 and also in design and technology by the end of both key stages where the pupils' progress is too spasmodic and they barely scrape into the expected levels.

On entry to the school pupils' attainment is low but their progress in the nursery is rapid. However, despite the good teaching in the Foundation Stage these young children have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their ability to talk about what they know. Their progress could be better served with additional, skilled adult support and intervention. Pupils of all abilities mainly achieve well as they move through the school although there are lapses in their progress as they move between the key stages.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have tremendous enthusiasm for school and they are willing learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' very good behaviour is supported by consistent, well-understood guidance from all staff. Pupils show a keenness to please and a full understanding of right and wrong. Their behaviour about school shows good levels of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' respect for each other and the school's values are excellent. Relationships are very good; older pupils benefit significantly from accepting responsibilities, which they take seriously. There is scope to further improve the opportunities for initiative and independence in class work.
Attendance	Good. The school works very hard to encourage regular attendance through awards and certificates. Parents confirm pupils' desire to attend and meet the high expectations set by the school.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.*

Ninety two lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed across the school. Forty two per cent of teaching was good, 21 per cent very good and at times excellent, and the remaining 37 per cent satisfactory. There are many strengths and few weaknesses although at times some of the satisfactory teaching was barely so and did too little to support pupils' progress. The best teaching is in the nursery, Years 2 and 6 and contributes notably to the pupils' good achievements, the standards attained in comparison with similar schools and exemplifies the highest of expectations for academic and personal support. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are well established and promote pupils' learning well.

A strength of the teaching is that most teachers plan well for the broad range of ability and ensure the work is suitably challenging or supportive. The consistency of behaviour management is a strong feature. Support staff are effective and they are used suitably in most but not all cases.

There are some challenges ahead to ensure greater consistency in the impact of teaching in relation to the use of assessments, a greater emphasis on improving pupils' speech, the impact and consistency of classrooms as literate environments, planning carefully for pupils to use and apply their basic skills in the other subjects, consistency in the marking of work and the careful use of time to achieve and assess the success of lesson objectives.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad and balanced curriculum with good quality learning opportunities. However, there is scope to further enrich all pupils' learning. An extensive range of extracurricular activities enhances the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory but better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress and class teachers plan well for their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The small number of pupils are well integrated into the life of the school and their progress is rapid.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	High quality. The school provides an exemplary oasis of moral guidance with strong emphasis on Christian values, happily and consistently delivered to the enjoyment of pupils. Cultural development is very good. Acts of worship are a pleasure to attend.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent provision for the pupils' health and safety; outstandingly so in terms of pastoral care and support enhanced by the exemplary work of the Home/School Parish coordinator. Good academic monitoring overall but scope for improvement in the early years and Key Stage 1.

### **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 successful amalgamation and the drive for high standards is a direct result of the Headteacher's unswerving dedication to the school's Catholic ethos and its educational aims. Exceptional support by the Senior Deputy Headteacher and the Key Stage 1 Coordinator. There is scope to share delegation more equitably.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	The governors are skilfully led and fulfill their responsibilities effectively save for the full delivery of information and communication technology. Governors contribute well to the school's success.
The school's evaluation of its performance	An excellent analysis of need was defined at the point of amalgamation with priorities clearly focused on pupils' achievements and staff development. Monitoring of action towards meeting aims is very good.
The strategic use of	Funding is well used to support staff training, which has impacted well

resources	on curriculum delivery. Financial control and management are very effective. Governors are well tuned to the principles of best value.
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### **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 quality of teaching and high level of pastoral care.</li> <li>• The quality of community and parental involvement.</li> <li>• The personal and social development of pupils.</li> <li>• The sensible approach to homework.</li> <li>• The encouragement for good attendance.</li> <li>• The information on their children's progress and what is happening in school.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• A minority do not feel the school works closely with them.</li> <li>• Some do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree overall with the positive parents' views. In relation to what parents do not like the inspection finds that:

- the quality of information including reports of pupils' progress is good;
- the range of extracurricular provision is very good;
- the school's willingness and efforts to work closely with parents are exceptional.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievement**

1. Pupils achieve well in this school given the low, and at times poor, attainment on entry of many pupils. The drive for high standards is at the heart of the school's priorities, planning and its decision making. In the Year 2000 national tests for 11 year old pupils most attained at the nationally expected Level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science. The cohort had a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and there were fewer pupils who attained the higher Level 5 than nationally found. However, when compared to similar schools the school's results are very positive; in English pupils' performance was well above average, above average in mathematics and average in science. It is not possible to give a clear picture of trends, as the school is too 'young' to have a telling history of attainment.

2. The school's targets are realistic but challenging and based on very good work by the assessment coordinator in analysing, evaluating and tracking pupils' progress over time; the school is highly conscious of giving added value from key stage to key stage and it meets these aims well; most notably when the pupils' low attainment is taken into account. However, the school is fully aware of the need to focus on analysis at entry, through the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and particularly to monitor rigorously to ensure that pupils sustain their performance which is very good at the end of Key Stage 1 into Key Stage 2.

3. The inspection findings reflect the test results for the oldest pupils and show that in English, mathematics and science most pupils attain in line with national expectations with about an equal minority attaining above and below what is usually found. This applies to all aspects of English and in their knowledge of mathematics and science but not in their use and application of the subjects to solve problems or investigate.

4. Standards are low in information technology; in Key Stage 1, most pupils just about attain as expected because they have a good knowledge of keyboard skills, know how to use listening centres and they have had sound access to drawing and painting programs. In Key Stage 2, the recently adopted scheme and direct skills' teaching has not yet had time to impact on improving standards although many have a sound knowledge of word processing skills but their use of control technology is limited.

5. Standards are broadly average with some good quality work in art in both key stages; as expected in geography at both key stages; no judgements are made in history at Key Stage 1 but they are average by the end of Key Stage 2. In design and technology standards are barely satisfactory by the ages of seven and 11; pupils do not systematically acquire skills as they move through the school. In music standards are low in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory by the time pupils reach Year 6 as they benefit from specialist teaching by the coordinator. Standards are good in physical education in Key Stage 1 and average by the end of Key Stage 2, although standards in swimming at both key stages are higher than usually found.

6. Children's attainment is low on entry to the school but their progress in the nursery is rapid. This good pace of progress is not consistently sustained but nevertheless the children in the reception class make satisfactory progress overall. Despite the good teaching found generally in the Foundation Stage these young children have many significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their ability to talk about what they know. At times their past work shows that they have been given experiences which are not relevant to their stage of learning within the stepping stones of the Early Learning Goals and overall work is far too formal too soon. In addition, although satisfactory there is scope to improve pupils' progress in writing and the usage of what they know in mathematics and science.

7. Pupils of all abilities mainly achieve well as they move through the school although there are lapses in their progress as they move between the key stages. This is most notable as they move from Key Stage 1 to 2 when the pupils who had achieved well in the Year 2000 national tests for seven year olds are not sustaining the pace of progress, which might be expected of them. Girls tend to achieve better than boys and the school through its own analysis has identified this and is setting targets to raise boys' attainment.

8. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress throughout. All pupils at Stage 2 and above on the special educational needs register have individual plans that include their targets. The class teachers devise the individual plans in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). This practice is however inconsistent and means the quality of targets is variable. Throughout the time that pupils are in the school, the early identification of their special needs and careful monitoring by class teachers and the Special Needs Co-ordinator contributes to the good progress they make. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have statements of special educational need are effective and ensure they attain standards that are in line with their prior attainments.

9. The small minority of pupils who have English as an additional language have made rapid progress in their ability to understand and use English to carry out their work. The twelve per cent of pupils who have been identified as being gifted and talented are mainly well catered for in being stretched in their mathematical capability and for some individuals who have been highlighted as having particular skills in art and sport.

10. There is no doubt that the significant factors in pupils' good achievements are the management decisions to ensure that literacy and numeracy are well taught and the careful analysis and tracking of progress.

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

11. The quality of pupils' attitudes to the school is excellent and their personal development and behaviour are very good. The pupils' levels of attendance are good.

12. The pupils love their school; they attend ready and willing to learn and to enjoy their school life to the full. They work hard to meet the high standards expected of them and compete eagerly to offer their contributions during plenary sessions. Their responses are consistent across the curriculum. They are equally well involved in extracurricular activities. During an English lesson for pupils in Years 2/3 they were working on group tasks according to ability. They were engaged on task with confidence and clearly enjoying the lesson. They worked with minimum supervision and showed good levels of initiative. Pupils in Year 5 were seen to be keen to participate in an English lesson. They paid attention to instructions and listened to each other during discussions.

13. The quality of the learning environment is enhanced by the very good standards of behaviour of the pupils. They understand and respect the rules for good conduct, and high standards of behaviour are evident throughout the school with senior pupils serving as a role model for juniors. This consistent good behaviour is evident even when several classes come together such as during assembly although at such times it is usual in schools for noise levels to increase and poor behaviour to be more prevalent. This is not the case in this school where the pupils respond well to the rules and such gatherings are reflective enjoyable periods where pupils display the highest standards.

14. Across the key stages pupils retain an overall mature attitude and demonstrate sensible and responsible behaviour towards their work and each other. They relate with genuine warmth and friendship to each other, the teaching staff and visitors. They accept roles and responsibility as they move through the school whether allocated or volunteered for. They can be seen taking responsibility for their equipment during lessons and assisting in the dining room during lunch. They are supportive and cooperative in lessons and activities, and discussions with them confirm that bullying is not a feature of their school life. They reveal no elements of discrimination and are respectful and tolerant of the values and beliefs of those with whom they have contact. The close relationship between the school, Church and the home serves to reinforce the community bond which supports pupils' personal development. The role of the Home/School Parish Coordinator in coordinating this relationship is a pivotal factor in the school's success.

15. The children in the Foundation Stage are very well supported in their introduction to school life. They respond well to guidance on how to conform to group rules and quickly learn the need to wait their turn and to share.

16. The school's levels of attendance are good and are testimony to the hard work of the school in encouraging and managing attendance and the enthusiasm of pupils for their school. Pupils, mainly but not wholly, attend on time and lessons achieve a prompt start.

17. Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. They relate well to adults and as a consequence gain in confidence and self-esteem. Those pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems respond well to the caring ethos, feel valued and build meaningful relationships with adults and their classmates.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. Overall the teaching is good. There are many strengths and few weaknesses. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and 63 per cent was good or better. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils and its high quality has a significant impact on learning and is a main reason why the pupils achieve well. However, where some teaching in Year 5 was satisfactory it was barely so and this limits pupils' progress.

19. Children enter the nursery with below average levels of attainment but through the sensitive and well-focused teaching make rapid progress. Teaching is very good overall at Key Stage 1 with some exceptional features in Year 2 where the greatest strengths lie. For example, in literacy both teachers know the needs of their pupils very well and use this knowledge well for example, when asking questions about how to read with expression. The teachers give pupils a very good role model to emulate and prompt them to consider how the characters have spoken and then encourage pupils to practise reading speech, which is vital as this a key weakness for many pupils. The high quality of the teaching in Year 6, particularly in English and mathematics contributes to the above average results, in the end of Key Stage 2, tests when compared with similar schools. A very good lesson on preparing pupils to plan a presentation for a younger audience showed the teacher's knowledge of the subject



and gave pupils a very good basis on which to consider the main points for how they would proceed with their work.

20. All teachers have good subject knowledge across the curriculum and deliver their lessons confidently. Initial planning is a strength, with targets set for individual pupils and their progress monitored and recorded. Lessons have clear and appropriate learning objectives that are reviewed at the end of most lessons. However, an area for development is the use of assessment information to modify the medium-term planning in the light of experiences.

21. Basic skills are very well taught, particularly in the nursery and at the end of Key Stage 1 and the school's literacy and numeracy programmes are competently and effectively delivered. Pupils make good progress in lessons but the basic skills are not sufficiently well applied in other subject areas. Not all teachers use the classrooms successfully to support the teaching of literacy.

22. The best lessons challenge pupils of all abilities and they make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding. However, in some lessons, there could be more emphasis on the development of skills and the application of knowledge. In a few classes in Key Stage 2 the pupils could be given more responsibility for their learning and be encouraged to research information and think through problems. On occasion teachers do too much of the work for the pupils and do not expect enough of them in finding out or recording for themselves.

23. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies that promote interest and consequently good learning. For example, when studying the habitat of plants and animals pupils are well organized in a circle so they can study the growth of carrot tops carefully and to share what they know with each other.

24. Throughout the school there are high expectations for good behaviour in the classroom and this is a strength. Teachers earn respect and attention by providing stimulating learning environments and by acknowledging and welcoming the contributions pupils make in lessons. Pupils in return concentrate well and try hard. Relationships are excellent and the ethos in the classrooms enhances learning.

25. Time is generally well used. All lessons start promptly and the momentum is maintained until the end. Occasionally lessons run out of time before all learning objectives are achieved or the teacher has time to review the main points of the session. A wide range of resources is well used and artefacts and books are carefully selected to support the learning. In an introductory lesson on rocks and minerals samples had been borrowed from the museum so that each group of pupils had some 12 different rock samples to compare and contrast. In Key Stage 1, big books are well used and video-tapes, globes and atlases enhance the learning in geography throughout the school. Each classroom had a computer, and these were frequently being used during lessons. However, they were mostly used for low level tasks and more thought needs to be given to how information and communication technology can make a real impact on learning across the curriculum.

26. Good use is made of classroom assistants at Key Stage 2. They are involved in lesson planning with the teachers and they give valuable support to groups of lower attaining pupils. There is less evidence of this happening in Key Stage 1.

27. In some classes homework is well linked to the work being done. In a Year 2 class the pupils, at the end of a lesson on the local area were asked to look at the shops and houses on their way home. This stimulated their interest and developed their powers of observation.

28. Good teaching is responsible for the rapid progress the pupils make in the nursery. Their personal development is fostered and they develop well in all the areas of learning. The success of the

pupils at the end of both key stages is due to the quality of teaching which encourages all pupils to work hard. Learning is made enjoyable and pupils are keen to improve and do well, and they succeed.

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

29. The school provides an appropriately broad and well-balanced curriculum with a good quality and range of learning opportunities. The quality and range of opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good and reception teachers are beginning to develop their planning in accordance with the Early Learning Goals. The strengths of the curriculum delivery are in the nursery and at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, where lively teaching and vibrant learning environments impact very well on pupils' progress. Adherence to the Early learning Goals is not consistent through the Foundation Stage. The curriculum successfully meets the needs of its pupils and is enhanced by a very good range of extracurricular activities, visitors to school, afterschool clubs and a residential visit for Year 6 pupils. The school meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum, though there are weaknesses in the provision for skills development in information technology, art and design and design and technology. The school has been created by amalgamating adjacent infant and junior schools and appropriate emphasis has been focused on the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school has been very successful in implementing these using the structure of the strategies to provide and support continuity of literacy and numeracy between the classes and key stages. The Governing Body has made the decision that sex education should be part of the school curriculum. Sex and drug education is provided in topics or as part of the personal, social and health education programme, as the pupils mature.

30. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. Teachers have copies of pupils' individual plans and these are used effectively to provide suitable work to meet the needs of individuals. The school ensures that the provision outlined in pupils' statements is in place and is reviewed annually in line with Code of Practice guidance. The school mission statement recognises the development and respect of the individual. This ethos is actively promoted and ensures all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. However, there is a minority of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 who are recorded on the special educational needs register but do not receive the regular support that would consolidate their progress.

31. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The ethos of respect for individuals permeates the school, adults are good role models and the result is that this aspect of the curriculum is a strength of the school. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and classroom rules are displayed so pupils understand what is acceptable and behave well. There is a well-planned scheme of work that is presented through topics and the use of circle time activities where children discuss feelings, relationships and how people change, as they grow older. In the weekly lessons pupils respond well, for example Year 1 pupils discover that someone can be mother and a grandma at the same time. Pupils in Year 5 become aware of the people such as doctors, dentist, dinner ladies and parents who can advise them on eating healthy food, while other Year 5 pupils discuss maturely the difference between loving and liking.

32. The school has excellent links with the community. The Home/School/Parish coordinator is proactive in developing links between the school and the community and her contribution to the life of the school in developing a happy and secure environment is invaluable. The school has effective links with the partner high schools with Year 6 pupils making a series of induction visits before they leave their primary school. The very good links with one of the high schools is successful in helping Year 6 pupils to learn about job applications and have practical experience as they apply for prefect posts and are interviewed prior to appointments being made. The school has useful links with Liverpool Football Club with pupils able to take advantage of the out of school Re-educate Study Support Programme

which focuses on information technology and social skills. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and contribute to charities; they have taken part in the Romanian Shoebox appeal and also support a local baby hospice.

33. The curriculum is enriched by visits from Merseyside Police, theatre groups, musicians and historians. Senior pupils have the opportunity to attend residential courses at Crosby Hall Educational Trust.

34. The after school clubs provide opportunities for pupils to develop particular interests. A very good example of this is the Gardening Club. Encouraged by two of their teachers, pupils examine the growth of their bulbs and enjoy making 'bird puddings' from nuts and crumbs as they discuss the how long the puddings will take to set and experiment with pipe cleaners to make good hanging hooks. The varied activities include clubs for French language, art and drama, computer studies and mathematics. Provision for sport includes netball, football and swimming; the school has an indoor swimming pool within the grounds.

35. The school makes overall high quality provision for the pupils' personal development. The quality of their moral development is excellent. Their spiritual and social development are very good and their cultural development is good.

36. The focus for the school's delivery of spiritual values is its Catholic ethos. The emphasis on Christian values within the teaching and traditions of the Church is happily and consistently delivered to the enjoyment and benefit of pupils. The conviction in teaching these values and relating it firmly to family and community bears much of the success in the development of the range of their personal values. To experience the children's celebration of collective worship is a pleasure. Worship is conducted in accordance with statutory requirements.

37. The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have the benefit of the role models provided by staff and they are secure in their understanding of good and bad behaviour. The school's use of rewards and sanctions is well balanced to acknowledge pupils' achievements whilst encouraging their personal development. A good example of the support for pupils' moral development is the geography scheme of work which provides Year 6 pupils with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on moral issues about the environment, such as the destruction of the rainforests.

38. The school makes significant effort to encourage appropriate relationships and their success is evident in the warmth and friendliness of the pupils. They form strong friendships with each other and have respectful trusting relationships with staff. They welcome visitors with whom they are happy and eager to share their work. Good provision is made for their social development through visits to outside venues for recreational and educational activities, attending residential courses and their high level of community involvement. The pupils take responsibility for a number of tasks that assist the running of the school such as prefect duties or helping in the dining room. The school makes good provision to support their development through introducing them to citizenship in Key Stage 2.

39. The school's curriculum planning shows a good level of provision to support the development of pupils' cultural values. They learn about our own culture through the study of the early invasions of Britain and the Tudor and Victorian periods of our culture. Their visits to local venues of interest introduces them to aspects their community culture. They have had ethnic visitors to the school, however their knowledge of other cultures is less extensive to prepare them for life in a multicultural society.

40. The school's strategies for developing these values commence with the youngest pupils at an appropriate level and their behaviour and personal development reflect this. They are confident and

secure in the school environment and they are learning to cope with the routines of sharing, waiting their turn saying prayers and concluding tasks.

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

41. The overall provision for the pupils' care and welfare is very good. No aspect is less than good with some aspects found to be excellent. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. They ensure teachers' ability to set targets in order to raise standards. There are however some inconsistencies in teachers' knowledge and use of assessments. The school is very successful with its procedures and strategies for behaviour management and the educational support and guidance provided for its pupils.

42. The school has made extensive and genuine provision to provide a safe, secure learning environment and ensure the health and safety of its pupils and staff. The strength of this provision is the excellent level of pastoral knowledge and care given by the staff supported by school, home and community liaison. Counselling is available for pupils affected by separation or bereavement and a mentor link is provided for pupils identified as experiencing barriers to learning. All staff are well-versed in child protection procedures and very well motivated by their pastoral care for pupils.

43. The development of pupils' personal, social and health education features prominently in the curriculum through direct teaching and 'Circle Time'. Their ability to make informed choices and to be aware of personal safety issues is supported by specialist visitors who advise on aspects such as 'Stranger Danger', bullying and the danger of drug abuse. The nursery and reception classes provide safe and secure learning environments where the level of care and support ensures that these young children develop trust and the confidence to be independent.

44. The school meets all the requirements for those pupils with statements of special educational need and all are well supported. Good links with other agencies ensure the provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is implemented. Teachers identify pupils' special needs within the first half term, and with support from the special needs co-ordinator make more specific assessments. The assessment results are used well to help teachers' plan effectively for pupils' individual needs. Pupils have full access to the school curriculum. A positive feature of the school provision is the recent appointment of a learning mentor, who is establishing good relationships with pupils and aims to help any pupils including those with behavioural problems to take better advantage of the broad curriculum offered by the school.

45. Procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' attainment and progress are very good and especially at Key Stage 2 they help teachers set appropriate targets for pupils and are used well in order to raise standards and support better progress being made.

46. The school looks carefully at its National Curriculum test results and uses these to check its predictions and at the same time to see where strengths and weaknesses lie in teaching and learning. It uses a nationally acceptable test, administered when children enter school, in order to give them a baseline score for aspects of English and mathematics. Although overall satisfactory, rigorous use of this to identify key targets for improvements is not consistent within the Foundation Stage. Little evidence exists of similar tests and scores to record children's social and personal development from this early period of their life in school.

47. The school makes good use of optional National Curriculum tests in Key Stage 2, in order to track pupils' progress in between their Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 obligatory tests. In this way they can keep a check on progress and set targets for individual pupils to encourage further progress. At

the same time, the school also uses further tests for reading, comprehension and word recognition, which it gathers together to make sure that pupils are making sufficient progress each year in these areas. The only problem currently with these tests is that they cannot be compared with levels of the National Curriculum and cannot therefore be readily used as part of that gathering of information.

48. In 1999, the school began tracking groups of pupils as they moved through the school. It selected three pupils each from three broad ability groups in classes and checked regularly on their progress, using the results as pointers to the progress of the rest of the pupils in those broad bands. This has proved a useful and innovative exercise, with the results being well used by teachers to aid improving pupils' progress and in setting targets.

49. Since adopting the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, the school has developed individual target setting sheets. These set targets in both subjects for pupils, which are reviewed termly, agreed between pupils, parents and the school and revised according to the progress made. Not only is this useful in involving the three parties in identifying the achievements of the pupils, but it also serves to give pupils realistic goals to aim for in raising attainment. This has not yet been accomplished in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage.

50. The Deputy Headteacher collates much of the gathered information and produces many useful charts and analysis of the information. This information and its use is at the heart of the successful drive to raise standards. The area for further development lies in recognising, checking and recording personal and social development, which would then complete the very good range of monitoring and support material.

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

51. The provision made by the school to engage in partnership with parents is very good and makes a significant impact on pupils' attitude to school. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory.

52. The great majority of parents who responded to pre-inspection enquiry report strong approval and support for the school's arrangements to inform and involve them in the life of the school and their children's learning. Parents' evenings are held three times a year and they are provided with good quality reports on how their child is progressing. Newsletters advise on forthcoming school activities and events. The school's strong commitment to working with families is evident in the support and advisory provisions offered by the school. Parents are welcomed into the nursery class at the start and end of the school day and the school provides an induction course for parents of nursery and reception pupils. Homework and reading records inform them of schoolwork for all pupils and these are accompanied by an invitation for parents to be involved. Parents are invited to curriculum meetings, class assemblies and school concerts. The Home/School Parish coordinator has visited all families to encourage their participation.

53. A small number of parents were active in school during the inspection making a valuable contribution to the learning environment. The school has introduced Home/School agreements to further encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning at home as well as at school.

54. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern. The school has good links with parents and an 'open door' policy for informal consultations; any concerns are also discussed at the parents evening. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator is available on a weekly basis after school for any parents who want to share concerns about their children's progress.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. There have been considerable changes to the staffing, responsibilities and governance of the school, which make any comparisons with the previous inspection reports invalid. Since the last inspection the school has been created by the amalgamation of the adjacent infant and junior schools. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher of the junior school were appointed the senior managers of the newly formed school from April 1999. The second Deputy Headteacher, who was absent at the time of the inspection, was previously Deputy Headteacher of the infant school. The amalgamation has been managed very well and the Headteacher and Senior Deputy Headteacher have worked tirelessly to build consensus and mutual respect between the two staffs; overall they have been successful but are aware of some further challenges in ensuring all staff are committed to the future of one school. They lead by example, promote a positive work ethic, make a very effective team and are equally dedicated to the school's success.

56. The leadership and management of the school in providing clarity of educational vision is excellent and the impact of this, is the key factor in the school's success and the good achievements of pupils. The Headteacher and Senior Deputy Headteacher supported by most staff and the governors are resolute in their dedication to giving pupils the tools to raise their own expectations for self-improvement. The school's aims are focused on its Catholic character, based on respect and care for individuals and a drive for high standards regardless of pupils' background or abilities. Aims are exceptionally well met and the ethos is one of high expectation. The school is very successful at being 'educationally inclusive' including not only the embracing and challenge of a comprehensive intake but also in ensuring that pupils want to attend school and in promoting a climate that regular attendance is a desirable and worthwhile goal.

57. Staff have been allocated responsibilities but this has been made more difficult because of staff absence and has resulted in the senior Deputy Headteacher carrying too many responsibilities. The coordination of design and technology is unsatisfactory because it has too little impact on standards in the subject. There is scope for all staff to share their expertise further to enhance the good beginning made to working as a team to further support the continuity of pupils' education.

58. The school's analysis of needs and strategic planning is excellent. The plan is well structured, well-written and focuses on the most important priorities related to pupils' achievements and the raising of standards. Whilst the plan is necessarily wide ranging it does not lose its focus on peripherals. Success criteria are well argued. Governors, staff and parents are well-informed and encouraged to be involved in determining the strategic direction of the school.

59. The Headteacher has a well-informed view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school; in deed the inspection findings brought no surprises for the senior management team. The management has a positive view of the inspection process to confirm the direction it will take to further improve the quality of education for pupils.

60. The governing body is skillfully led. The Chair of Governors is actively involved in daily activities and provides an excellent link between the school, Church and community. Minutes of meetings show that governors are well-appraised of the daily challenges facing staff and that they ask pertinent questions about the results of initiatives. They have a relevant structure of sub-committees and through these provide good support and outside expertise to the overall management of the school. Governors have identified clear criteria for identifying best value and they show questioning, prudence and consultation in their decision-making. The governors fulfill their statutory responsibilities effectively

save for the full delivery for information and communication technology, which they have identified for improvement.

61. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies has been very well managed but there is scope for the literacy coordinator to take a more active role in monitoring, analysing and being accountable for the teaching of English, particularly speaking and writing.

62. The special educational needs coordinator is experienced and has well-established administrative arrangements to make sure that reviews are held regularly and that pupils' individual needs are met. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs receive their entitlement to extra support and resources. There is a satisfactory, clearly written policy for special educational needs and this is due to be reviewed in light of impending new legislation. The school provides a satisfactory level of staffing and resources to meet the needs of this group of pupils. However the deployment of learning support assistants does not allow the school to meet the special educational needs of all groups of pupils who are identified as needing additional support.

63. The accommodation is well used but is disparate, unwieldy to manage and in poor condition. The school eagerly awaits imminent plans to create one building. Some initiatives have been put on hold, for example, the information and communication technology suite and the new library area; staff are keen for the building to be complete so that they may enhance the learning environment and further opportunities for pupils. The caretaker and his team maintain the accommodation to a high standard of cleanliness.

64. Financial control and management of resources are very good. The focus for the school has been to manage the changes necessary as a result of the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, which it has done well. Added to this has been the school's nomination for 'Beacon' status, although separately funded, has had significant positive implications for staff training. The school development plan, in taking account of these demands, has made very good provision for its educational priorities. Specific grants have been very well directed to ensure optimum return. The school seeks to achieve maximum benefit from its financial resources and governors and senior managers are fastidious in applying the principles of best value in their use of funds and have devised clear guidance for doing so.

65. Given its staffing, resources, accommodation and the effectiveness of their use along with the good progress and achievements of pupils, whose attainment on entry is low, the school gives very good value for money.





## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

### **66. The governors, Headteacher and staff now need to:**

**Raise standards in information and communication technology, which are below average and, in music at Key Stage 1 and design and technology across the school by ensuring that:**

- staff competence and confidence to teach the subjects are improved;
- the full delivery of the National Curriculum requirements are carefully monitored;
- pupils have regular and direct access to acquiring ICT skills and using them systematically in the other subjects;
- the coordination of design and technology is improved.

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph(s): 4, 5, 25, 29, 57, 106, 113-119 and 132-148.*

**Extend the breadth of the curriculum for the younger pupils and notably the emphasis on language improvement by ensuring that:**

- there is a clear understanding of, and adherence to the principles of the Early Learning Goals;
- the curriculum stems from further practical and enriching activities to extend pupils' knowledge of the world;
- there is sufficient adult support and intervention to develop pupils' thinking and speaking skills about new experiences;
- a broader range of recording techniques are used that are based on clear analysis of pupils' stage of development.

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph(s): 6, 29, 68, 69, 71, 73 and 78*

**Improve the pupils' progress in writing and its use and, the practical application of mathematical and scientific knowledge and skills by ensuring that:**

- the literacy coordinator has ample opportunity to monitor, analyse and check progress to identify areas for improvement in writing;
- a consistent approach to teaching handwriting is adopted through the school;
- pupils have ample opportunities to acquire relevant vocabulary and benefit from good adult role models and intervention;
- teachers plan for greater opportunities for pupils to explore and exercise independence in their learning.

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph(s): 3, 6, 21, 22, 71, 77, 81, 90, 91, 99 and 100*

**Broaden the impact of the very good assessment work in Key Stage 2 across the whole school to ensure that:**

- the extensive expertise of the Deputy Headteacher impacts on the assessment practice and subsequently the progress of pupils across the whole school;
- baseline assessments are used more rigorously to identify key targets for pupils;
- the attainment of pupils at the end of key stages is carefully monitored to ensure pupils' progress is sustained consistently.

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph(s): 20, 46, 47, 49, 50 and 84*

*Other minor weaknesses can be found in paragraphs: 30, 57, 62 and 82*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	19	42	37	0	0	0

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	294
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		124

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	63

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	19	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	14
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	32	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (n/a)	94 (n/a)	100 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	85(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	32	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (n/a)	100 (n/a)	97 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	29	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	25	22	25
	Total	39	37	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (74)	74 (89)	80 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	17
	Girls	22	22	26
	Total	34	37	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (79)	74 (85)	86 (91)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	247
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	215

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	620,170.58
Total expenditure	610,326.42
Expenditure per pupil	1,891.49
Balance brought forward from previous year	80,286.84
Balance carried forward to next year	90,131.00

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	326
Number of questionnaires returned	96

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	27	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	49	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	42	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	69	30	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	36	16	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	29	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	22	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	47	41	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	29	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	32	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	29	11	2	10

## **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**

67. Children attend the nursery part-time for either a morning or afternoon session. On entry to the nursery, standards of attainment are below national expectations. Some children have very poor communication skills and hardly speak when they first arrive at the nursery. As a result of the vibrant curriculum and the very good relationships developed between the adults and the children, most children, including those who have special educational needs make very good progress especially in personal development and speaking skills. By the time they transfer to the reception classes, their attainment is around average compared with national standards except in communication and knowledge and understanding of the world.

68. Children in the reception classes, including children who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They continue to make good progress in personal development. Their progress in communication, mathematical, physical and creative skills is satisfactory but children make limited progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Behaviour management is good and the very positive relationships within the reception classes have a positive impact on children's favourable attitudes to school.

69. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. The children have a very good start to their education when they attend the supportive and enriching environment of the nursery. Curriculum planning provides a cohesive curriculum and includes all the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage. However, the curriculum delivery within the reception classes has not yet fully embraced the breadth and relevance needed to make sure the impact of the very good nursery curriculum continues throughout the Foundation Stage, particularly given the low level of many children's attainment on entry. All children who have special educational needs are identified early and teachers use appropriate strategies to make sure all pupils have full access to the curriculum. There are good relationships with parents who are considered by the school to be partners in the children's education.

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

70. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children have made very good progress in their personal and emotional development and reach national expectations in this area. This shows very good achievement and reflects the good teaching for children under five. The majority of children are eager to come to the nursery and enjoy play activities. This positive attitude continues to develop well into the reception classes. Boys and girls are happy to play together as was evident when observing groups of children playing in the post office, and supermarket. Relationships are very good and children work well together when they count coins in the fast food shop and help each other to sieve pasta and sand in preparation for their collage work. They respond to instructions and questions but a significant minority do not initiate conversation. The high expectations of the teachers to say 'please' and 'thank-you' and their positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour have a positive impact on children's personal and social development. Good opportunities are taken at milk-time for adults to encourage children to develop their social skills. There are good opportunities for children to learn to concentrate or to persevere with an adult directed activity for example when they perform sequences of movements or write shopping lists. Children are encouraged to make choices, work together in role-play and take turns with the toys and activities available. The adults are very good role models for the children, always treating each other with courtesy and respect. Nursery registration time is a happy event where adults make sure that children benefit from the opportunities to develop friendships and enjoy each other's company.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

71. Children enter the nursery with skills that are below average and when they leave the Foundation Stage, due largely to good teaching, their attainment is as expected in all areas except in spoken language which remains below. Some speak clearly and confidently but many still use a limited range of vocabulary speaking in short phrases rather than complete sentences. There are good opportunities for nursery children to develop spoken language as they discuss the texture of the dough when they make buns, and reception children talk with their teacher about the colour, shape and features of their front doors. A variety of role-play situations give the children good opportunities to talk with greater confidence. Teachers work hard to encourage children to increase their ability to listen for prolonged periods of time. Teachers regularly share books with children and encourage a desire to read. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children know the letters of the alphabet and can say a range of initial sounds. They recognise their own names and understand that writing communicates meaning. They know to turn a page from left to right and higher attaining children can read simple sentences using picture clues and their knowledge of initial letters to help them, they are also able to identify rhyming words. Average children are confident to read key words and repeated sentences in their text. Lower attaining children have an enthusiasm for books and enjoy sharing stories and discussing pictures with adults. Children regularly take their books home to share with their family and parents are very supportive of the school in encouraging their children to read. Children are given opportunities to develop writing skills when they make shopping lists, fill in forms and write letters at the post office. However, their work shows too much copy writing and not enough early attempts at independent writing and their progress in correct letter formation is slow. More recent work is of better quality and relevance to their young needs.

## **Mathematical development**

72. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage most children have made good progress and reach national expectations in this area of learning. Teaching is good and children are given sufficient opportunities to experience mathematics in everyday situations. Children enjoy counting activities when they count coins in the shop and post office and pay for their goods. The daily emptying of the post box and changing of postal times is an effective way of making children aware of time. Nursery children understand that a cake has to be cut in half so it can be shared. Under adult direction reception children use their counting skills when they pour cups of water into a larger container. They enjoy exploring the school for squares, triangles and circle and are able to describe these shapes to their teacher; the more able children share their knowledge that 'you need lots of squares to make a box'. Good teaching stimulates children's interest in shape and as a result, they search their classroom to find three-dimensional shapes such as cones and cylinders. Other opportunities to develop number skills include counting the children who are present during registration and counting the number of words in a short story. Teachers use every opportunity effectively to develop mathematical skills and this has a positive impact on children's learning.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

73. Attainment in this area of learning is below the standards expected although teaching is satisfactory. This is because the children have limited experiences when they arrive at the school and the curriculum in the reception classes is not sufficiently broad and stimulating for the children to make good progress. Children can fasten pieces of construction together to make models. They know that they have changed since they were babies. They talk about and draw their families and some know their full address. They enjoy using sand and pasta as they experiment with materials. They have a growing awareness of the neighbourhood describing houses that are 'stuck together'. With adult support, children can use the mouse to click on shapes or to place fruits in boxes on the computer



monitor. They understand that there are times for celebration such as Christmas or someone's birthday, and photographic evidence shows the children have visited Gulliver's World and a farm.

### **Physical development**

74. During the inspection there were limited opportunities to observe outdoor play. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of the children reach the nationally expected levels of ability in their physical development. They work quietly when they use construction kits and join the pieces carefully. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to handle small tools such as pencils, paint brushes and scissors. They put these skills to good use when cutting and pasting their collage work and making models from playdough. In physical education lessons children make good progress in developing control of the speed direction and height of their movements. They respond well to their teacher and are aware of the need to leave space for others and enjoy jumping and landing in a sequenced pattern.

### **Creative development**

75. The children's attainment is in line with standards expected when they leave the Foundation Stage and they make good progress in their learning because of good teaching. They make drawings to represent stories their teachers have recounted. They explore colour and texture as they use a wide range of materials to cut and glue. Children enjoy and join in with songs such as 'The more we are together'. Children enjoy imaginative role-play in the post office, shop and fast food shop. They delight in dressing up although the opportunity to dress up and engage in role-play where they could further their speaking skills is limited in the reception classes. Adults join in with the children and help to promote language but there is considerable scope for further adult intervention given the very specific weakness in children's speaking and communication skills. Children use paint to express themselves freely and their work is proudly displayed around the classrooms.

## ENGLISH

76. Standards are in line with national expectations by the age of 11 in both national tests and when the inspection findings are considered. Pupils achieve well given their low starting base and well above other pupils in similar schools. By the age of seven, pupils attain average standards in tests and in their daily work and again they attain well above other pupils in similar schools. Reading is the main strength and the school has identified the need to improve writing performance and the inspection agrees that this is a key area for improvement.

77. The quality of teaching and adherence to the principles of the National Literacy Strategy are the main reasons for the good achievement. The very good analysis of test and assessment data at Key Stage 2 further support the tracking of pupils' progress to identify targets for improvement and this adds notably to the overall achievement. The rigour with which target setting takes place in Years 5 and 6 is not yet well established elsewhere and also the literacy coordinator does not have enough input in to tracking progress through the school. This means the outcomes of the excellent teaching pupils receive consistently in Year 2 is not followed through and their progress built upon as well as it could be into lower Key Stage 2.

78. Pupils' language and communication skills are low when they enter the school and in spite of some good work in the Foundation Stage the pupils are limited in both their vocabulary and experiences about which they can talk. In Year 1 pupils engaged in shared reading activity, act out the sequence of the story, *The Gingerbread Man* and they gain in confidence as they chant key phrases. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have broadly average speaking skills although a significant minority lack confidence and competence to speak aloud to an audience. They give answers to the teacher's questions and some are able to give definitions of words and also offer ideas for the next phase of how a story might unfold. In Year 3, pupils profitably use their speaking skills to contribute to a discussion on school rules; in Year 4, others use their listening skills well to follow a story at a listening centre and answer questions to show their understanding. In Year 5, speaking and listening are more variable between the classes. In one class there was too much teacher talk and the teacher gave pupils too little time to formulate their ideas, especially girls, but in the other class where teaching is often very good the teacher drove the pupils to answer and extend their ideas. By the age of 11, pupils speaking skills are better and securely placed within expected levels to cope with their work. Pupils have acquired good levels of technical vocabulary about the subject. The personal vocabulary of all except the highest attainers remains more limited. Listening skills are average by the age of seven and good by the age of 11.

79. Standards in reading are at least satisfactory by the age of seven and for some pupils they are good; a minority are making good progress in their reading given their prior attainment but they still have a long way to go. There is a very good focus on pupils identifying ways to help them read new words; they know to look at the pictures for a clue, look at the size of print to help think how to read the word, ask a friend, say the sounds and read ahead. Pupils by the age of seven are acquiring a very good understanding of reading with expression. When asked 'How the wolf spoke?' a pupil replies, 'with a 'slinky' voice' and then proceeds to read the wolf's speech in that way. Pupils enjoy reading aloud and all attempt to join in. Pupils are making very good progress in recognizing speech marks and cues to aid with expression; they are encouraged to read at home but not all parents are supportive to the process; where pupils say that they read often to parents and carers they tend to show more confidence in their reading. Many pupils by the age of seven can readily recognize the author and title, and they know what the index and contents page are and how to use them. Pupils are mainly eager to read and many can say the names of some of their favourite books or stories.

80. Pupils' reading is soundly sustained into Key Stage 2 but those pupils who still lack knowledge of phonic skills and whose reading is less strong are not progressing as quickly as they have done. Most can name authors that they prefer to read, read more frequently on their own for enjoyment and have a good understanding of how to use a dictionary to search for the meaning of new words. Pupils say they prefer reading storybooks to information texts and this is telling because the school non-fiction library is limited and also pupils' general knowledge is weak. The promotion of non-fiction text and reading for information through choice is a goal for many pupils to reach. Older pupils understand reading for information and some are making good progress in extracting information from text in lessons. For example, in Year 5 pupils make variable progress when linking their science work on breathing to reading; in one class progress is very good and pupils are led to understand fully how to extract information however, in the parallel class progress is only satisfactory because the teacher's explanations and knowledge are too limited.

81. Standards are average in writing by the end of the key stages but some pupils are attaining above at the end of Key Stage 1 and a small minority are on target to attain above at Key Stage 2. In the later Foundation Stage and early Key Stage 1 pupils are not having enough opportunity to write independently resulting in gaps in their learning; too much work is copied and this does not support pupils well enough in attempting new words or in using their phonic knowledge. However, pupils' progress improves significantly in Year 2 and scrutiny of work shows strong improvement in the depth, quality and quantity of pupils' written work and their ability to 'have a go' at writing for themselves. They use their phonic knowledge to sound out words for spelling and draw on what they know about compound words and when looking for small words in 'big words' to help with spelling. Handwriting is not consistent or good enough across the school. There is no agreed approach to teaching handwriting and pupils do not easily move to a joined script to support spelling, fluency or note taking skills. Pupils write for a broad range of purposes by the age of seven for example, describing why they like the season of spring and writing letters from a mother to a daughter. By the age of 11, pupils use the conventions of Standard English suitably in their writing and the attainment of most is average. The technical skills are in place. Pupils know how writing should be structured; the creativity and incisiveness of writing is weaker; this has much to do with their limited prior experiences. The progress in output of work is variable across the key stage but by Year 6 productivity and quality are mainly good. Spelling is fairly accurate and pupils readily check their spellings using dictionaries. The most able choose adventurous words, for example, when describing 'night', one pupil writes 'Night is nasty because it kidnaps the sun'. However, in both key stages pupils' personal experiences are limited and too often they do not have the vocabulary or knowledge to draw on. This hinders the development of their writing particularly imaginative writing. The key features for improving writing are to broaden the pupils' experiences, general knowledge and role models for writing, linking to the work in reading and emulating how authors work to capture their audience's attention. Worksheets are used expeditiously and do not hinder pupils' progress.

82. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is consistently very good in Year 2 and at times excellent; there are regular examples of very good teaching in Year 5 and 6. However, some teaching is barely adequate because teacher knowledge is not strong and the approach lacks creativity. The main strength of the teaching is that teachers have taken the features of the National Literacy Strategy and implemented them well. The introductions to lessons give pupils knowledge and deepen their understanding. For example, the work in Year 2 on reading with fluency; both teachers were relentless in checking that pupils could identify speech marks and tested them on how to read speech. The teachers' modeling of reading gave the pupils a very good idea of how to read and the relationships gave them confidence to 'have a go'. In Year 3, the teaching is satisfactory but organisation and management of the class space and pupils during introductions detract from discussion; the teacher has to compete with support staff working with less able pupils. Teaching in Year 4 is good and in Year 5 too variable ranging from barely satisfactory to very good. The teaching in Year 6 is good and very

good and contributes well to the final standards achieved by pupils. Plenary sessions are not used carefully by some staff to ensure there is sufficient time for checking, understanding and determining the next step of learning.

83. Pupils enjoy literacy sessions and they are responsive to the work offered. In all lessons they showed a good work ethic although a minority of pupils in one Year 5 class lacked concentration and showed some immature behaviour.

84. Assessment is mainly good but better at upper Key Stage 2 than other areas. A very good feature through the school is that teachers set literacy targets for all pupils and these are shared termly with pupils and parents. Older pupils know what their targets are and can discuss how they are trying to improve. There is insufficient use and analysis of national test results as pupils move between the key stages. The delivery of English meets statutory requirements. The literacy coordinator is knowledgeable but not yet fully effective in monitoring the quality of provision across the school and influencing practice, although some time has been made available for this to happen. The delivery of English is overall a strong feature of the school but there are areas for improvement outlined as main areas for improvement by the school particularly in the use of writing in the other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Results from the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that standards were below average when compared with all schools nationally, but above average when compared with schools in which pupils come from similar backgrounds. Although the national comparison suggests a decline in results, when examined closely, they show that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was well above the national average, however results were down graded as there were less than the average percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 grade. Over the last four years, results have shown a steady improvement, especially when looking at the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 grade.

86. Evidence from the current inspection confirms that in the current Year 6, the vast majority of pupils will achieve the expected Level 4, with a significant minority reaching the higher Level 5. The results of the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 are even more positive with 100 per cent of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or higher. In this key stage the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, was above the national average. Overall, the pupils scored well above the average scores of pupils in similar schools. Once again, the trend in results over the last four years has been a positive one.

87. Inspection evidence points to current standards being in line with national expectations, with a significant number of pupils being already capable of achieving the higher Level 3 grade.

88. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in their mathematics. Work is prepared for different ability groups within classes and good support is given to those pupils with special educational needs. As a result they make the same good progress as other pupils. At the same time, the school has deemed that the top three per cent of its pupils should be noted as gifted and talented. As a result of this move, those pupils are also receiving work which is often well suited to their higher than average ability, so that they too make good progress. The small group of pupils, for whom English is not their first language, makes equally good progress and are often not discernable within a class, as they are so well integrated.

89. The successes in mathematics across the two key stages can be attributed to: -

- the commitment teachers show to making improvements in standards.
- the very effective adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy.

- the leadership of an able and hard-working coordinator.
- the careful recording of assessment information, which allows pupils' progress to be tracked and realistic targets set for them.

90. By the age of seven, pupils develop a good understanding of place value. They know their number bonds to ten, with a great many pupils knowing them to 100. Pupils can add and subtract with both tens and units and understand that multiplying can be accomplished through a number of additions. They recognise all coins and can make simple calculations involving giving change. Their mental recall is being developed well during numeracy lessons. They can count on, count backwards, count in odd and even numbers and can make use of basic “times table” knowledge. Pupils can describe simple two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, squares and rectangles, by referring to sides, corners and edges. Whilst the school tries hard to frame much of its mathematics in “real-life” settings, it does not yet give pupils enough opportunities to investigate numbers, where there are no right or wrong answers. In this area of work they are not making enough use of their mathematical understanding and knowledge to attempt to solve open-ended problems.

91. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils work well with decimals in both addition and subtraction. They have a good understanding of fractions and higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of the links between fractions, decimals and percentages. There is good understanding of negative numbers and overall, pupils can make good use of the four operations, which feature in many of their numeracy lessons. They understand the difference between perimeter and area and are capable of calculating both. Good work is noted in symmetry, with nearly all pupils able to point to lines of symmetry and indicate aspects of rotational symmetry. Work in data handling, whilst being good, does not make enough use of information technology. Although there are a number of examples of the use of information technology on display, the school has some way to go before it integrates this fully into the work in mathematics. Equally work in investigative mathematics is less well developed, with pupils getting too few opportunities to pursue open-ended problem solving, which draws on their good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of mathematics.

92. Each teacher was seen teaching aspects of mathematics. Overall teaching is good. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Of the sixteen lessons seen, one was excellent, one was very good, 11 were good and three were satisfactory. This is a very positive profile of teaching in the school and has a significant effect of the progress pupils make. Positive features of nearly all lessons were the well-formulated plans, supported well by the National Numeracy Strategy. Plans gave teachers a clear picture of their own objectives and the learning objectives of their pupils. These were nearly always shared with pupils so that they too knew what they were going to learn. Work for the various groups within the class was not just different, but met the needs of the groups well. Once again, the information given to teachers by the National Numeracy Strategy ensured that they had good subject knowledge, which in turn made the teaching of basic skills very successful. Throughout the school, the management of lessons and the high expectations shown by teachers of their pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work, were further key factors in the success of lessons.

93. In all mathematics lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils were always at least satisfactory. Sixty per cent of lessons showed good attitudes and behaviour, with 30 per cent being very good or excellent. This very positive picture has a real impact on learning. Pupils concentrate well in the mental recall section of the lessons; they persevere with their calculations, contribute well to discussions and are confident in explaining their strategies for their work, not only to their teacher but also to the class. Very little time is lost through unacceptable behaviour and consequently maximum use is made of lesson time.

94. In the excellent lesson, seen in a Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher's exposition and very clear explanations drew from information of previous lessons during the week and so led to specific challenges being set for individuals and small groups in the class. The questioning technique of the teacher was superb. It challenged and extended the more able pupils but safeguarded the pupils with special educational needs by including them with their own particular questions. The context of the lesson was weighing. This was exemplified by the introduction of Red Riding Hood's shopping bag, the contents of which had to be weighed and items had to be less than one kilogram. This captured the imagination of the pupils who behaved impeccably, worked hard at their tasks, were very well behaved, and ready and willing to learn.

95. The school has made very good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Several teachers have been able to attend very useful courses on its extended use and the school benefited from an early opportunity of putting the strategy into action. The school has now reached a point where it has an opportunity to reflect on its current use of the strategy, in order to find better opportunities to introduce further aspects of investigational mathematics within its weekly work.

96. In very many areas of the school, pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to improve their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding is not sufficiently developed. This is partly due to teachers' lack of confidence and some lack of appropriate numbers of computers and software. Equally, the use teachers make of mathematics across the wider curriculum deserves further investigation. Opportunities are missed in geography, design and technology and to a lesser extent science, to involve aspects of mathematics in order to emphasise its wider application. There is scope for some improvement in the use made of tests in lower Key Stage 1 and at the changeover from one key stage to another.

97. Marking of work, throughout the school, is generally carried out accurately and positively, giving pupils an understanding of how they might improve their work. Assessments are used well to set targets for pupils, which are shared with them and their parents. Results of tests are very well recorded at Key Stage 2, and give teachers enough information in order to track pupils' progress from year to year.

98. The subject coordinator, in spite of her heavy workload as Deputy Headteacher, manages the subject very well. She has considerable subject knowledge and is very clear about the subject's strengths and areas for further development. Her analysis of assessments and her recording of pupils' progress have led the school well into developing strategies for making targets for pupils achievable, manageable yet challenging.

## **SCIENCE**

99. In the year 2000 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' attainment was below the national average and close to the average compared to similar schools for those attaining Level 4 or above but above average for those attaining Level 5 or above. The inspection finds that pupils at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are attaining in line with national expectations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of 'fair testing' is sound. All pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of both natural and physical scientific phenomena. However, their ability to determine their own line of enquiry is not so well developed.

100. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils recognise the need for fair tests and are well versed in making predictions and hypothesising on possible outcomes to investigations. They demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. They are able to use scientific vocabulary well, for example, when exploring the circulatory system of the human body or labelling the

parts of a flowering plant. In a lesson observed they used their knowledge and understanding of material and their properties drawn from previous work to clarify substances such as solids, liquids and gases. There was evidence of their understanding of gravitational pull in their written recordings of investigations involving the dropping of a ball and other objects. Detailed work on electricity, demonstrated their knowledge of electrical circuits and an understanding of which materials are good conductors and insulators. However, opportunities for them to use their knowledge and understanding further through closing their own circuits were missed.

101. By the age of seven, pupils are asking questions and are finding the answers to their questions through a focused programme of investigations, using both first-hand experiences and simple secondary sources. They are able to use simple equipment, make observations and record their findings accurately. For example, following a walk around the school's grounds they recognised different creatures and the places they live. They used their artistic skills well in recording their findings through their high quality observational drawings of the different plants. Many of which had been labelled correctly.

102. Other work scrutinised gave testimony to their secure knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and physical phenomena. Of particular interest were their efforts in meeting the challenge of making a lump of plasticine float. Their 'bobbing boats' experiment which focused on floating and sinking was at a higher standard than often seen at this stage.

103. Pupils of all ages show an eagerness to be involved in the practical activities. Their positive attitudes and very good behaviour have a good effect on their learning. They concentrate well, work together successfully and make good progress. For example, Year 2 pupils worked at full stretch throughout a lesson on the habitats of plants and animals. They responded well to the teacher's questioning and persevered in searching through their dictionaries and reference materials for their answers. Year 4 pupils satisfied their curiosity by exploring the characteristics of different rocks in a sensible, controlled but very enthusiastic manner.

104. The overall quality of teaching is good, with instances of very good teaching at the end of both key stages. Lessons are well planned and the ones seen were generally well prepared and resourced effectively for the determined activities. The activities produce appropriate challenges for the pupils and they respond positively. Teachers constantly assess pupils' development during the lessons, through observation and questioning, using this to make direct teaching points which have a positive effect on the learning.

105. Teachers stress health and safety procedures, so that when handling different materials or setting up experiments the pupils are carefully instructed in how to do so without danger to themselves or others.

106. The subject has been reviewed and the revised policy statement is comprehensive and well informed, providing an effective reference for members of staff. Scrutiny of the teachers' planning shows detail of subject knowledge to be taught, attention to the investigative process and the range of pupils' needs including those with special educational needs and the more able. Weekly evaluations are made and teacher assessments are used effectively to influence future planning. Resources are very good and support the delivery of the subject well. The environment and educational visits are used effectively to broaden the pupils' knowledge and understanding and to arouse their curiosity. The pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used well throughout the investigative process, but their information and communication technology skills are underdeveloped. The subject is well managed and delivery meets requirements of the National Curriculum, and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, social and spiritual development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Standards by the ages of seven and 11 are broadly average. Pupils produce work, which shows a sound and at times good grasp of techniques and skills.

108. In Key Stage 1, pupils have learned to mix colours and apply them appropriately to their work. In one lesson, Year 1 pupils used their skills in cutting, sticking and pasting a variety of materials they had selected when designing and making 'a people who care for us' card. The work produced was of a satisfactory standard. Corridor displays enrich the environment, the wide variety of work reflecting the teacher's delivery of a broad range of experiences. Line drawings of mother and child; silhouettes, where glue sticks had been used to blend the colours and, scary Incy Wincey Spiders hanging menacingly in front of their dyed webs give a good ideal of the rich experiences being given to, and enjoyed by the pupils.

109. In Key Stage 2, pupils were observed using their observational skills to produce line drawings of their partners in profile whilst older pupils were designing and making noses in the style of those of the ancient Greeks. Displays show their developing skills across a wide range of techniques. Observational drawings showed a sophisticated approach to the use of tone and texture. Extended pattern work showed a high level of dexterity and skill in the use of paint and materials.

110. Progress is good throughout the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities show an eagerness and skill in working with a wide range of materials including clay in a variety of dimensions and scales. The pupils select relevant materials, experiment with ideas with increasing control and awareness, and evaluate and improve their own work. Pupils enjoy making and designing and they are eager to explain the techniques they have used.

111. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned, prepared and resourced. Although, it is evident that much of the work is teacher directed with only limited opportunities being offered for the pupils to determine the nature of their work. Outcomes are determined by the range of resources being offered during the lesson, or by the techniques introduced and demonstrated by the teacher. The teachers make every effort to display the pupils' work to its full advantage, which enhances both classrooms and corridors.

112. Resources, including reference material on famous artists and corridors and art in other cultures, are good and well managed and used. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

113. Standards are only just satisfactory by the ages of seven and 11. There are some good and satisfactory projects completed by pupils in a number of classes. However, there are unsatisfactory elements about the overall organisation and delivery of the subject, which does not give pupils the best chance of making progress in their knowledge, understanding and development of skills required by the National Curriculum. As a result, pupils make unsatisfactory progress over time.

114. Coordination of the subject is weak and this leads to a lack of clarity in the overall planning of work through the school. There is no clear plan for the development of skills within the subject; that is planned activities do not reinforce skills previously learnt or lead readily to new skills.



115 The school has rightly focused on the development of literacy and numeracy in very recent times, but the development of design and technology has suffered as a result.

116. In spite of this there are examples of teachers' planning good lessons and of individual topics and projects meeting requirements. In Year 3, for example, pupils make models of their own choice, fill in sheets showing lists of materials they plan to use and write brief descriptions of the methods they might employ in construction. They complete brief evaluations saying what worked well and what could have been improved.

116. Again in Year 6, pupils have made glove puppets, they have written brief plans, but with far more emphasis being given to making rather than designing. This imbalance in the work is noted in a number of planning statements. Teachers and pupils move too quickly to making activities without spending enough time on the design element or on the process of looking at the skills required for the projects.

117. In the lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher led a discussion well on the nutritional value of sandwiches, prior to an investigation into a number of items on offer to the pupils. The resources were well prepared, but parts of the lesson were disrupted by some pupils' behaviour, which detracted from the overall pace of lesson. This silly behaviour results, from the teacher not having enough strategies to deal with it.

118. Overall, food technology is not a strong feature of the work in design and technology. This is partly due to a lack of accommodation and resources, but is equally due to a lack of inventiveness on the part of the coordinator, in providing ideas and solutions for overcoming this shortfall.

119. The subject offers good opportunities to provide links with both literacy and numeracy; however, these links are not explored often enough. Planning shows no clear highlighting of opportunities for pupils to write using different writing frames for the different ability groups, neither do they show enough links with measuring, calculating or displaying data. The coordinator has not noted these in his monitoring of teachers' plans and therefore the gaps have gone unchecked.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

120. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1. This was on the local area and the attainment at the end of the lesson was above that expected for Year 2 pupils. They were able to describe the different types of buildings in the local area and used appropriate vocabulary such as 'supermarket', 'terraced houses' and 'cinema'. When using a worksheet two pupils were heard discussing why there was no mosque in their local area.

121. At Key Stage 2 attainment is in line with expectations for their age. Pupils in Year 3 know about weather and seasonal patterns and how human beings adapt to living in different climates. Year 4 pupils are able to talk about rivers and the water cycle using geographical vocabulary such as 'erosion', deposition and 'evaporation'. By Year 6 pupils understand the locations of, and conditions in, the rain forests of the world. They are beginning to think about the implications of the current rate of destruction of the rain forests and are being made aware of 'sustainable development'.

122. Pupils make steady progress in their learning but the higher attainers would benefit from more opportunities to take responsibility for finding out for themselves. Although atlas work is good, too often they are told where to look rather than searching for themselves. Pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of the continents and can identify them from a blank map.

123. Attitudes and behaviour are good at both key stages. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions and respect the ideas of one another. They cooperate well in pair and small group work.

124. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are some good features. Planning is thorough and the teachers have good subject knowledge. A wide range of resources is used and particularly good use is made of globes and the atlas. Pupil management was always good. In some lessons pupils could have been given more taxing tasks and teacher interventions fewer. In one lesson, that followed a video, pupils were not given sufficient opportunity to say what they had remembered before being told the main points.

125. Geographical skills and environmental change are well covered but the places, programme of study needs developing to include more consideration of other regions and countries. Information and communication technology is underused in geography and there is little evidence of it being used for data processing.

126. The school recognizes the need to produce a policy for the subject, and to review the scheme of work. These are priorities in the development plan. At present there is no coordinator, the Deputy Headteacher having oversight of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

127. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 and it is not possible to form a judgement on standards or teaching at this stage. The scrutiny of work and review of classroom displays showed some work on changing times in the comparison between a Victorian kitchen and one today.

128. Standards at Key Stage 2 are in line with expectations. Pupils have a good knowledge of the past, for example the Romans, in Year 3, Aztecs in Year 5 and the Victorians in Year 6. The scrutiny of work showed that as the pupils progress through the school they develop the skills of historical enquiry and are aware of primary and secondary sources of information. However, few classrooms display timelines and pupils are frequently unable to put their studies in a correct chronological sequence.

129. Attitudes are generally good. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to good teaching. Occasionally, when the pupils lose interest the noise level rises and attention wanes.

130. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning and organisation are good, as is pupil management. Some of the teaching is stimulating, for example the discussion about the finding of a buried Anglo-Saxon boat and the introduction to the Greeks by way of a consideration of present day Greece, the people, food and customs. However, in lessons where there is too much teacher exposition and the pace of some exercises is slow, pupils do not learn as much as they should.

131. The management of the subject is sound. A coordinator has recently been appointed and she works closely with other teachers in the preparation of medium term plans. History is another subject that features in the school development plan for review during the next twelve months. The curriculum covers all the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

132. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations overall and the subject does not meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 2, as not all the National Curriculum Programme of Study is taught. The school has continued to promote some aspects of the

work well and has adopted a useful commercial scheme of work. However, as this scheme of work has only been used over a comparatively short period of time, there has not been the accumulation of skills, knowledge and understanding required to reach the necessary nationally expected levels. More progress is evident in Key Stage 1; due to the shorter time pupils spend there.

133. At Key Stage 1 pupils work through cards, which give them a good basic grounding in keyboard skills. However, the length of time being spent on this area of work detracts from the time available for them to put this knowledge into effect. As a consequence, whilst pupils understand what the various keys on the keyboard can do and know the various parts of the computer, they do not have sufficient access to the hardware on which to put their knowledge to practical use.

134. Pupils in both Year 1 and 2 were observed working with a numeracy program, whilst at another time a small group of pupils were using the class computer to build up a sketch plan of the local area in a geography lesson. As there is only one computer in any class, there is insufficient time for more than a very small proportion of pupils to use the computer and take advantage of the application of their skills at the appropriate time. Displays in classes and other observations made during other lessons at Key Stage 1 show that many pupils have access to listening centres at which they listen to stories, often controlling volume, stop and start facilities while they listen. In a Year 1 and 2 class evidence in displays show that pupils have had access to the computer for drawing and painting activities at a satisfactory level.

135. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have reached a sound standard in their wordprocessing skills. They are able to change fonts and the size of the letters they use. They can highlight an area of text and move it about their work employing “cut and paste” techniques. This is noted in Year 6 work in literacy, in which pupils have written a letter as if from Sir Gawain to King Arthur so that they could improve the quality of their work.

136. They can readily save, retrieve and re-load their work from one lesson to the next and can obtain information from CD-ROM. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson were interrogating an encyclopaedia CD in order to find information about tropical rain forests. Pupils have used their class computers for storing data. For example in a Year 3 lesson pupils were recording personal measurements as part of their investigations in a science lesson. In connection with a small number of mathematics lessons, pupils have used their computers to practice basic skills of adding and subtraction, while others have entered data about their class eye colours in order to create a graph or pie chart. This has not been carried out enough across the key stage and shows too little progress in the skills used. In a Year 4 literacy lesson a group of pupils were seen working with a listening centre. They followed instructions well as they listened to poetry and worked carefully from a worksheet.

137. The development of pupils’ skills in control technology is limited. At Key Stage 1 pupils give a programmable floor toy instructions for it to move in particular directions, but at Key Stage 2, a small group of pupils were unable to give instructions to their class computer so that it might draw shapes or otherwise follow their particular instructions on screen.

138. Pupils’ modelling skills are adequate at Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to describe their use of several programmes with which they “enter” a rain forest or are taken back to Ancient Egypt. They are then offered opportunities to make decisions alone or in groups as they move through the program. These types of activities are not as well represented at Key Stage 1.

139. The area of work covering monitoring and sensing is not in evidence at the present time. Pupils have not had opportunities to use measuring and sensing probes in order to measure light or heat in connection, for example, with work in science.

140. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 have had good opportunities to improve their understanding and skills through a scheme organised by Liverpool Football Club. This scheme offers older pupils an opportunity to go to the stadium and work in a computer suite on various projects over a short period of time. This has raised pupils' interests, but its impact has been limited by the lack of facilities back at school. In the same way, the school computer club offers a small group of pupils extra access to ICT but due to lack of facilities, these numbers are very small and, therefore, their skills have little effect on their class work.

141. Although the direct teaching of information and communication technology was observed in four lessons, the teacher who gives support for the subject in both key stages took three of them. The teaching in all three of these lessons was satisfactory, with most of the lessons conducted from the front of the class, using a large white interactive screen. Although pupils could see what was going on, they did not take a very active part in the lessons and had little opportunity to practise skills they had been shown. It is clear that opportunities would be given over the course of a week to practise some of the skills, but by that time many pupils would have forgotten the initial impact and direct teaching of the lesson. In a better lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class, whilst the teacher still used the new interactive white board well, so that the whole class could see what was being demonstrated, he also made good use of paper keyboards so that all pupils could immediately put into effect that which they had learned, albeit not directly on the computer.

142. Over the recent past, the school has suffered from not having sufficient hardware or accommodation with which to put into effect a structured and effective programme of teaching information and communication technology. It has adopted a scheme of work which addresses the content of the National Curriculum for the subject and might well be further and more closely linked with the nationally recommended scheme, in order to ensure the systematic build up of skills.

143. Many teachers still lack confidence in their own expertise but all will soon have the opportunity for specialised training. The school also has very clear plans for a computer suite in the soon to be altered building. This should provide pupils with better access to computers and more opportunities for them to practise their skills and receive direct teaching. Until the above opportunities have been created, progress and an improvement in pupils' achievements in information and communication technology will continue to be slow and remain unsatisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

144. Although only one music lesson was observed at each key stage, these, along with a close scrutiny of planning, suggests strongly that whilst singing is of a satisfactory standard, other elements of the music curriculum are not well taught and lead to unsatisfactory standards, although sound work is carried out in Year 6.

145. Class displays about music were completely absent. No large music posters showing the instruments of an orchestra were displayed, hardly any books about famous composers were available and virtually no written work was seen, as a response to music as a stimulus. This gives rise to concern about the status of music in the school.

146. Over the very recent past, the school has rightly focused on making improvements to areas such as literacy and numeracy, but for some teachers, this has meant a severe lack of time and interest shown in music. Many pupils enter the school with little or no background in artistic or aesthetic interests, therefore, the lack of good quality music provision in the school as a whole is of some concern.

147. In looking through planning files for all teachers, there is too much discrepancy between classes regarding regular access to music. In some planning, music is missing on too regular a basis. As a result, the knowledge, understanding and skills expected of pupils, shows unsatisfactory progress, even though the scheme of work, written by the coordinator is perfectly adequate.

148. In spite of a few individual instances of music from the wider world, for example in Year 2, where pupils have listened to Bangrha music, examples of a wider use for world music is not seen to give pupils support for their cultural and multicultural development. Instances of composers noted in planning files relate heavily to white European composers and do not make enough mention of African, Afro-Caribbean or other wider world composers, in spite of a very useful visit by African musicians earlier in the year.

149. Photographs show that pupils have had the opportunity to experience and take part in Christmas productions. Through this and other activities, it is clear that singing is a stronger element of the work in music.

150. In the two lessons seen, the lesson of the coordinator in Key Stage 2 showed that her good subject knowledge allowed her to encourage pupils through her own singing, to create a lesson which pupils enjoyed and to which they made good contributions. They listened to street vendor songs of the Victorian period, linked to their work in history, and then had the opportunity to make up their own songs in similar style.

151. A teacher who had less knowledge and musical ability took the lesson noted in Key Stage 1. And as a result, the progress made by pupils was not as good as it might have been. Rather too much advice and information was given to the pupils. The teacher shared her thoughts on the two pieces of music played, "The Bird" by Prokofiev and "The Elephant" from Saint-Saens, before asking pupils for their impressions. As a result, too many pupils copied her ideas instead of coming up with their own.

152. The coordinator has taken lessons in other classes, but has not had sufficient opportunities to influence all teachers to take more of a positive approach to music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

153. Standards are as expected for the ages of the pupils at both key stages. However, in swimming pupils' attainment is well above average. Swimming is a strength of the school.

154. In a Year 1 gymnastics class the pupils understood the need to warm up and the importance of keeping space between themselves and others. They performed a series of jumps and rolls well but had more difficulty disciplining themselves to running only three paces when making running jumps. In a Year 2 dance class the pupils learnt how to move like robots. They quickly got into the role and the standard of movement achieved was much higher than expected for their age.

155. Pupils in Key Stage 2 showed good levels of ball control and were able to pass and catch with considerable skill. Pupils in a Year 5 class, when playing invasion games, were aware of the importance of moving into space to receive a pass and did so very effectively; they recognised the need for rules and adhered to them. Good progress was made during the lesson. A Year 3 class had more difficulty following instructions when working in pairs and, partly because of the very cold conditions in the hall, lost concentration and did not make the progress expected.

156. Pupils at both key stages achieve standards that are above expectations in swimming. The school benefits from its own indoor pool and very good peripatetic swimming instructors. In a Year 2 class the majority of pupils could swim without the support of armbands and all had confidence in the

water. They were able to swim a width backstroke and several swam a length front crawl. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to swim the required 25 metres and have good styles being able to keep their heads low in the water. They understand the principles of total immersion swimming. In swimming girls generally reached higher standards than the boys.

157. Class teachers have at least a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and ensure that all pupils enjoy the activities and benefit from a good work out.

158. The pupils both in the hall and the swimming pool behaved maturely although they were naturally exuberant. They understood the need for safety regulations and there was no horseplay. Boys and girls worked well together and they all listened carefully and responded well to instructions.

159. The physical education curriculum covers all the National Curriculum areas of study.