

INSPECTION REPORT

SMITHDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 131597

Headteacher: Mrs. R. Crowe

Reporting inspector: Mrs E. Parry
2615

Dates of inspection: 26 - 30 March 2001

Inspection number: 230551

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chatsworth Drive Liverpool
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. N. Christian
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2615	E. Parry	Registered inspector	ICT; Art; Foundation Stage	Equal opportunities; What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11427	T Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3533	A McGregor	Team inspector	Mathematics; Design and technology; History	English as an additional language
23647	G Cooper	Team inspector	English; Music; Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17681	R Sharples	Team inspector	Science; Geography; Physical education	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Smithdown Primary School opened in September 1998 after the amalgamation of two local primary schools. It caters for 252 pupils; 135 boys and 117 girls. Forty eight children attend the nursery for either the morning or the afternoon session. Whilst the school takes in pupils of all abilities, there are more than usual starting nursery with skills and knowledge which are much lower than most three year olds have. The school has a multi-ethnic character. More than half of the children are white. Some are refugees from Eastern Europe. The rest are from a variety of different backgrounds. Over a quarter of the children speak English as their second language and a high proportion of these need support in learning English. This is a much higher figure than is found in schools nationally. Over half of the children have free school meals which is high compared to most schools. It reflects the fact that there is much unemployment in the area. Whilst only one pupil has a statement of educational need, over a third of the children are on the school's special educational needs register; an above average figure. Quite a few children have started or left the school during the year. The school is part of an Education Action Zone in the city.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Staff have worked hard in the two years of the school's existence to establish a good base. The school is well led by the headteacher and ably supported by a temporary associate headteacher. Because of illnesses, some senior management posts are temporary. Whilst some staff make good contributions to help the school to move forward, others could do more. Standards in national tests for eleven year olds are well below the average. The school is developing rapidly and is in a good position to continue improving. Overall it gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is well led and teachers are beginning to take a lead in developing subjects.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- A good curriculum is provided for children in nursery and reception.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good overall.
- The school cares well for its pupils in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.
- There are many excellent displays and interesting things to look at.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Attendance is well below the national average.
- The difficulties of a few pupils are not satisfactorily identified in statements of educational need.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not had an inspection before. Much of the two years since the amalgamation have been spent in uniting the different schools into one and in refurbishing the building to provide better accommodation. At the time of the inspection, the school had only recently

opened the physical education (PE) hall and information and communication technology (ICT) suite; the library improvements had yet to be started.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English		E*	E*	D
mathematics		E*	E*	D
science		E	E	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

Average C

below average D

well below average E

In English and mathematics, the results of eleven year olds in 2000 are in the bottom five per cent nationally and below those of schools where the take up of free school meals is similar. In science, results are well below the national average but in line with those of similar schools. The school reached the targets it had set for science but fell short of those for English and mathematics. Inspection evidence suggests that this year's results will be closer to the new targets. Results for seven year olds are also in the bottom five per cent for reading and writing and below those of similar schools. Results in mathematics are well below the national average but in line with those of similar schools. The school has no results for 1998 as it had only just opened at that point and there is not enough information to judge how effectively it is raising standards over time. Although there was improvement in mathematics in both key stages and reading at Key Stage 1 from 1999 to 2000, there was a slight fall in other areas

Pupils of all abilities come to the school. However, when they start at the nursery, most are not as advanced as you would expect three year olds to be. Most make good progress in nursery and by reception are more settled. They are beginning to read, write and do work in mathematics. In English, standards are well below what is expected by the end of infants and juniors. Children speak more confidently than they read or write. Standards are a little better in mathematics and science although they are both below expected levels. In information and communication technology, standards are below where they should be. This is because the school has only just opened its ICT suite and only in the last month have children had good access to computers. Standards are below average in physical education. They have been affected by the fact that the hall has not been available until recently and the facilities for outdoor work are poor. In music, standards are average at the end of infants but are below average by the end of juniors. In all other subjects children are working at suitable levels. Given their attainment when they started, pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

Children with special needs make satisfactory progress due to the level of support that the school is able to provide. However, there are some children with learning and behaviour difficulties which are not reflected in statements of educational need. Children who speak English as their second language benefit from the good levels of adult support once they can speak reasonably well and reach satisfactory standards. There are a few children who speak little or no English and the school does not have anyone on the staff with the kinds of special expertise that would help these children to learn English more quickly and to do better.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Whilst most children enjoy coming to school and try hard to do their work, there are some who are easily distracted and do not do as much as they are capable of.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The large majority of pupils consistently behave well in classrooms, assemblies and in the playground. Some find it difficult to behave well for good lengths of time and get easily upset.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. The staff work hard to encourage children to make open and friendly relationships with adults and with each other. There are too few opportunities for children to take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Although it is improving, attendance remains below that of most schools. A number of pupils are often late. This has an adverse affect on what those children achieve in school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
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.

Teaching overall is good. It was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons, good in 47 per cent of these and very good in a further 16 per cent. In only two lessons, 3 per cent, was teaching unsatisfactory.

Children in the nursery and reception classes are taught well. The adults plan and work together effectively. The classrooms are colourful, practical environments where children are encouraged to make their own choices of what to do. Direct teaching of skills is good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the very good and good teaching is based on effective planning, calm and supportive relationships and interesting activities. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is more modestly paced and less challenging. In the two unsatisfactory lessons, the amount of work done was limited, for example by inexperience in using the ICT facilities.

Sometimes nursery and reception children listen well; at other times they do not listen as well as they should. In the rest of the school, most children are keen to learn, work hard and enjoy what they are doing although some are easily distracted and do not take a sufficiently active part in lessons. In some classes, there are children who find it difficult to be part of a group and a few whose behaviour is difficult to manage.

The school responds positively to pupils with special educational needs. There is a good level of adult support in classes which helps many children. However, this is not always enough for pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems or learning difficulties.

Pupils who speak little or no English do not have access to specialist support. Once they have learned basic English, they manage much better through the general support in class.

Given its circumstances, the school has made a sound start to introducing national literacy and numeracy strategies and the teaching of these skills is satisfactory. However, it has not yet used the additional literacy strategy to help children who struggle. Teachers are trying hard to get to grips with the new technology of the ICT suite but are not yet secure in their knowledge of how to use the facility. Although they have generally good knowledge of most subjects, some teachers are less secure about music and physical education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in nursery and reception is good with an interesting range of activities. For infants and juniors, the curriculum is satisfactory. The good plan which staff have created is beginning to ensure a balanced education but many aspects are at early stages of development. For instance, an ICT suite has just opened and the library is due to be enhanced shortly and are reasons for the gaps in pupils' experiences. There are not enough extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The school provides a good level of support through additional staffing but this is not always enough. A few pupils have not had their needs fully recognised in a statement of educational need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Most children manage well through the support of classroom assistants but a few need much more specialised support than the school can currently offer.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school celebrates a wide range of cultural influences in its displays. Pupils are taught to respect each other. They are given plenty of opportunities to consider moral and social issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school provides a safe, caring environment. Staff know pupils well. There are good procedures to assess how well pupils are doing. This information now needs to be used more accurately in planning what pupils will do next.

The school has made good efforts to invite parents to help but few take advantage of the opportunities created. Parents are not yet sufficiently involved in children's education in school, although they are able to help with homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has given a good lead in establishing the new school. She is well supported by the temporary associate headteacher and by teachers in their management roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors have worked very hard in difficult circumstances to ensure that the building and refurbishment programme is completed. They are aware that they need to turn their attention now to helping staff to improve the standards that pupils achieve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has put in place systems to see how well it is doing but these are still at very early stages.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governors and headteacher have a good understanding of the need to get the best value for their money.

The school's building programme is almost complete. There are sufficient classrooms, although some are quite small, and a good range of other small teaching and administration spaces. Displays of high quality make it an interesting place for children to be in. The school is currently well staffed with teachers and classroom assistants. There are limited facilities for outdoor games.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects children to work hard. • Children like coming to school. • They can approach school with their concerns. • Children are making good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children do not get the right amount of homework. • A wider range of interesting activities. • Better information about how their children are doing • Working more closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the first three of the parents' positive views. Pupils' progress is satisfactory over the two years that the school has been open although it has been slowed down by interruptions in the building programme. However, in most of the lessons seen, pupils were making good progress especially when they settled down quickly and worked hard. Homework is a little inconsistent and the team agrees that there is not a wide enough range of interesting extra curricular activities. The information that parents receive about their children is satisfactory and the staff are available should more be needed. The school is trying to work more closely with parents but only a few respond to the opportunities provided.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start at the nursery, many have very low skills in key areas such as personal and social development, speech, early writing and drawing, number and knowledge of the world. Despite much improvement in nursery and reception, overall these areas are still likely to be well below what is typical for five year olds.

2. In the national tests for eleven year olds in the year 2000, the results for English and mathematics are in the bottom five per cent nationally and below those found in similar schools. Results in science are well below the national average although in line with those of similar schools. In all three subjects, a few pupils reached the higher levels, but more than twice as many as is found in most schools are at the lowest grades. Factors that influence the results include the large number of pupils who have special educational needs for learning difficulties, and those who speak English as an additional language and are still at early stages of learning it. An extra factor in the results of the last two years, but one which will not be there in future, is the considerable disruption that has been caused as the pupils have moved into the new school. For these reasons, the inspection team judges attainment in the tests to have been satisfactory. As the school has only been open for two years, there is not enough information to describe the trend over time.

3. Results for seven-year-olds in the national tests in 2000 are in the bottom five per cent nationally in reading and writing. They also compare less favourably to the results found in similar schools. In science, which is assessed by teachers, results are below average but like those of similar schools. As in Key Stage 2, there are groups of pupils with significant special educational needs and English as a second language who affect results. Given the very low starting point in nursery and reception, this represents satisfactory attainment.

4. There are some differences in the attainment of boys and girls in the tests and assessments in both key stages but, at the moment, the information does not lend itself to any firmer conclusion than that differences exist. For example, boys results in English over two years were higher than girls for eleven year olds but lower than girls for seven year olds. Similarly in mathematics and science, while there are differences, there are no discernible patterns as yet.

5. Inspection evidence finds that attainment in English is well below average by seven and eleven years of age. Pupils have a wide range of skills in speaking and listening from those who do both well to those who have difficulties in both areas. Reading skills are similarly varied. Higher attainers read expressively by eleven. Others read the words competently enough but do not understand some of the vocabulary and find it difficult to understand more complex meanings. Pupils have not had the opportunity to learn how to use a school library and therefore are unable to describe how they would find information. At both key stages, progress in writing is slower than that in reading. Pupils are taught appropriate grammar but do not apply it to their own writing. Most pupils' handwriting is unsatisfactory with too few using a fluent joined up style by the end of Key Stage 2. Many do not present their work well enough.

6. In mathematics, inspection findings are similar to the information from tests showing standards that are below average by the end of both key stages. By the age of eleven, there is a wide range of attainment with some pupils being competent in all aspects and others insecure. Generally, older pupils develop a secure knowledge of numbers, shapes and

measures and can apply their learning to practical situations. They collect and interpret data, sometimes in mathematics lessons sometimes in other subjects such as science and geography. They are beginning to use computers to enter the data and print off different types of graphs. Most use mathematical vocabulary appropriately. There is a similar wide range of attainment at seven years of age. Most but not all have a satisfactory grasp of number, shape and measures. Whilst most pupils use and understand mathematical vocabulary, a significant minority have weaknesses in this area.

7. Standards in science at both key stages are below average but closer to what is expected than the test and assessment results indicate. This is due to good teaching and to the use of assessment information to focus on areas of weakness. Well-prepared investigations stimulate interest and motivate pupils' learning. By seven and eleven years of age pupils are beginning to show satisfactory levels of knowledge and sound investigational skills.

8. Pupils are reaching satisfactory standards in what they are currently doing in ICT, music and physical education, but because they have some substantial gaps in their experiences in these subjects, standards are below where they should be overall by Year 6. In ICT and physical education, lack of facilities during the building programme has affected provision and therefore affected what pupils have learned and the standards they have reached. Standards in physical education are likely to continue being affected in some areas because of poor facilities for outdoor work. In religious education, art, geography, history and in design and technology, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards which are broadly average by the end of both key stages.

9. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve satisfactory standards due to the level of support they receive but there are times when their progress is slow. For example, when pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties find it difficult to concentrate or when their learning difficulties make it almost impossible for them to co-operate with either other pupils or with the staff. One pupil, who does not have a statement for learning difficulties, is placed in the nursery for the afternoon. This follows advice given by the Local Education Authority. Whilst it gives time for gently paced development of some learning, it is not helping in others, for example in making social contacts.

10. Most children who speak English as a second language have a fair degree of fluency and manage well enough through the additional support in class. The few who speak little or no English do not do as well. There is no one with sufficient expertise to advise the staff on appropriate types of support. These pupils are often working at lower levels than they are capable of, for example in mathematics, because they do not understand what is said and what they have to do.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, personal development and behaviour are satisfactory. Many are positive and enthusiastic, getting on with their work calmly and politely but this is balanced by examples of unsatisfactory attitudes, particularly in some classes in the middle of Key Stage 2.

12. Pupils were often interested and involved in lessons, but there were also occasions when some pupils were unable to sustain concentration for the whole or even for part of the lesson. A good example of this was observed in a personal, health and social education (PHSE) lesson in which the teacher had to continually amend her strategy during the lesson in an attempt to maintain pupil concentration.

13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and in the school hall is often good but can be inconsistent. For example, a door opened for some pupils would lead to the response of 'thank you' but other pupils would walk straight through the open door without even observing that someone was trying to assist them. During a whole-school assembly, the majority of pupils demonstrated good attitudes and behaviour throughout a well constructed service in which Key Stage 1 children presented a very warm and colourful picture of Spring. There is some documentary evidence of occasional challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils at the school and there have been several fixed term and lunchtime exclusions as part of the school's behaviour management strategy. However, these exclusions were all related to a small minority of pupils at the school.

14. The day-to-day relationships between pupils and teachers, and pupils and pupils are also inconsistent. Pupils were observed to work very well together during one PHSE lesson but in another they would not listen to their teacher or to their fellow pupils. Pupils generally relate well to each other in the playground. Although the school provides some opportunities for pupils take on responsibilities such as helping to set up the hall for an assembly, overall such opportunities are limited.

15. The overall attendance at the school is unsatisfactory and is well below the national average. Lateness is a persistent problem for some pupils. However, the incidence of unauthorised absence has significantly improved and punctuality is improving as has pupils' punctuality. These have been assisted by funding and input from the Education Action Zone. The school is aware of a minor issue relating to the consistent marking of registers when Key Stage 1 pupils change classes at the start of the afternoon and has already taken action to ensure that the correct procedure is followed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Children in the nursery and reception classes are taught well. The adults in both classes work effectively together. Planning is good. The classrooms are bright, colourful and well organised to give access to different types of learning throughout the day. They are effective environments for young children to make their own choices of what to do. Direct teaching of skills is good. For example children are taught about the sounds that letters make and how to use those sounds to help them write. Adults make careful observations of children's skills and use this assessment well to plan what is needed next. Sometimes nursery and reception children listen calmly and take part in discussions sensibly. At other times they are restless, do not listen as well as they should and do not take part in class work such as reciting the alphabet rhyme in a controlled way. This affects how much they learn in a lesson.

17. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching overall is good with a range from very good to unsatisfactory. The very good and good teaching is based on effective planning, calm and supportive relationships, often with a touch of humour, and good ways of keeping the children interested and working hard. For example, lively and successful teaching in design and technology in Key Stage 1 and history in Key Stage 2 kept pupils engrossed in their activities. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is more modestly paced and less challenging. Most children are keen to learn, work hard and enjoy what they are doing. Year 6 pupils for example, are almost always calm, thoughtful and co-operative. They work hard and with consideration for others. In some classes, pupils are easily distracted, a few can be argumentative and slow lessons down. Particularly in the middle of Key Stage 2, there are children who find it difficult to be part of a group and teachers have more of a struggle to keep some of them working without friction. In both lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace was slow and too little demand was made on pupils' learning. Marking is often good

with useful comments on how pupils can improve and individual targets set to secure improvement. However, it is also a little inconsistent with opportunities missed to make mistakes clear and ways of improvement evident to the pupils.

18. Teaching in English is good overall. Lessons are often lively, tasks well designed to challenge pupils of all abilities, no time is wasted and classroom support is used effectively. Occasionally the pace is slower and the ends of lessons are not used as well as possible to confirm and enhance learning. Handwriting and presentation are not consistently well developed. The school has made a sound start to introducing national literacy strategies and the teaching of these skills is satisfactory. However, for a number of different reasons including staff illness, it has not yet used the additional literacy strategy help children who struggle. Teaching in mathematics is good. The school has made a sound start to introducing the national numeracy strategy especially to develop mental and oral work. Teachers make sure that skills such as measurement and handling data are used in subjects such as science and geography. In science, good teaching based on an investigative approach is having an effect and the standards of work are improving. Teachers are trying hard to get to grips with the new technology of the ICT suite but are not yet secure in their knowledge of how to use the facility. Although they have generally good knowledge of most subjects, some teachers are less secure about music and physical education.

19. The school has a positive approach to pupils with special educational needs. There is a good level of adult support in classes which helps many children. However, this is not always enough for pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems or learning difficulties. Sometimes teachers need more strategies for dealing with difficult problems; they cope at the moment because there is always another adult in the classroom.

20. Pupils who speak English as a second language and speak it reasonably fluently cope well through the levels of additional support in class and their progress usually matches that of other pupils. The few who speak little or no English make slow progress at first because they have difficulty in understanding the discussions and written material. Because of this, they are often working at levels that are below their capacity. They do not have access to specialist support in these early stages. There is at present no one with the expertise to support staff in saying how best these pupils can be helped.

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

21. There is a good curriculum for pupils in nursery and reception. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus. The school has introduced national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and these are at a satisfactory stage their implementation.

22. A whole school curriculum policy gives a general overview of the school's approach and each subject has an annual overview to ensure coverage and lack of repetition. This is usually, but not entirely, successful. For example, in religious education there is some overlap of what pupils in the junior classes learn about Sikhism. Teachers plan in more detail half-termly. At this stage, teachers make learning objectives clearer so that they can be discussed with pupils during lessons. Finally, a weekly plan is created to ensure that the fine detail of pupils' tasks and resources required are clarified.

23. Equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum are satisfactory. Although it still has problems to resolve, the school is working hard to ensure that pupils attend and that they

come on time and therefore have access to learning. The good levels of staffing ensure that most pupils who need help are given it. However, there are concerns about the lack of statements of educational need which would help the staff to define more precisely what those pupils need. Similarly there is a lack of informed support for pupils who are at early stages of learning English.

24. The provision of extra curricular activities is unsatisfactory. This confirms a strong minority view of parents. The school is aware of the need to extend the curriculum provided. There are plans to develop a range of activities for pupils as the school settles into its new building and into the rhythm and routine of the curriculum. For example, a library club is mentioned within the library policy. However, the library is not yet fitted out, so no further action can be taken at present.

25. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. It takes place during lessons such as science as well as during other activities such as circle time. Staff are quick to take incidental opportunities to promote personal and social education in a range of lessons, for example, in the teaching of religious education and in the discussions held during English lessons. However, although there is a good policy, there is no written scheme of work for this aspect of the curriculum to ensure that pupils get a progressive range of opportunities throughout the school.

26. The school has satisfactory links with the community to ensure that pupils are aware of the society all around them. Governors have a sub-committee that establishes and supports such links. Whilst there are some good links, there are also some lost opportunities for example in sport and in music. There are no visits to places of worship other than the local church nor are there visits from faith communities other than the regular and supportive visits of the vicar.

27. Good links are maintained with partner institutions. The school is supported by the Education Action Zone and has benefited from association with a Beacon School, for example with management skills. The school provides job experience placements for secondary school students and work placements for student teachers and nursery nurses.

28. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The spiritual development of pupils is good. All pupils are invited to attend regular assemblies in which singing is often a feature. During one whole school assembly, a group of Key Stage 1 pupils led the rest of the school in prayer. Spirituality was particularly evident as individual pupils reminded everyone about the wonderful images of Spring. Subjects such as religious education, art, design and technology, history and geography make good contributions as do the thoughtful displays and areas of interest that greet pupils as they come into the school.

29. The moral development of pupils is good. Teachers act as good role models for pupils in the way they present themselves in the classroom and around the school. Pupils are consistently taught the difference between right and wrong. PHSE lessons are used to good effect in focusing pupils' minds on everyday issues linked to their own experience. The school consistently promotes sharing and taking turns.

30. Provision for the social development of pupils is satisfactory. There are some opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and although these are limited, the response from pupils is usually good. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their social skills in the school dining room and in the playground as well as to work together in the classroom.

31. The cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils have many opportunities to study both local and wider cultures in school and through visits to the local community, a recent example being to the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Current displays around the school walls are written in a variety of languages including English, Somali, Urdu and German. Opportunities are also taken to develop pupils' knowledge of other cultures through various subjects of the curriculum. In one classroom, for instance, pupils have made a variety of replica mud huts in connection with a study of life in an African village.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are satisfactory and for the monitoring of personal development and for pupils' support and guidance, they are good. Child Protection procedures are in place and effective. Teachers know their pupils well and, in the classroom, they are quick to observe any personal difficulties and to take appropriate action. The headteacher and other staff provide a high level of personal support to all children at the school and close contact is maintained with parents when appropriate.

33. The present system of monitoring the individual levels of pupil absence is good and the school is significantly assisted in this area by a small team representing the Education Action Zone (EAZ). The promotion of regular attendance is good as is demonstrated by the gradually increasing levels of attendance, the elimination of unauthorised absence through immediate checking, and incidents of lateness. Through the Excellence in Cities funding, the school has additional good support through staff who work specifically to help pupils who might become disaffected with school life.

34. There is a range of strategies for the monitoring and control of behaviour but they are not consistently applied across the whole school. The impact of this inconsistent provision can be seen in the widely divergent levels of actual pupil behaviour in the classroom and across the key stages. The headteacher plays a co-ordinating role in this area and external agencies also provide appropriate support as necessary. A weekly control sheet is occasionally used to assist in the promotion of good behaviour for pupils whose behaviour is giving concerns. Very much as a last resort, fixed-term exclusions are used to assist in the control of challenging behaviour together with the occasional strategy of lunchtime exclusion.

35. The school acknowledges pupils' individual achievement through praise in the classroom and, more formally, during achievement assemblies in which pupils' success is celebrated. The opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility for various tasks around the school, are satisfactory.

36. Considerable attention and priority has been given to improve the arrangements and quality of assessment in the school. There is now a clear direction and policy with strong leadership provided by the headteacher in developments. Good procedures have been developed overall for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. The school carefully analyses national test results and other assessments to identify strengths and areas for improvement, although it is appreciated that even more information can usefully be gleaned from these and other sources of evidence to support improvements. Substantial work has been done to develop teachers' expertise and understanding, not least in relation to the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Pupils' work is regularly marked but on a number of occasions inconsistencies in the quality of marking were seen, especially in relation to the guidance given to pupils on how to improve. Staff regularly assess pupils in a variety of ways from the time they start in nursery and reception. From their knowledge of pupils, teachers often set them personal targets, for example, in numeracy and literacy to

support them in their learning and achievement. This valuable process now needs to be refined and developed more widely and consistently.

37. Assessment information in some foundation subjects is sometimes much less well used and systematically collected. Common approaches to assessment are now firmly in place and monitoring is increasingly being used to focus on pupils' learning and attainment to enhance continuity and progress throughout this new school.

38. Good procedures are in place for the school to identify pupils with special educational needs and for assessing their progress. However, only one pupil has a statement of educational need and more pupils would benefit from the clearer identification of needs which comes from the later stages of assessment which involve the Local Education Authority (LEA). The process is well managed in school but, for whatever reasons, response from the LEA has not been sufficient.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Overall the partnership with parents is satisfactory. Few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and the percentage return to the parental questionnaire was low. A majority of parents who completed the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. However, a significant number of parents were dissatisfied with the level of homework and with the range of extra curricular activities available to pupils. Many parents also felt that they were not provided with sufficient information about how their child was getting on at school.

40. School academic reports are informative to parents in terms of providing details of what their children have been studying over the past year and the reports are supplemented with termly open evenings. Although many reports include some references to possible targets for improvement, these are inconsistent. Staff are also available to talk to parents at the start or end of the day providing satisfactory arrangements for parents to find out how well their children are doing.

41. The information provided by the school through the Prospectus and via the Annual Governors Report to Parents conforms to statutory requirements. The school also sends out regular newsletters to keep parents informed. The school has not attempted to provide extra curricular activities because of its concentration on the amalgamation and, as parents pointed out, these are unsatisfactory. There are good contacts with other schools and with the local community which are used extensively to enhance access to the curriculum.

42. Very few parents are regular visitors to the school in terms of providing classroom support or in helping to listen to pupils read. The school has provided a range of activities to help parents to become more involved and would welcome more active involvement but few parents take advantage of these. Regular homework is provided to supplement pupils' work at the school and this includes a variety of reading books. The home/school reading diaries contain very few entries from parents. The school operates an 'open door' policy and parents are always welcome to discuss any particular areas of concern in relation to their children. There is a good level of additional support provided to the parents of pupils with special educational needs. The learning support mentor makes significant efforts to meet up with parents at both ends of the school day. Representatives of the local community are regular visitors to the school and during the inspection members of the local police force attended a meeting designed to improve the levels of safety in and around the school environment.

43. The school provides accommodation for the local Parent School Partnership which benefits parents in this school as well as in others. Those who attend are predominantly people who speak English as a second language and who gain understanding of the language and of the Education system and how they can help their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The school has faced a difficult time over the last two years due to the refurbishment programme and constant delays and disruptions. The headteacher has given a strong lead in putting high quality of provision at the top of the agenda. The Local Education Authority recognised the enormity of the task of managing the situation and provided an associate headteacher to help for a short time. The two have formed a very good team and have been able to move developments along at a much quicker pace. Another major source of help has been the connections with a Beacon School. The headteacher and staff all speak very highly of the support that they have had in developing their management roles more quickly through this link than they could otherwise have done. Because of the work that has been done in a short time, all policies and procedures are in place and co-ordinators are starting to take an active part in developing their subjects. The school has made several attempts to introduce the additional literacy strategy but these failed because of circumstances to do with illnesses which were not in the school's control. The school has begun to look at pupils' performance and to identify where improvements are needed but this is still at early stages of development.

45. Governors have supported the school very well during this time with their major effort being to complete the building with as few disruptions as possible and with the best quality they could negotiate. They are aware that they need now to turn their attention to matters such as the standards that pupils achieve. There is good awareness of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve.

46. The school finances are satisfactorily managed by the school administrator with the assistance of the headteacher and the Governing Body as required. The school applies the principle of 'best value' to all significant purchases, and money to improve resources for subjects is clearly linked to the priorities outlined in the school development plan. School administrative staff receive regular training in the best use of new technology to support the financial management of the school. The school has been successful in attracting a number of specific grants such as that from the Excellence in Cities project. These funds are used appropriately for their designated purpose and provide valuable support, for example for pupils who are in danger of becoming disaffected with school life. The school, in its present format, has not yet had a formal inspection visit from the financial auditors. Given the difficulties the school has faced in the last two years, the high quality of learning environment provided, the very low starting point of the pupils and the standards that they achieve by the age of eleven, the school provides satisfactory value for money

47. There is a good number of teaching and support staff. The headteacher has set up sound procedures for monitoring what is happening in all areas of the school life. Co-ordinators check their subjects and a few have had time to look at teaching in the classroom. In monitoring and auditing staff skills, a number of areas have been identified where staff need further support to improve their contribution to the school. These include the roles of the deputy headteacher, administration officer and caretaker.

48. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is handled well within school. Suitable individual education plans are written by staff and monitored by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. However, not enough pupils have their needs

recognised through statements due to slowness of response by the LEA in the final stages of the process. The governing body commit additional funds to those designated to ensure that every class has an assistant and this provides much needed support for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Governors have also tried without success to appoint someone from minority groups to support pupils who learn English. This remains a weakness in staffing of which they are aware and attempting to remedy.

49. Accommodation is now good. It has taken two years for the amalgamation to be completed. Some details still remain to be done. The PE hall and ICT suite were finished just before the inspection and the library was still to be fully furnished and organised. These gaps in accommodation have clearly limited pupils' experiences and the standards that they are achieving. The length of time that the programme of refurbishment has taken has affected the pace of curriculum developments and, until recently, staff morale. However, there is now a good range of classroom, administration and other spaces. Some of the classrooms are very small, for example, those for Year 6. The playground surface is not good enough and there is no immediate grassed area for games. A strength in the school is the way that displays and areas of visual interest have created a high quality learning environment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to continue the work of raising standards in all areas of the school's life, the headteacher, staff and governors should consider the points below.

I. Raise the standards that pupils achieve.

In English by:

- consistently ensuring that pupils know what is to be learned at the beginnings of lessons and using the plenary sessions to assess the learning;
- encouraging pupils to draft and improve their work and to appraise each others' work.
- developing pupils' ability to use the library for research purposes;
- making sure that all pupils use a joined up style of handwriting and that all present their work equally well;
- getting the additional literacy strategy going to help pupils who struggle;
- marking more consistently especially to set targets based on what has been achieved;
- monitoring the differences between the attainment of boys and girls;
- training someone to learn how better to support pupils in the early stages of learning English and to pass that knowledge on to others.

Paragraphs 5; 18; 20; 65-74.

In mathematics by:

- continuing to develop the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in lessons using National Numeracy Strategies;
- monitoring closely the effects of developments and strategies on pupils' learning and attainment – using this information to provide rigorous guidance for teachers' planning and school improvement;
- planning and providing for a closer match of work for pupils with different levels of prior attainment, especially during group tasks and for higher attainers;
- ensuring, in the marking of pupils' work, a greater emphasis and consistency in the quality of written guidance to pupils on how to improve;
- continuing to develop the quality and consistency of personal targets for pupils and involving them regularly in their clarification and review;
- continuing to make effective use of the valuable links with the Beacon School and acting on the school's own priorities;
- looking for strategies to help pupils at very early stages of learning English to acquire mathematical language more quickly.

Paragraphs 6; 18; 78-83.

In science by continuing to:

- give a strong emphasis to investigative work;
- monitor information from tests and assessments and making adjustments to the curriculum accordingly;
- develop the use of ICT in science;
- and by ensuring that marking gives pupils more guidance on improvements.

Paragraphs 7; 18; 87-90

In information and communication technology by implementing the planned programme for teacher training and ensuring that the ICT suite is fully used.

Paragraphs 8; 18; 107-111

II. Improve pupils' attendance by consistently applying the Education Action Zone strategy of early response to absence or lateness on each and every day.

Paragraph 15

III. Work with the Local Education Authority to ensure that the later stages of assessment for pupils with special educational needs recognise those needs fully.

Paragraphs 9; 38.

There are other smaller issues, mainly related to developing relationships with parents and to management, that the governors might like to address in their action plan. The most important of these can be found in paragraphs 42 and 46-49. Minor curriculum issues can be found within the subject sections.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	47	34	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48	252
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	145

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	88

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	68

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9
National comparative data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.1

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	19	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	5	17
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	23	16	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (58)	47 (52)	85 (65)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	18
	Girls	12	13	15
	Total	28	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (71)	88 (71)	97 (71)
	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	15	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	8
	Girls	5	5	9
	Total	10	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	38 (45)	46 (39)	65 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	6	8	8
	Total	11	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (45)	58 (41)	58 (68)
	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	8
Black – other	34
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	170
Any other minority ethnic group	37

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	4	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	242.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	613,695.94
Total expenditure	598,878.81
Expenditure per pupil	2,683.99
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,799.34
Balance carried forward to next year	43,616.47

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	290
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	40	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	44	11	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	43	10	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	30	33	11	13
The teaching is good.	48	34	10	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	33	26	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	39	4	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	41	1	0	14
The school works closely with parents.	30	38	19	9	5
The school is well led and managed.	38	36	6	6	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	46	10	4	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	30	23	14	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. Children start at the nursery when they are three years old. At the time of the inspection, 8 of the 27 children in reception were still under five. Children of all abilities come to the nursery, but in general they are not as advanced as most three year olds are and there are more children with some degree of special educational need than is usually the case. Overall, many have very low skills in key areas such as personal and social development, speech, early writing and drawing, number, and knowledge of the world. Teaching and learning are good in all six areas although there are some minor points for development.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. A good programme is provided for children's personal, social and emotional development which reflects the staff's understanding of children's needs and their good responses to the children. Despite this, many will not have reached the targets expected by the time they are five years old.

53. When they start at the nursery, children vary in their levels of confidence with adults and in their skills in playing with others. Whilst some are confident, others are reluctant to join in, for example standing at the side rather than sitting down for registration. This is handled sensitively by adults who give the children time and positive encouragement. For example, when one child stood up in a story session in nursery, he was taken onto an adult's knee where he sat quietly even though he still made no attempt to take part in the lesson.

54. Although staff work hard to help children to become more socially confident, there are still weaknesses which show in group sessions as well as in play. Sometimes children sit quietly and join in, at other times they are restless and uncooperative. Sometimes they play well with others, at other times they are unable to share and do not consider other children's needs. At all times, adults deal calmly and sensitively with children. Reception class children join in afternoon playtimes and in assemblies with the older pupils which help them to prepare for the move into Key Stage 1.

55. Photographs and displays show that the children are taught to value different customs and beliefs. They celebrate Chinese New Year and Eid as well as Christian festivals. Signs and displays make them familiar with writing in different languages.

Communication, language and literacy

56. There is good provision for developing children's communication, language and literacy in nursery and reception. This is essential because it is a weak area of children's skills and knowledge when they first come to school. Many of the children talk confidently enough to adults but their speech is unclear. Some are still only communicating in simple words or phrases such as 'me do' or 'what that' and some understand what is said but are very reluctant to reply. Some talk to themselves as they play in the sort of babble that is typical of toddlers. Strong emphasis is given to talking to children in the nursery, to encouraging conversation between adults and children, and to giving the children as wide a vocabulary as possible. Teaching and learning are good. Children enjoy looking at books in the nursery but there is a wide range of attainment here. Some read stories from pictures with a good match between the picture and what they say; one child does not realise that the book is upside down but happily continues making up a story. All of the children can

recognise their name and put it on the registration chart to show that they have arrived. Most of the children make marks to represent writing but a lot of these are early, loosely formed shapes with little control. There are opportunities for children to write in play but given their lack of skill, more could be done to develop hand and eye co-ordination.

57. In reception class, there is a good balance between more formally structured sessions and learning through play. When they are listening carefully, the children answer questions which show that they have remembered a story. Good teaching in the style of the literacy hour enables children to learn factual information such as the terms author, illustrator and title. The children learn the alphabet order through a song but at times they do not co-operate well as a group and do not keep together despite the best efforts of the teacher to lead them. Children choose to look at books when they have a free choice. They hold the books correctly and particularly enjoy ones which have pop-up sections. Registration times are used effectively for simple reading tasks such as recognising each others' names or the days of the week. A more able group tried to list the names of nursery rhyme characters. The teacher led them effectively to use their knowledge of sounds to help them to write. In such directly taught activities, the children are reaching satisfactory standards with more able children on course to reach the expected levels. However, many children, despite making good progress are not likely to achieve what most children do by five year olds. They do not retain what they learned. For example, writing reverts to unformed scribble in play and children talk in unclear, short phrases where they would answer in sentences when adults push them to do so.

Mathematical development

58. Children's attainment in mathematics is likely to be below the expected level by the time they reach the age of five but closer than their language and literacy skills. In nursery, the range of what children know about number is great with some happy to count up to large numbers and others not sure of what comes after 2. Teaching in nursery and reception is good when adults make use of times such as registration and snack to extend learning. For example, the milk cartons were imaginatively used to create three dimensional patterns which children were asked to repeat and were able to do. Children respond well to learning through play such as learning about full and empty in the sand or guessing from the sound whether the biscuit tin is full or only half full as it is passed round. Both nursery and reception classrooms contain interesting mathematical areas with numbers, number lines and shapes decorating the wall spaces so that children become used to seeing them. Sometimes the planned activities do not contain enough to challenge children's thinking as for example, when sorting objects with very clearly different characteristics into two sets which make it almost impossible to be wrong. Children's written work shows that by reception, some are combining sets, writing numbers and working with shape.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. There is a good programme for developing knowledge and understanding of the world. Each day children observe the weather with their teachers and are encouraged to record it together through symbols. They do the same with the days of the week. Their answers show that they know the names of the days of the week but not the sequence. Children grow cress and beans and are encouraged to watch what happens and record it through pictures and drawings. Photographs of the children visiting the maternity unit in the nearby women's hospital show that good use is made of local facilities to support learning. This is followed up in play such as the baby clinic in reception. Children will talk about themselves and their immediate families but are not as good at talking about where they live or what is around them. In this particular strand of knowledge and understanding of the world, children's attainment is low. Both classes have a good range of construction

materials which children like to play with when they are given free choice. They have satisfactory skills in joining components such as road tracks or building blocks. Some children made good use of the tape recorders to listen to stories, using the headphones and controls confidently. Unfortunately computers were out of action during the inspection visit but replacements are expected shortly.

Physical development

60. Children make good progress in physical activities such as climbing over and under equipment. Some are very unsteady when they first try these, needing help from an adult or the sides of the climbing equipment but become better through the regular opportunities provided. By reception, children are quite competent at activities such as throwing and catching showing skills typical for their age. In both classes there is a good range of activities to encourage hand control for example through cutting and sticking, construction activities and painting. The finer movements that children need for drawing and writing are provided in both taught and free choice activities. However, as this type of control is an area where children do not do very well and many have very low skills, staff need to consider what else they can add to the programme that will help the children to develop hand and eye co-ordination more quickly.

Creative development

61. The two classroom bases contain a good range of creative play. There are interesting role play areas but these were not seen in use because there were so few children due to illnesses. Staff try to make links into literacy and mathematical learning in these areas by putting up labels and lists but could make even more use of natural links such as including recipe books or telephone directories in the home corner so that children see written material from everyday life.

62. Children in both classes have free access to paint and collage materials which they explore with pleasure. They apply the ready-mixed paint in bold splodges of colour, for example as they paint butterflies and caterpillars in the nursery or Humpty Dumpty in reception. Children do not have enough opportunity to explore the colour and texture of paint freely, as they are not provided with mixing trays or water palettes.

63. Children choose materials from the collage boxes and stick them onto pictures of Spring. They demonstrate satisfactory skills in their collage work. There are marked differences in skills using playdough in reception. A child with a good sense of shape and form produced an excellent piece of work showing Humpty Dumpty in a garden. In other children's work, the pictures produced in play dough lacked that kind of sophistication. Children's drawings show a similar range of control with some in both classes making representations of people which are at a very early stage of observation. In one case in the nursery, for example, the features of the face were outside the circle. In other examples, the people that children draw are typical for three to five year olds with a growing accuracy and good levels of detail. However, overall children's creative skills are likely to be below what is typical of children by five years of age.

ENGLISH

64. Standards are well below those expected nationally when pupils are seven and eleven. The findings of the inspection are similar to, but not the same as, the results of National Curriculum tests for 2000. Compared to national expectations, standards in the school are not high but given that attainment at the end of reception is well below average, pupils have made satisfactory progress they leave the school. However, there is room for further improvement. The school sets challenging targets for attainment in English. Those for 2000 were not met. The school's systems for assessment are now more accurate and this year's more realistic targets are likely to be met.

65. In the year 2000 tests, seven year olds attained standards that were very low (within the lowest five per cent of results nationally) in both reading and writing. When compared with similar schools, results were below the average. The school has only two years of results, so long-term trends have not been established. However, girls have done better than boys in this time. The difference is most marked in reading and less noticeable in writing. Standards seen during inspection were a little better than this.

66. Eleven year olds attained standards that were very low in English in the year 2000 tests. When compared with similar schools, results were below average. Whilst there is too little information to describe long-term trends, in the two years of tests, boys did better than girls. This is against the national trend in attainment and a reversal of what happened with seven-year-olds. Standards seen during inspection are a little better than test results for the past two years indicate.

67. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average when pupils are seven and eleven. Many pupils listen carefully in a range of contexts such as lessons and assembly but in a small number of classes, pupils do not listen well enough. This is usually associated with behaviour difficulties for a minority and with other specific learning difficulties. Most pupils with special educational needs listen well. However, their speech is less well developed. Pupils with English as an additional language also listen carefully but some of them have difficulty in understanding because of their limited English. This is clear from the occasional inappropriate response to an instruction or a question. Some pupils speak clearly to a wider audience from prepared speeches. For example, younger pupils in the school led a Spring assembly for the rest of the school and made sure their voices were heard. In lessons, the spontaneous speech of younger pupils is frequently indistinct, vocabulary is not well developed and pupils usually give the briefest answers to questions. Older pupils show the good progress they have made. They relish class discussions and for a significant number, speaking and listening skills have improved and are about average in standard. This is particularly the case in Year 6 where teachers create well thought out opportunities for speaking. These pupils work well in group situations, using their skills effectively for discussion, opinion forming, negotiation and collaboration. Higher attainers enjoy this style of working particularly and use their skills well. Lower attainers also benefit from this type of work, although some find it difficult to do and to join in.

68. Standards in reading for pupils up to the age of seven are below the level expected. Most know many common words at sight and develop strategies for working out unfamiliar words, such as partitioning longer words and using sounds. However, some pupils are reluctant to use these strategies and have to be encouraged. Occasionally higher-attaining pupils read too quickly and lose the sense of what they read. Others find understanding the text difficult when they come across a number of unfamiliar words. Whilst few pupils give opinions about a favourite book or author, many express opinions about well-known fairy stories and discuss the characters from the story. Pupils have some understanding of book features such as author and title, although at times there is confusion about the differences.

Discrimination between fiction and non-fiction is not well established. Pupils have no understanding of how books are arranged in a library.

69. Eleven year olds achieve standards below the level expected. They read the text of their book reasonably well, fluently reading most common words and making a good attempt at unusual ones. However, many do not understand some of the vocabulary in the books and find understanding difficult as a result. Higher-attaining pupils read expressively and understand about the use of voice to read direct speech. Lower-attaining pupils find fluent reading difficult and tend to read in an inexpressive voice as they concentrate on working out less familiar words. A majority of pupils express book preferences. They enjoy Roald Dahl stories and the Harry Potter books. Some enjoy the 'spooky' stories of R.L. Stine. Lower-attaining pupils express no preferences. All pupils have some understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They discuss the value and use of the 'blurb' on the back of a work of fiction. They know how to use contents, index and glossary pages of a non-fiction book. Some give very good explanations of how to use a glossary. However, the lack of a library shows in pupils' lack of understanding of how to access information. Although they know that fiction books are arranged in alphabetical order by author surname, they offer no explanation for the arrangement of non-fiction books. Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in reading, as they begin to speak it well. However, the few still at very early stages in acquiring spoken English are not making as much progress in reading because they are still learning to speak the language.

70. Standards of writing for seven year olds are well below average. Progress in writing is slower than that in reading. Higher-attaining pupils achieve a standard that is about the level expected for their age. Lower-attaining pupils remain well below the standard expected and a large proportion of pupils are in this category. All pupils learn appropriate skills. They know what a sentence is. They spell words with regular patterns. Many make mistakes when spelling more difficult words, but they have enough knowledge of phonics to give recognisable alternatives. They have ideas that they put into their own stories. However, not enough pupils use the skills they learn on a regular basis in their writing. For example, although pupils in Year 2 can say that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, only one pupil in the group used the correct punctuation in a sentence writing exercise. For most pupils, handwriting is untidy and does not approach the standard expected for pupils of their age. There is little evidence of pupils spontaneously using varied and interesting vocabulary, or of the use of more complex punctuation such as speech marks and question marks.

71. Standards of writing for eleven year olds are well below average. The progress they make is satisfactory. It is better where the school has adopted a strategy for grouping pupils by ability across classes. Progress is slower where pupils with special educational needs find it difficult to concentrate on their tasks. Progress also slows where pupils do not speak English as a first language, are acquiring early language skills and have to make do with low-level tasks that do not tap their intellectual potential. Pupils have ideas which are often communicated well in shared and guided writing sessions. For example, some wrote imaginative collaborative poetry during the inspection. Others created powerful arguments balancing the points for and the points against children using mobile phones. Although some of the finer points of written English are learned in lessons, even higher-attaining pupils need to be reminded frequently about using features such as paragraphing and punctuation. Again, much of the handwriting and presentation is below the standard expected. There are few examples of good quality fluent writing being used and many pupils prefer to print. Although literacy skills are not strong, pupils receive great encouragement to use these skills in subjects across the curriculum. For example, the tasks set in history, geography, science and religious education are not restricted to work sheets but include tasks that expect pupils to use literacy skills.

72. The teaching of English was good with a range from very good to unsatisfactory. It was strongest in Year 6 but strong also in Years 1 and 3. Teaching was less strong in Years 4 and 5. In the best teaching, a brisk pace carries pupils along with its momentum. Teachers are lively and enthusiastic and this has a positive effect on learning. Tasks are well designed to interest and challenge pupils of all abilities. Because pupils are very involved in the learning, there is no wasted time. Teachers are very positive in their relationships with pupils. They do not have to use control strategies and pupils settle very quickly to the work they have to do. Good questions ensure that pupils keep their concentration and that the teacher knows what progress they are making. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants, particularly in the attention they are able to give pupils who have difficulty in their learning.

73. Where teaching is at times less effective and on very rare occasions unsatisfactory, pace is slower and the content of lessons less challenging. Marking is not always consistent in quality. Teachers do not expect sufficient of pupils in the presentation of their work. Not enough is made of homework throughout the school. It is better in some classes and year groups than in others. A concentration of pupils with behaviour difficulties in some year groups affects the impact of teaching on learning. The school has made a satisfactory start to the National Literacy Strategy in class lessons, but some features can be developed further. These include, the balance of whole class teaching, the strong use of the ending of the lesson to confirm what progress pupils have made, the use of additional strategies for those who are struggling. There is insufficient expert help available for pupils who are at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language.

74. The school has just opened its computer suite. At present, computers are not used enough to support learning in English. For example, when pupils want to write a second draft of a piece of work to improve its style, content and accuracy, they have to rewrite it. This is frustrating. At present teachers do not have the knowledge and expertise to support pupils in their ICT learning needs.

75. Due to absences, there is a temporary co-ordinator for English. She checks what is happening through looking at planning and pupils' work but has been unable to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. A suitable action plan is designed to take the subject forward. Insecure assessment in the previous year meant that teacher assessments for seven year olds were too optimistic. These are now much more accurate and therefore more valuable. There is good use of assessment to group pupils where this is appropriate. Assessments are also used to set tasks which match pupils' prior attainment. There is insufficient use of targets to promote the continuous progress of pupils. The school analyses its test results. It has not yet identified strategies to address the differences that it has identified in the attainment of boys and girls.

76. The provision of resources is satisfactory, although gaps are being identified as the school gets used to the new building and establishes a secure curriculum. The library has still to be fitted out.

MATHEMATICS

77. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards below that expected for their ages. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of each key stage were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. In the school's second year of taking these tests, in 2000, small gains were made at the end of Key Stage 1, although equivalent results at the end of Key Stage 2 were still in the lowest five per cent of all schools. When compared to similar

schools, however, both sets of results for 2000 are better, although still below average. Similar to the national picture, girls tend to achieve better than boys.

78. By the age of seven, many pupils but not all, can count on and back in twos and tens, can recognise sequences of numbers including odd and even numbers and can complete missing numbers in a simple sequence. Many have a satisfactory grasp of number facts to twenty and some beyond. Most pupils can name and identify some features of flat shapes and to a lesser extent solid shapes. Some are able to measure using an increasing range of different standard units, although others are much less confident and accurate. Similarly, some pupils are beginning to use an appropriate range of mathematical language and vocabulary and can tackle simple problem solving approaches, but a significant minority are still at an earlier stage of understanding and competence.

79. Many pupils, by the age of eleven, are able to use mental recall effectively and some use a developing range of strategies to estimate and work out their answers. Some pupils have a sound understanding of place value in relation to their age and have an appropriate grasp of fractions, decimals and percentages. Others are less competent in each of these areas. Many pupils are beginning to use relevant diagrams, arrays of data and graphs, sometimes linked to their work in other subjects. Many pupils now use mathematical language appropriately and are increasingly competent in working out real life problems, whilst others are less competent in these aspects.

80. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress and achieve appropriate levels of attainment. Some of the pupils who speak English as a second language competently do as well as others and are not impeded in their mathematics work. A small number who speak little or no English when they start the school are working at levels below their mathematical competence because they do not understand what they have to do and because the staff are not skilled enough in using strategies such as modelling with number apparatus to ensure that the pupil understands the task. These pupils do not benefit from the good approaches in mental and oral parts of the lessons since they do not have enough everyday language or specific mathematical vocabulary to take part.

81. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy into the curriculum and is beginning to make effective use of the range of strategies and approaches to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Attention has been focused strongly and to good effect on raising standards of mental and oral work and other important aspects, including using and applying and developing the range of appropriate mathematical language. Nevertheless, much more remains to be done, over a longer period of time before marked gains can be made in pupils' attainment, particularly since many pupils enter this new school with low levels of understanding and competence in number skills. Although some good examples were seen, more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to carry out investigations and problem solving in mathematics, to make a range of estimations, check their results and give greater attention to precision and accuracy in their measurements.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. Teachers often have a good knowledge of the subject, expectations of behaviour and pupils' learning are high, the pace is rapid and good use is made of questions. The quality of teachers' planning is often good with careful attention being given to learning objectives for lessons. Lessons are often well structured with good use of the mental and oral session at the beginning and in the best lessons, the plenary session at the end is effectively used to tackle misconceptions and to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. At best the targeted group work is highly effective and pupils make rapid progress in their learning. However, on occasions, this aspect of the lesson is less well developed, particularly where the work is imprecisely matched to pupils' prior attainment. On numerous occasions, good quality direct

teaching was seen in both key stages which had a significant effect on the quality of learning and achievement by pupils.

83. Most pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They often work hard, listen carefully and take pride in the presentation of their work and achievements. They generally behave well and often see a number of activities as fun, especially mental and oral work, number games and challenging practical activities. On a few occasions, some pupils lose concentration when the tasks are insufficiently well matched to their age and ability.

84. The arrangements for assessment are satisfactory with many aspects developing well and others less advanced. Results from a number of sources are analysed and often used well to target underachievement and the differing needs of pupils. Increasingly effective use of continuous assessment is being made to guide teachers' planning, although there are still some inconsistencies, such as in marking, where wide variations were seen in the quality of guidance for pupils on how they could improve. Assessment is used appropriately to set targets for pupils but while personal targets for pupils in some classes are of good quality, elsewhere they are inconsistently developed.

85. The co-ordinator is providing a strong lead in the subject and is actively supported by all the staff. Arrangements for staff development are effective and strategies for monitoring and evaluation are already contributing well to improvements in provision and standards. In the valuable lesson observation forms, careful attention is given to teaching and other important aspects but more could now usefully be given to the direct impact on pupils' learning and achievement. The school is generally well resourced for the subject although further items could be included to support developing practical classroom activities linked with the national strategies, such as for mental and oral work, and to replace worn or outdated equipment from time to time. There are clear signs, even at this early stage, that the high priority and considerable efforts being made by the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the subject, linked to the implementation of national strategies, are beginning to have an effect on pupils' achievement.

SCIENCE

86. The results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below the national average but in line with those of similar schools. The school is confident that it will achieve its predicted targets for 2001. The school recognised that the Key Stage 1 teacher assessments for 2000 were predicted at too high a level and a system for achieving a more accurate result has been introduced. This involves teachers keeping a record of, and grading, the pupils' achievement every time they complete a piece of work in Years 1 and 2.

87. The work seen during the inspection reflects an improvement in standards. This is due to good teaching and to the use of information gained from analysing the past national test results to focus on areas of weakness. The good use of well-prepared investigations, to act as a stimulus to interest and motivate pupils' learning, is having a positive effect on their achievements across the age range.

88. In Year 6, pupils understand that the distance the light is from the pencil and the angle it shines on it, influences the length of the shadow. Before they start the investigation they are encouraged to predict what will happen and to consider what makes a fair test, for example that the distance the torch is from the pencil must be accurately measured every time. They understand that the shape of the shadow is the same as the pencil because light travels in straight lines. A major consideration in the lesson is which pupils are given blue or red torches! This is determined by whether they are Everton or Liverpool supporters. They

understand how to construct an electrical circuit and recognise the symbols that are used to represent a battery and a bulb. When talking about the parts of the human body, pupils can distinguish between arteries and veins and understand the purpose of the lungs. They can describe the effects of gravity and can apply their work on friction to the difference between riding a bicycle with a hard or soft tyre. In Year 4, pupils work on friction and conduct an investigation into how far a model car will travel on different surfaces. A group of pupils are surprised to find that the car travels further on the playground than on the smooth surface of the corridor. They explain the result by saying that they thought the area of the playground they used was slightly downhill.

89. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a satisfactory understanding of a range of scientific facts. When talking to the pupils they can point out objects, such as a chair and say it is made of plastic. They understand the difference between man made and natural materials, for example that wood is a natural material. They are unable to decide if paper is man made or natural. When discussing their work on forces pupils can give examples of pushing a pram and climbing a ladder. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils are given a daffodil to study. They label the parts of the plant on a diagram. The more able pupils complete a diagram that has greater detail, for example the recognition of the stamens and stigma. Pupils can state that plants need water, light and warmth to help them grow and understand certain differences between plants and animals, for instance that animals can move and have babies.

90. Pupils show good levels of interest and concentration when they are working and this is a direct result of the good teaching. The work seen in their books illustrates that they are given the opportunity to develop their writing and communication skills when recording investigations. Teachers make effective use of worksheets that are designed to meet the needs of the different abilities of pupils; for example pupils with special needs are given more prompts on the sheet and when they are completing their work they receive support from a classroom assistant. The more able pupils are expected to be more independent in the completion of their work. The work in the lessons is clearly introduced by the teachers; pupils are told what they are expected to learn and are asked challenging questions as the lesson progresses. For example, in Year 2 when the pupils are looking at the parts of a daffodil the teacher asks them what is the role of the roots. Pupils work well together and discuss their findings when working in pairs or as a group during investigations. Pupils' books are marked but the comments are often brief and provide little guidance for future work. There is insufficient use of computers in science and the only example seen was the printing of a line graph in a Year 6 lesson.

91. The co-ordinator is providing very good support to the rest of the staff and is making good use of the monitoring of test results and pupils' books to direct future developments aimed at improving standards. The opportunity to monitor the teaching throughout the school will add to this improvement. There has been a detailed audit of the resources that are stored centrally and the intention is to review the appropriateness of teaching materials as new activities are introduced. The co-ordinator has received good training from her contact with a local Beacon School.

ART AND DESIGN

92. Taking account of work on display as well as what was seen in three lessons, standards in art and design are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In the few lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory.

93. Year 6 pupils, using a landscape by Paul Klee as a stimulus, reproduced the colours and designs of segments of the picture in a variety of materials such as tissue paper,

pastels, water pencils and paint. They worked with quiet but relaxed concentration which was evidently based on the teacher's high expectations that such a work ethos is usual. The pupils have used Escher's ideas to make their own tessellating patterns. These are very carefully drawn and coloured. Year 5 pupils worked steadily on experimenting with the effects it is possible to achieve using black drawing pencils. They learned from the teacher that a loose wrist movement makes it easier to control the texture as does using the side of the pencil. Some of them used the medium well, others found using soft pencils quite challenging and wanted to return to the safety of their ordinary pencils. The number of adults in the room ensured that those pupils with special educational needs related to behaviour were well supported by prompt attention when they looked like getting upset. As a result of the support and the individual nature of task, most pupils succeeded in producing a satisfactory response. In a Year 3 lesson, some of the pupils showed a real ability for drawing portraits whilst others found the task quite difficult. Good teaching ensured that the pupils knew at the start of the lesson what they were going to learn and do. Potential silliness was firmly handled so that all children tried hard.

94. Because of when art and design appears on the timetable, no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 but work in classrooms and corridors is of an appropriate standard. There are neat paintings of Spring flowers by Year 1 and lively three dimensional collages of Spring in Year 2.

95. Staff take great care in displaying pupils' work in classrooms. Displays in the corridors show that art makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. There is work from many different countries for example African and Chinese art as well as art from ancient and present European countries, all of it imaginatively displayed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in design and technology and therefore no overall judgements are made about teaching. However, a range of evidence was drawn from the scrutiny of pupils' work including work on display, from teachers' planning, discussions with pupils about their work, scrutiny of records, reports and other evidence. This suggests that appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to make sound progress and that attainment is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages.

97. Pupils in a Year 1 class showed good skills in cutting, joining, making and finishing to construct a three dimensional house from a simple two dimensional template. Many of the pupils were beginning to develop good basic understanding about simple structures and developing their own ideas through design and in the making and finishing. Very good teaching and learning was in evidence throughout the lesson with pupils making significant progress. Attitudes and behaviour were excellent with pupils actively supporting each other in their learning, listening with rapt attention to instructions and guidance from their teacher and the support assistant. All the class were completely engrossed in the tasks they had been set throughout the lesson, and showed remarkable concentration, commitment and resolve in the face of difficulties which they encountered. Elsewhere there was evidence of a range of activities being tackled by pupils across the school including designs and structures made from construction kits, designing and making moving monsters using recycled materials, pop-up books and masks including those linked with the Chinese New Year.

98. Through talking to pupils it is evident that they enjoy design and technology activities, work hard, see it as important and persist with problems they encounter. Teachers' planning is closely linked to national guidelines and, from the evidence available, of at least sound

quality. There is a clear action plan for the subject which astutely highlights relevant priorities related to an audit of resources and monitoring of planning. It is recognised that more resources are needed in some areas including newly planned work linked to the use of the new national guidelines and to support the teaching and learning of control aspects of the subject. Attention is currently being given to the development of monitoring strategies but, as yet, these are still at an early stage of development.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Only two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 and one in Key Stage 1. Further evidence was gained from talking to pupils and studying the work they had covered in their books. This suggests that standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of each key stage.

100. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to understand that places are different from their own locality. Their limited knowledge of their own environment makes it difficult for them to be accurate when making comparisons of the types of houses that are common in different countries. For example, they do not recognise that a country cottage is in England. When talking to pupils in the Year 2 class, they are able to name the countries in the British Isles and can describe their journey to school.

101. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can use geographical terms, such as source and estuary to describe the features of rivers and they are extending their knowledge of countries in the world. They display satisfactory progress in the understanding and interpretation of information represented on a range of maps. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson understood that the weather on the equator is warmer than in England. During this lesson good use was made of the different ethnic backgrounds of the pupils, for example a pupil from Somalia said it is hot in that country and rains at night. In a Year 5 lesson pupils create a timeline of the daily activities of a woman living in an Indian village and compare this with their own daily routine. This helped them to understand how the women in these situations have to perform a wide range of physical activities, for example carrying containers of water on their head, lighting fires and picking tea.

102. In the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory. The resources, as in the Year 5 lesson, are generally well prepared and this helps in focusing the pupils' concentration on the activity and assists in the development of their independent learning. However too few glue sticks in this lesson caused problems because the pupils are not good at sharing. In the Year 1 and 4 lessons the teachers and classroom assistants develop a positive relationship with the pupils and this results in all of the pupils receiving good support.

103. The well qualified co-ordinator is enthusiastic to combine history and geography to produce a humanities module, to extend the number of out-of-school visits and to continue the introduction of the national guidelines. In the light of these developments, the limited amount of resources will need increasing. There is as yet no method of assessing pupil achievement or progress in geography.

HISTORY

104. During the inspection no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. A small number of lessons were seen in Key Stage 2 and a range of other evidence was available including pupils' work, teachers' planning, records and discussions with pupils about their work. On the basis of this evidence, appropriate opportunities are being provided to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. Pupils achieve standards which are broadly in line with national expectations by the ends of both key stages and often make good progress especially where the work links closely to the use of artefacts, and other valuable sources of evidence or involves the use of visits or visitors.

105. Younger pupils can talk about changes in their lives and those of their family and are beginning to show an awareness of how their lives are different from their parents and grandparents when they were young. They can describe some differences in everyday life and objects from more distant times beyond their own including past events, famous people and changes such as technology. By the age of eleven, pupils know facts about people and events from the history of Britain including earlier times and the history of Britain since the 1930s. Pupils in both Year 6 classes knew and understood a great deal about life in the 1950s which they had been studying in considerable detail. Many were able to appreciate what it must have been like to live during this period, understand issues and changes taking place during this time, together with causes and had a good knowledge about historical events and people. Many pupils also had a good understanding and knowledge of chronology and sequences of events. Older pupils are beginning to develop a concept of the distant past and can describe important features of past societies and periods, for example, the Ancient Greeks and the Egyptians, including their ways of life and beliefs. Increasingly, throughout the school, pupils are using a range of sources of evidence to make deductions, such as artefacts, articles, photographs, cuttings, extracts from the period, records, and eye-witness accounts, all of which were clearly and effectively used in Year 6 during the detailed study related to the second World War.

106. Most pupils have good attitudes towards history, clearly enjoy much of the work, behave well, work hard and take pride in their achievements. They readily talk about what they have done and some pupils have very apparently found the work not just interesting but fascinating. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes, at the end of Key Stage 2, it is very good. The best lessons are characterised by high quality direct teaching with imaginative use of a range of stimulating artefacts and other source materials, challenging tasks, high expectations, very good knowledge of the subject, use of questions and management skills. In short, they are able to make history come alive for the pupils, who become totally immersed in the subject. On rare occasions where there is too much reliance on undemanding worksheets, the responses of the pupils and the quality of their learning is much more limited. Effective use is being made of national guidelines for the subject to support teachers' planning. There is a clear and helpful policy. Resources for some topics are considerable and of high quality, but elsewhere, especially where new topics are in the process of being introduced, more resources are needed. As yet, monitoring is underdeveloped.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

107. The school's ICT suite opened recently and is beginning to have an effect on what pupils do. However, it has not been open long enough to have made radical changes. Too little teaching was observed to make overall judgements about quality, but in the few lessons seen, there are clearly differences in the teachers' skills, confidence and knowledge. Some are confident in what they are using, others are not.

108. By the end of their time in school, pupils are reaching satisfactory standards in what they do. Overall, however, standards are below where they should be because there are gaps in the pupils' and teachers' experiences. Some Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the internet and its possible uses through having computers at home and using them, for example to e-mail their friends. Most know how to create graphs and what different types they can make, but know nothing about spreadsheets. In typing up arguments about whether children should have mobile phones, Year 6 pupils showed a sound knowledge of word processing skills. In another lesson, when they were entering data from a science investigation, pupils worked enthusiastically but their inexperience showed in the way they entered the wrong set of data against the wrong axis. Both pupils and teachers get a little frustrated at times by their lack of knowledge of correct procedures. In discussions, Year 6 pupils were able to describe how texts can be changed and enhanced. They talked with interest about a video conferencing session they had recently had and knew how to use the computer to find out information. An area that they have not covered is using the computer to control and monitor events.

109. In the Year 4 class, pupils worked in pairs with interest and application on putting in the data they had collected and creating different graphs from it. Some of the adults gave good support by talking to the pupils about how to do the tasks but sometimes the helper did the tasks for the children rather than helping them to do it.

110. There is too little work in Year 2 to make any conclusive judgement about standards by the end of Key Stage 1. The interactive white board was used to support learning in mathematics but it was at a slower pace than such a session would have been without the board, nor did it improve the pupils' skills in ICT although they did enjoy the bingo game. A similar session supporting literacy in Year 1 worked better because the whole class session using the white board was followed by group activities where children were able to do the same tasks on the computers.

111. The co-ordinator has worked hard to give the staff support on introducing the children to a good programme of work in ICT. More training is planned to address the lack of confidence that teachers have but nevertheless they are 'having a go' at using the excellent facility whilst waiting for the training to help them further.

MUSIC

112. Standards in music are below the level expected when pupils are seven and eleven. Singing is about average but pupils' experience and attainment in all aspects of the music curriculum are limited. Pupils start full time school with a very narrow range of knowledge and skills. Although they make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of new learning, that progress is insufficient to raise attainment to expected levels.

113. Seven year olds sing well. They have a good understanding of pitch. They sing words clearly and meaningfully. Pupils know a range of songs for assembly. Occasionally they use tambourines to accompany the words of songs. They have no knowledge of organising and shaping sound to create their own music. Shown a range of instruments available for use in school, they name only a few and have little understanding how they can be used. There is a lack of rigour in the range of musical experiences that pupils receive, although teachers' planning covers the whole curriculum.

114. Eleven year olds have satisfactory singing skills. They sing enthusiastically with clear diction. They name some of the instruments of the orchestra and identified the families of instruments. They occasionally listen to music, often as part of other lessons but sometimes

for the sake of the music itself. Pupils do not compose their own music and performance skills are only used on special occasions when there is a concert in school. They talk eagerly about their visit to the Philharmonic Hall, a highlight of their musical experience. Again, pupils have insufficient sustained experiences across the range of listening, appraising, composing and performing expected of the music curriculum.

115. In the few lessons seen, teachers worked from suitable plans and teaching was generally good. However, a lack of depth of coverage of the curriculum indicates that there may be some gaps in their knowledge. Teachers have a narrow range of strategies for teaching music and it is sometimes difficult to them to achieve lesson objectives as a result.

116. Attitudes to music lessons are usually good and behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are interested in what they are doing. Occasionally, where the routines and disciplines of the curriculum are not well established, behaviour is not satisfactory. For example, pupils not used to making their own music with instruments find it difficult to take turns and to control their response. Pupils listening to music to appraise it do not have the listening attitude and disciplines necessary to get the best out of the lesson. This slows down the lesson. The need for teacher control strategies means that the lesson is not as effective as it should be.

117. The subject co-ordinator is a skilled musician who leads assembly music well. This is the part of music that is best developed in the school. There is a school policy for music. A new scheme of work recently introduced has not had enough time to work its way through the school. Apart from knowing how well pupils sing, the co-ordinator has no opportunity for monitoring standards across the curriculum. This makes it very difficult for her to know what needs to be improved. A link is maintained with the Toxteth School Music Association. Pupils sing for special occasions at the Cathedral and at the local hospital. There is no formal system for the assessment and recording of the progress pupils make. Resources are satisfactory but pupils have few opportunities to use the range of instruments available.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. The pupils' achievements have been limited by the lack of access to suitable facilities. This has restricted what the school can offer in terms of a broad and balanced curriculum in physical education. As a result of this, the overall standards in the subject are below what is usually expected. This has recently improved with the completion of the refurbishment of the hall and gymnasium but there is still a serious inadequacy in the outdoor facilities. This restricts the opportunities that pupils have to develop games and social skills, which is offered through taking part in team activities. The playground is unsuitable for playing games on because of the poor state of the surface and the inadequacy of safety and retention fencing.

119. In the four lessons observed, the standards range from unsatisfactory to good. In Year 1, pupils move in different ways, for example from a tucked position to a stretch to simulate the growth of a seed and can transfer these skills onto the small apparatus. They are aware of the need to warm up at the beginning of the lesson. When the teacher asks them what has happened to their heartbeat following these activities, the pupils can say it has increased. The teacher insists on the pupils following clear safety procedures, for example that four pupils must carry the large mats. The good level of performance of the movements that the pupils achieve in this lesson is influenced by the high standards expected by the teacher, for example the bending of their knees following a jump off the apparatus.

120. In a Year 2 lesson on ball skills, the pupils are not offered the opportunity to develop the standard of their catching skills. This is due to the lack of the specific teaching of these

skills and the inappropriateness of the activities for the cold and windy weather conditions, which caused the lesson to be shortened.

121. In a Year 6 lesson on the playground, all the pupils showed good levels of stamina when running in repetitive relays. They recorded their times and were encouraged by the teacher to try to improve their performance. During the warm-up session to a good lesson, Year 5 pupils jog around the hall, bend to touch the floor, sit down and jump according to the number indicated by the teacher. They show enthusiasm and enjoyment when taking part in this activity. The pupils show good agility when performing standing and long jumps on the mats and they receive good ongoing encouragement from the teacher. At the end of the lesson they take part in a cooling down activity where they are encouraged to lie on the floor and let their bodies relax. The teacher's management of the pupils in the class is good with pupils given a short period of time out at the side of the hall if their behaviour is seen to be endangering the safety of themselves or others in the group. The pupils do not want the lesson to finish. Pupils in Key Stage 2 take part in swimming lessons and have achieved a range of proficiency awards.

122. At present there are no extra curricular activities but the co-ordinator is planning to start lunchtime activities such as netball and dance, now the facilities are available. There are no teams representing the school in any games activity and therefore pupils are missing out on these important opportunities for their social and physical development.

123. The co-ordinator has implemented the use of national standards to provide a structure to the curriculum. The amount of resources is increasing but further equipment, for example badminton and suitable fixed equipment in the hall are yet to be acquired. There is no method of assessing pupil achievement or progress in this subject but the co-ordinator has recognised the need for development in this area.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Attainment is in line with expectations of the local syllabus when pupils are seven and eleven. Pupils have a broad range of opportunities for learning across the curriculum. Given that they show below average knowledge and understanding when they start religious education lessons, pupils make good progress and their achievement is good against prior attainment.

125. Seven year olds have a secure knowledge and understanding of festivals and celebrations. They know about the Chinese New Year and well-known saints days. They write about 'New Beginnings' as they prepare an Easter assembly for the rest of the school. Pupils discuss feelings in relation to the work they do in the subject. Pupils in Year 2 have a basic knowledge of the events in the life of Jesus. Eleven year olds learn about aspects of a range of world religions, such as Islam and Sikhism. They have an adequate knowledge of the values and beliefs of Muslims. They learn about the five K's of Sikhism and about the vows taken by Sikh men. The school places sufficient emphasis on learning from religion as well as learning about religion. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and they are well involved in discussions during lessons. Pupils who speak English as an additional language competently make satisfactory progress. Those acquiring early language skills make less progress as they find difficulty accessing the talk and reading.

126. Teaching is good overall. It is a little stronger with the older pupils in the school. Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge. Pupils are managed well. Many lessons are briskly paced and this helps pupils learn effectively. Teachers' planning is

secure and gives lessons the support they need. Tasks are suitably planned. Sometimes different tasks are created for pupils of different abilities. There is a good mixture of whole class teaching with effective question and answer sessions and group and individual work. Pupils are positive about their learning, although some do not take easily to the values of different faith communities. They do not always see the relevance of the rules by which some people live their lives or why the vows people take are important to them. Despite this, most pupils have a growing respect for and understanding of different cultural backgrounds.

127. The year plan covers the requirements of the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus satisfactorily. However, the school is discovering flaws in the way it has been arranged. There is some overlap of curriculum content which will have to be adjusted for future years. The co-ordinator produces an appropriate action plan and monitors teachers' planning on a regular and systematic basis. Samples of work are collected to give a view of standards of attainment but there is no formal system to record the progress pupils make. There has been no monitoring of teaching and it is therefore difficult for the co-ordinator to evaluate and develop what happens in lessons. The provision of resources is satisfactory although there is little access to religious artefacts to support what pupils learn. Some use is made of local places of worship and visitors to school and these are beneficial. However, there are no visits to places of worship other than churches and no visitors to school other than the vicar.