

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MATTHEW ARNOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104557

Headteacher: Mr G Mason

Reporting inspector: Mrs. L Traves  
24039

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 230623

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dingle Lane Liverpool
Postcode:	L8 9UB
Telephone number:	0151 727 2145
Fax number:	0151 726 0803
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Professor W. Chambers
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24039	Mrs L Traves	Registered Inspector	History Geography Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action
9843	Mrs S Drake	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
3624	Mr P Snelling	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
1492	Mr D Twist	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology	Teaching and learning
30724	Mrs Hiscock D	Team inspector	English Music Physical education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Matthew Arnold Primary School is about the same size as most primary schools, with 237 pupils on roll, 131 boys and 106 girls, aged between 3 -11 years. The higher number of boys creates an imbalance in some classes. The school has a 60-place part-time nursery, which currently has 27 pupils attending. It also has a 20-place language unit, which is full. The school serves the community of the Dingle in Liverpool, an area of some economic disadvantage and change due to regeneration. Just over half of the children are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. Thirty-seven per cent of children have special educational needs. These are mostly related to speech and language difficulties. This figure is also well above average. Eleven per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Four pupils speak English as an additional language. Of these, two are at an early stage of language learning. Four children are from asylum-seeking families. The school has recently moved to a new building and a new headteacher and deputy have been appointed since the last inspection. It is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ). Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

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

Matthew Arnold is a school that is beginning to show improvement. Many children do not reach average standards by the time they leave at 11 years, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Although pupils are now beginning to achieve more in these areas, there is still some way to go. Children achieve well through the nursery and reception classes from a very low starting point, because of the consistently good teaching they receive. This is also true of pupils in the language unit classes. Other pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets because they receive good support. Although teaching in the infants and juniors is mostly satisfactory or better, there is still room for improvement. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, they like school and their behaviour is good. The headteacher, deputy head and governors provide sound leadership and are strongly committed to raising standards. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- There is good teaching and a strong curriculum in the nursery and reception classes; as a result pupils achieve well;
- Teaching in the language unit classes is very good and pupils make very good progress;
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well;
- Pupils' attitudes to school are good and they behave well; relationships are good;
- The school gives good encouragement to parents to support their children's learning;
- Good financial planning is helping the school to achieve its goals;
- Links with the community and other institutions are enriching pupils' learning.

### What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough in both key stages in English, mathematics, some aspects of science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education (RE) and geography. They are not high enough in music in the juniors;
- Some aspects of teaching and learning are not as good as they should be;
- The school needs to identify and prioritise key areas for development more sharply;
- The school could make better use of the information it collects on pupils' performance;
- The school could keep a better eye on the effectiveness of its work;
- The pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is underdeveloped;
- The extent to which the school meets requirements for checking on procedures for Health and Safety.

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

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

Satisfactory improvements have been made since the school was last inspected in February 1998. In the two and a half years following the last inspection, little progress was made in addressing most of the key issues identified. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher in September 2000, some significant improvements have been made. For example, teaching, learning and the curriculum in the nursery and reception classes are of a much higher quality and children now achieve well. Significant staffing changes have taken place and teaching is showing signs of improvement. The curriculum for infant and junior pupils has been redesigned and teachers now know exactly what should be taught to each year group. These factors are now enabling pupils to build securely on previous learning. The governing body has a better understanding of the work of the school, what needs to be done to improve and their role in this improvement. The new school building provides a high quality environment for teaching and learning. However, standards in the infants and juniors have not improved quickly enough in most subjects. Pupils' progress has not been checked closely enough to ensure the right work is set for them. As a result, they have not learned at a fast enough rate. Not enough improvement has been made in the way in which the school checks on the effectiveness of its work.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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



Science	E	E	E	D	well below average	E
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The test results for Year 6 pupils show that standards at 11 years are well below those found in most schools and have been for the last 3 years. Inspection findings indicate that although more pupils are now achieving average levels, there are not enough pupils exceeding these. When compared with similar schools, the picture is better, with standards being above average in English and average in mathematics. In science, standards are still below average. The number of pupils reaching expected standards in the tests for 7-year-olds in reading and writing is well below average. In mathematics, standards for these pupils are in the bottom 5 per cent of schools in the country.

Children enter the school with well below average attainment. A significant number have a very limited vocabulary and are lacking in confidence. They achieve well in the nursery, becoming confident in learning new skills and relating to others. This good progress is maintained into the reception class. Whilst standards in the tests remain below average, inspection findings show that children in the infants and juniors are now beginning to make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. This is because there have been some improvements in teaching. However, there are still areas for improvement. For example, not enough opportunities are given, for pupils to learn practically or to carry out their own investigations in mathematics and science. In English, pupils do not have enough practice in writing. Work set, particularly for the more able pupils is insufficiently challenging and they could achieve more. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their abilities and pupils in the language unit achieve very well, because they are well supported.

In other subjects, standards are below average in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education (RE), and geography in both the infants and juniors, and in music in the juniors. In history, art and physical education (PE) in the infants and juniors, and in music in the infants, standards are similar to those found in most schools. However, in design and technology not enough work was seen during the inspection to judge standards.

The school has set itself sensible targets for what pupils should achieve in the future and is beginning to make steady progress towards these.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good; most pupils are keen to learn and are attentive in class. They work hard in lessons and listen well to their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils are co-operative and polite. They work and play together well and are respectful of others in class and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good; relationships between all members of the school community are good. Pupils are tolerant of each other and show respect.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory; despite the school's efforts, improvement is slow.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*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 satisfactory. During the inspection, lessons seen in the infants were consistently satisfactory or better. However, there was some unsatisfactory teaching seen in the juniors that needs to be improved. In the nursery and reception, teaching is consistently good. Excellent relationships, good planning and close attention to meeting the children's needs all ensure they make good progress. Throughout the school, teachers manage their pupils well and as a result, pupils behave well and pay good attention to their work. Teachers' questioning is effective in giving the pupils the confidence to 'have a go'. Not all lessons contain these good features. This results in inconsistencies across the school and underlines the need for teaching to be checked more regularly. In some lessons, teachers do not cater for the needs of more able pupils well enough and they achieve less than they could. Marking is also a weakness because it is not used well enough to help pupils improve. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. In literacy, teachers are good at teaching letter sounds and in numeracy, they teach mental arithmetic well. However, they do not always give pupils enough opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Teachers and other staff provide good support for children with special educational needs and they achieve well as a result. Staff also provide appropriate support for pupils whose first language is not English, particularly in nursery and reception. Teaching in the Language Unit classes is very good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in nursery and reception. Satisfactory in the infants and juniors. There are weaknesses in mathematics and science in the opportunities pupils are given to find out for themselves. Not enough opportunities are given for children to work on computers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall and very good for children in the Language Unit. Clear targets for improvement are set and regularly reviewed for each pupil. Staff, including classroom assistants and speech therapists work well together to support them and help them progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils at the early stages of learning English are supported appropriately and make sound progress towards targets set for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory in spiritual, moral and social development. Children know right from wrong and know how to get on well together. Cultural development is unsatisfactory because pupils have too few opportunities to learn about the diversity of other cultures.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school is a caring community. Day-to-day care is satisfactory. Attendance is promoted very well. However, the use of assessment to plan the next stages of learning for pupils is weak. The health and safety policy and procedures need to be revised to meet requirements.
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The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents feel that the headteacher is approachable and responsive. The Parent-School Partnership helps parents to improve their own education as well as showing them how they can support their children's learning.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has brought about significant improvements in the nursery and reception classes. With the deputy, he has also ensured that teachers know what to teach to each year group. Management of subjects has been ineffective in the past, but is now improving. Most subject leaders are new to their roles, but are already beginning to get to grips with what needs to be done to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. A group committed to making the school better. They are closely involved in making decisions about the future of the school. However, they do not fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school does not identify areas for improvement precisely enough or prioritise them sufficiently. Teaching and learning are not sufficiently checked to ensure improvements. More use could be made of information collected on pupils' performance to make improvements to teaching and the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. The school ensures that specific grants are used for their intended purposes. It seeks best value in its work. It uses resources from initiatives such as the Education Action Zone well for school development.

The school accommodation is of a very high standard and is well maintained by the care-taking and cleaning team. There is a suitable number of both teaching and support staff. Resources are generally good. However, despite some improvements, there are not enough computers for the effective teaching of ICT.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children make good progress;</li> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school;</li> <li>• The teaching in the school is good;</li> <li>• The school is welcoming and approachable;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities for children outside lessons;</li> <li>• The amount of homework;</li> <li>• They would like the school to work more closely with them and to give them more</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most parents feel the school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	information.
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The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views that the school is welcoming and approachable, and that the children like school. However, there are aspects of teaching, learning and management that require some improvement. The amount of homework set is similar to that found in most primary schools. The inspection team agrees that the school could give parents more information, particularly about their children's progress. It could also provide more activities for pupils outside lessons. However, the team feels that the school works well in partnership with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school's test results show that there have been some improvements in the numbers of pupils attaining the expected levels, at ages seven and eleven, since 1998. This rate of improvement is, however, only just keeping pace with that of all schools nationally. Matthew Arnold's results for the Year 2000, therefore, are still well below average when compared to all schools, in English, mathematics and science at 7 and 11 years. At Key Stage 1, mathematics results have consistently placed Matthew Arnold in the bottom five per cent of schools in the country since 1997. Early indications of results from the 2001 tests (unvalidated) show that this pattern has largely continued, with the exception of science at Key Stage 2, where there has been a significant improvement.
2. At Key Stage 1, when compared to schools in similar circumstances, results for 2000 were average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, the picture was better, with English being above average, mathematics around the average and science below average.
3. There are some significant factors that influence the school's performance. The area around the school is one of social deprivation. Children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below that of most three-year-olds, particularly in their language development. Many more pupils than in most schools (51 per cent) are eligible for free school meals. A high percentage (37 per cent) have special educational needs. The school is good at identifying the needs of these pupils and gives them good support. However, despite these factors, achievement has not been fast enough for many pupils, particularly the more able.
4. Pupils in nursery and reception are on course to reach expected standards in mathematics, personal and social development, physical development and creative development. However, the majority will not meet expected standards in communication, language and literacy or knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils achieve well in both classes, which is a direct result of consistently good teaching. They leave the reception class with a firm base on which to build.
5. Standards in English are below average at Key Stages 1 and 2. The overall progress of the majority of pupils continues to be hindered by their weak language and communication skills. It takes time for them to make up lost ground in this area and achievement is unsatisfactory in the area of speaking. However, recent improvements in teaching methods and the use of national 'catch-up' programmes are proving beneficial and the rate of achievement in reading is improving rapidly and is now satisfactory at both key stages.

Similarly in writing, better teaching and more opportunities for pupils to practice their writing skills is leading to improvements at both key stages. Achievement at both key stages is now also satisfactory. Standards in handwriting are unsatisfactory at age 11 because it is not taught systematically enough.

6. Standards in mathematics are also below average at both key stages. The low standards achieved by pupils by age 7 have left pupils with too much ground to cover by age 11. Pupils at both key stages have had too few opportunities to develop their mental mathematics skills or to solve problems and work practically. Progress is also hindered by their weak language skills. However, a number of recent changes have raised pupils' achievement and they are now making better progress, particularly at Key Stage 1. This is because teaching has improved and the assessment of pupils' abilities is now more accurate.
7. Standards in science are rising, with more pupils attaining the expected levels. This is bringing the older pupils' performance closer to that of other schools. However, standards are still below average at both key stages, largely because too few pupils achieve the higher levels (Levels 3 and 5). At both key stages, pupils achieve reasonably well when asked to recall factual information. However, they achieve less well when asked to find things out through their own investigations.
8. More able pupils at both key stages do not achieve as well as they could in English, mathematics and science, largely as a result of weaknesses in teaching and assessment. In many lessons, work is not set at the right level for these pupils. It is not challenging enough for them and they cover old ground, rather than extending their knowledge and skills.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities in most lessons, because they are well supported and targets set for them are appropriate. Pupils in the language unit classes achieve very well in relation to their abilities because of high quality teaching and high levels of support. Those who have English as an additional language make sound progress.
10. Throughout the school, knowledge and skills are not taught in enough depth in ICT, geography and religious education, or at Key Stage 2 in music. Pupils' achievements are limited and therefore in these subjects standards are not as high as seen in most schools. In design and technology, insufficient evidence was available to enable judgements to be made on standards. In the remaining subjects of the curriculum, standards are in line with expectations at ages 7 and 11.
11. As teaching and learning are improving, the school is beginning to make satisfactory progress towards achieving the goals it has set itself.

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

12. Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and learning. They behave well and develop good quality relationships with other children and adults. Pupils

have coped well with the move to a new building and the significant number of new staff who have joined the school. Although their attitudes and behaviour are not judged to be so exceptionally good as they were at the time of the previous inspection, the school operates as a friendly, relaxed and orderly community in which good quality learning can take place.

13. As with the rest of the school, pupils in nursery and reception have good attitudes and behave well. Even those who had only been members of the nursery for a few weeks at the time of the inspection, enter the classroom with a smile. They are already developing good social skills, together with the confidence to select which activities they wish to take part in. They are helpful about tidying up and respond well to the encouragement and praise that staff give them. Older pupils say that they like school and that they are finding the lessons increasingly interesting, with more opportunities than in the past to do practical work. Most pupils are attentive in lessons and keen to volunteer answers. However, throughout the school, pupils show some reluctance to re-enter the building at the end of break times or to settle to written work when the need for this arises.
14. Pupils behave well and there has been no need to exclude anyone in the last twelve months. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are generally courteous, holding doors open for adults or offering help with carrying loads, and they behave well in the dining hall. They move around the building sensibly and can be trusted to deliver messages or when they have to re-enter the building for something forgotten. In the playground, one boy very honestly told the lunchtime assistant that he had found a £1 coin, and readily handed it over to its rightful owner. When pupils take part in activities outside school, members of the public often praise their behaviour. Year 6 has more pupils than other classes and has a larger than average number of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Some of these find it hard to behave well all the time. Sometimes, this challenging behaviour affects the ability of all pupils in the class to learn. However, these pupils, who are mainly boys, are responding well to the support offered them by school staff and they are developing increasing self-discipline.
15. Relationships between everyone who works in the school are good. Pupils want to please their teachers and they are very supportive of each other. For example, they share resources well in science lessons or help others who stumble when they are reading aloud. They do not laugh unkindly at each other, and they are welcoming to those who are new to the school, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. During one registration period, a pupil in Year 6 was anxious to ensure that a pupil who is gradually being integrated into this class from the Language Unit was not being left out of activities. In lessons and in the playground, pupils of different ethnic background work and play together well. Pupils do not consider that bullying or other types of harassment are a feature of their school life, and it is clear that any such incidents are swiftly dealt with. There are fewer opportunities than in the past for pupils to contribute to the community or use their initiative but, when given responsibilities, as in Year 6, they carry them out effectively.



16. Attendance levels at the school have improved in the past year, although they are still considerably below the national average and, therefore, unsatisfactory. In the most recent academic year, more than ten per cent of pupils of statutory school age had the equivalent of one day each week away from school. Attendance levels of children in the nursery are particularly low. The school has worked hard recently to ensure that pupils attend regularly and punctually, and these efforts are now beginning to have an effect. For example, levels of unauthorised absence have dropped significantly so that they are now better than average. Although it is not yet entirely satisfactory, pupils' punctuality, which was poor at the time of the previous inspection, has also improved, with very few pupils now arriving significantly after the start of the school day.

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

17. The current deployment of teachers to classes has only been in place for two weeks. This is because there has been a number of long serving teachers who have recently left the school and several staff have been reallocated to different year groups. It is taking time for some staff to find the right level of challenge for their pupils, because prior assessments of their abilities have not always been sufficiently accurate and they are still adjusting to teaching a new age group. This is particularly affecting the learning of more able pupils. Overall, teaching is stronger than at the time of the last inspection, with more very good teaching and fewer unsatisfactory lessons. Although this improvement bodes well for the future, there are still weaknesses that need to be addressed, in order to eradicate the unsatisfactory and raise the standard of the more ordinary teaching. In particular, expectations of more able pupils need to be raised and aspects of good practice need to be shared more effectively amongst the staff.
18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is no major differential between these key stages, but during the inspection, teaching in the infants was slightly stronger than that in the juniors where there were three unsatisfactory lessons. About half the lessons seen in these key stages were judged to be good or better and about one in five was very good. In the Foundation stage, teaching is consistently good in both nursery and reception where children get off to a strong start. This represents a strong improvement since the last inspection, when half the lessons in the nursery were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching in the two language unit classes is of a consistently very good quality and meets the needs of these pupils very well.
19. In the nursery and reception classes, the excellent relationships which teachers and support staff establish with pupils are the key to giving them the confidence they need to learn well. They work hard at providing learning experiences that match the children's needs, concentrating particularly on developing their independence and social skills. Teachers have high expectations of children's concentration and effort and as a result the children are keen to please and work hard at their tasks. There is a purposeful learning

atmosphere in both classes. The nursery and reception classes now operate as one unit, with initiatives such as joint planning of activities by all the staff. This is helping to provide the consistent quality of learning that was missing at the time of the last inspection. The well planned activities ensure that children in reception are challenged at a higher level than in nursery by using more difficult and varied resources, discussing their work and recording more of their ideas.

20. There are several key features that characterise the best teaching but these are not always found regularly in lessons. It is this inconsistency that underlines the need for more regular monitoring of teaching by the leadership and management and by the spreading of good practice.
21. Overall, pupil management is good. Teachers have good strategies to maintain control and, as a result, pupils pay very good attention to lesson introductions and stick to their tasks well. The Year 1 teacher, for example, asked the pupils 'Who made the class rules?' When the pupils replied that they did, the teacher quickly got them to realise the significance of this by asking them 'So who is expected to keep to them?' 'We are!' was the reply. For the rest of the lesson they were very well behaved and concentrated well, allowing a good learning atmosphere to develop.
22. Teachers' questioning is effective. Their supportive manner and encouraging tone helps pupils to have the confidence to 'have a go'. In most lessons, they are not afraid of getting an answer wrong because teachers value all responses from the class. Even if a pupil is well off track, they will boost their confidence with statements such as 'A good try - can anyone help him out here?' On occasions, however, teachers do not give pupils enough time to formulate their answers and speak for them, in an attempt to help them. This limits the opportunities for children to extend their answers beyond one or two words or a simple phrase. Resources are generally well chosen to interest the children. In a Year 2 music lesson, for example, the varied choice of pieces from ancient church music to blues, captured the children's interest and prompted them to offer very good suggestions for the feelings evoked by the music. On other occasions, however, teachers miss opportunities to use the most appropriate resources. For example, in both literacy and numeracy teaching, the use of individual white boards would have enabled more pupils to be involved in answering teachers' questions, as opposed to just one pupil at a time.
23. In the best lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they expect them to learn. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, the teacher told the pupils that they were going to look at ways in which all human beings were similar and that they would learn that changes take place as they grow from babies into children. This set the pupils on course to think about this as the lesson moved along. At times however, the objectives set for lessons are too vague to specify exactly what the outcome is intended to be, or else they are not shared in terms that the pupils can fully understand. For example, in a Year 3 lesson

designed to study what particular animals need to keep them healthy, the aim displayed on the board was 'To review animal needs with reference to pets'.

24. Some plenary sessions are well used to draw together what has been learned during the lesson, but others can be simply a 'show and tell' session where pupils read or show their work to others. This misses the opportunity to reinforce the key learning from the lesson and to check whether the pupils have achieved the aim of the lesson.
25. A weaker area of teaching is the way teachers cater for the needs of more able pupils. Lesson plans often set the same level of work for these pupils as for the rest of the class with the result that they are under-challenged and 'coast' during some lessons. In a Year 2 history lesson on Florence Nightingale for example, the five more able pupils were not expected to record any more information than middle or lower attaining pupils. This was despite having shown good insight into the period during their oral work. Another area for improvement is marking, which is cursory at best in most infant and junior classes. The use of ticks or crosses is insufficient to help pupils understand the mistakes they have made or how they might improve their work.
26. Support assistants make a good contribution to lessons. They are well briefed and intervene skilfully whenever needed to support individuals and groups of pupils. Their support of pupils with special educational needs is very effective because it is highly focused on specific basic skills. These pupils make good progress in lessons as a result. Teachers and classroom assistants provided appropriately and sensitively for pupils with English as an additional language. For example, a new entrant to reception with no English was guided sensitively through a suitable range of practical tasks to allow him to experience the same activities as his peers. The class was taught to count to five in his native language, which enabled him to build confidence and join in class activity at an early stage.
27. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. Teachers follow the structure of the national frameworks for these subjects, which helps them plan and structure their teaching effectively. However, teachers give pupils too few opportunities to practise the skills they learn when doing their work in other subjects. For example, worksheets are sometimes used in history and science, limiting the pupils' opportunities to practice their writing skills.
28. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It is used extensively, particularly at the top of the school, to help pupils revise their knowledge and practise key skills in literacy and mathematics. This is helping children to prepare more effectively for the end of key stage tests. However, some of the worksheets used are too easy and add little to pupils' prior learning.

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

29. At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum for the youngest pupils was weak. The work planned in the nursery did not draw on the national recommendations for learning. Links between the work provided in the nursery and in the reception class were poor. This situation has now been turned round completely and the curriculum provided in the Foundation Stage is good. All staff in the reception and nursery classes plan and work closely together, with the activities they provide drawn from the current national guidelines. This valuable improvement has been brought about by changes of staff, which have raised levels of expertise. Good leadership from the headteacher, who has drawn on the support available from the local authority and Education Action Zone, has promoted it.
30. Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 also make better use than before of nationally recommended schemes for teaching literacy, numeracy and other subjects. As a result, more appropriate work is now planned for these pupils. The deputy headteacher, who manages the curriculum, has better organised and set out what is to be covered in each year, and teachers are becoming clearer about the key learning points to be covered each term. The governors are to be commended for supporting the release of the deputy from class to enable this improvement to be made. There is now more work to be done to ensure that the right balance of activities is taught within each subject. For example, pupils need to be given more opportunities to write non-fiction in English, apply their numeracy skills to solving problems in mathematics, and perform and compose in music.
31. One aspect that is improving is the reduction in the overuse of simplistic 'fill in the sentence / colour the pictures' type worksheets, a trend which should be continued. In some lessons, such as science and history at Key Stage 1, pupils are now much better challenged to write and present findings or accounts. In others, such as science at Key Stage 2, too many worksheets still deprive children of opportunities to write freely. Not enough use is made of numeracy skills or ICT in other subjects. For example, there are too few opportunities for pupils to record their data or report results in science investigations. The exception to this is in the Foundation Stage and the language unit classes, where good use is made of computers in a wide range of work.
32. Overall, satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to learn outside school. A particular strength is in the way visits to places of interest are used to enrich pupils experiences in some subjects. For example, the school made good use of opportunities offered through the Education Action Zone by taking pupils to visit a photographic processing plant. Opportunities are missed in Key Stages 1 and 2 however to use the local area around the school, particularly in geography. This limits pupils understanding of their own locality. In the Foundation Stage, however, the local area is used well, with visits to local shops, for example, being used to stimulate imaginative play. In previous years, a good range of out of school clubs has been offered to pupils. However, the range has narrowed this year, with football the only activity

currently offered. This is limiting opportunities for pupils with other interests, such as art and music, to extend their experiences.

33. There are valuable links with the local secondary school. In physical education, for example, pupils gain from the expertise of secondary school staff working with them. The Education Action Zone has encouraged links between schools in the area and this has led to the sharing of ideas to improve pupils' learning.
34. A firm foundation for pupils' personal, social and health education is established in the Foundation Stage. Although staff continue to promote pupils' personal development to a satisfactory level in the infant and junior classes, there are gaps in provision that need to be filled. For example, there is no planned policy or programme for educating the children about drugs or citizenship. Teachers give attention to matters such as health in lessons but it tends to be incidental rather than part of a planned programme. A learning mentor has recently been appointed who is introducing activities such as 'circle time', during which the whole class discusses personal and social issues.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but the school is not sufficiently active in helping pupils appreciate, and prepare for living in, our multi-cultural society. Currently, there is no formal curriculum programme to develop pupils' personal and social education, although there are firm plans to introduce Circle Time across the school, and so the provision is more incidental than systematic.
36. As at the time of the previous inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Whilst assemblies usually include some time for reflection or prayer they are seldom inspiring. Those seen during inspection did not, for example, have music playing whilst pupils entered and left the room. This meant that there was no atmosphere of peace and quiet, different from the everyday. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour and come to an understanding that, for instance 'Only you can change your attitude'. In some lessons, they are given opportunities to respond to, for instance, the moods evoked by different types of music or the emotions aroused through literature but, overall, there are few occasions in which pupils are invited to think beyond the mundane and let their spirits fly.
37. The provision to promote pupils' moral and social development is also satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage and the Language Unit the provision is good, with staff providing ample opportunity and encouragement for children to grow in confidence, awareness of others' needs, and independence. In the rest of the school, teachers make regular reference to the class rules, which pupils have discussed and developed this term, when establishing order or picking up on unkind comments. Pupils respond well to this, showing that they have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school's behaviour policy is based on praising good rather than admonishing mistakes and, on the whole, staff act as good role models for pupils in the way that they treat them and other adults. Pupils are encouraged to support those who are

less fortunate than themselves and last year raised funds for both the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Comic Relief. Teachers are providing increasing numbers of opportunities for pupils to collaborate in lessons but, since the last inspection, both the School Council and the 'buddy' system have come to a halt. The school has plans to restart these activities in a more effective form than before, but currently there are too few opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community and come to an understanding of how societies work best.

38. Provision to promote pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Through different subjects of the curriculum, pupils learn about, for instance, the work of artists, different forms of literature and different types of music. Some pupils have the opportunity to attend, for example, concerts at the Philharmonic Hall and, on occasion, visit places of interest such as Speke Hall. However, more opportunities could be taken to use the rich cultural heritage of the local area to support learning. The opportunities for children in the Foundation Unit are more frequent and culturally inclusive than for older pupils, ranging from a local farm to a Chinese restaurant. The agreed syllabus for religious education includes topics about the main world religions, but inspection evidence shows that pupils' knowledge and understanding of these is scanty in the extreme. Some books, particularly those for nursery and reception children, include stories from other cultures, but the record of assemblies for last year shows very little reference to any culture or belief other than English and Christianity. At the time of the previous inspection there was a vibrant programme of extra-curricular activities, including African drumming, which extended pupils' cultural awareness and appreciation but in the absence of such opportunities the school's provision in this area is too limited to be satisfactory.

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

39. Members of staff know pupils well as individuals and are flexible in their approach to their specific needs. They are sympathetic to their circumstances and create a welcoming, reasonably predictable environment in which pupils can grow in confidence and maturity. As at the time of the previous inspection, much of the support that staff offer to pupils is based on this informal knowledge and a genuine desire to help those in their care to reach their full potential. However, the systems for assessing pupils' academic progress are still not sufficiently robust to ensure that pupils are always working to best effect.
40. The arrangements to ensure child protection are satisfactory. Staff have received appropriate training, are alert to potential problems and any information is kept suitably confidentially. The school takes good care of pupils who are looked after by local authority and staff members go to great lengths to support asylum seekers and others who are trying to establish themselves within the community. It is also willing to accept pupils who have had difficulties in other schools. The provision for pupils who have accidents, or feel unwell, or who have specific medical needs are also satisfactory and those who supervise pupils in the playground do so in a competent and pleasant way.

Although on a day to day basis staff take appropriate measures to ensure that, for instance, pupils take care in science and physical education lessons and the school is a safe environment, the school's overall procedures for monitoring health and safety are unsatisfactory. There is no site-specific policy; staff are unclear about who has responsibility for what, and risk assessments are not carried out as part of a regular programme, as required by law, although some have taken place. Since these omissions were drawn to his attention, the headteacher has taken prompt action to set about remedying the situation.

41. Over the past few months, and particularly since the summer term, the school has instituted many effective measures to promote good attendance. Registration procedures have improved since the previous inspection when the recording of unauthorised absence was not carried out sufficiently well. School staff, the education welfare officer and members of the Education Action Zone (EAZ) Social Inclusion team work together very well to highlight to parents and pupils the importance of good attendance. They make contact with those who do not let the school know the cause of their children's absence. These combined efforts are proving highly effective in improving the attendance and punctuality of pupils throughout the school.
42. Support from the EAZ team, and in particular the Learning Mentor, is also helping to improve pupils' standards of behaviour. The Learning Mentor works on a one to one basis, with small groups and within classrooms to help pupils develop strategies that will improve their confidence and self-discipline. She has established good relationships with pupils and staff, and is proving to be a real asset to the school community. The school's overall procedures to ensure good behaviour are satisfactory but they are not currently implemented totally consistently which means that pupils sometimes receive different messages from different staff members, or even from the same person as their patience wears thin. The system for awarding points and certificates is not yet fully established and with different, sometimes negatively worded rules in each classroom but no readily visible overall school rules, it is not entirely clear to all pupils what the school expects of them. Staff record any racist or bullying incidents appropriately and take effective, sometimes imaginative steps to raise the victim's self esteem and encourage other pupils to value their contribution to the community.
43. The monitoring and support of pupils' personal development is satisfactory although it is still, essentially, informal. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' home circumstances and are sympathetic to their particular needs but, in general, carry most of this information in their heads. There is no whole school system for recording, for instance, the issuing of certificates or who has been chosen as 'star of the week'. The Learning Mentor carefully records her work with individuals who are causing concern and some teachers are beginning to monitor pupils' behaviour and general happiness in school but such systematic recording is not yet in place throughout the school.

44. The school conducts a large number of different tests on its pupils and records the outcomes carefully but does not yet use the information thus gleaned to best advantage when planning what teachers will teach and pupils will learn. Assessment practice in the Foundation Stage, Language Unit and for pupils who have special educational needs is good, with staff keeping good records and setting clear, achievable and regularly updated targets for pupils. Elsewhere in the school, teachers only carry out regular assessment in English and mathematics, in both of these subjects teachers' assessment of the standards that pupils have reached are not always accurate. In the great majority of lessons, the only way in which teachers adapt the level of work for different pupils is by providing 'more of the same' for those who finish earlier than others. This means that, frequently, it does not provide sufficient challenge for those who are capable of higher achievement and in some cases the work is too hard for those who need extra support. Teachers are not yet confident about how to convert the information provided by testing and assessment into clear curriculum aims. Where they have had help with this from the local education authority, they have not reviewed and followed up the initial written targets to see whether pupils have reached them. Overall, the academic and personal support provided for pupils is adequate in that teachers are helpful to individuals and want them to succeed. The school now needs to collect a wider range of more accurate information. This then needs to be used more effectively as a tool when planning the content of lessons and evaluating what steps different groups of pupils need to take next in order to achieve appropriately.

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

45. A number of parents and grandparents of current pupils attended this school and had a great attachment to 'the old building'. They greeted the move to the new building, with a new headteacher, with some apprehension but now the great majority of parents and carers view the school in a positive light and are supportive of the opportunities provided for their children and themselves. In particular, parents consider that the teaching is good and helps their children to enjoy school and make good progress; they find staff very approachable and appreciate the openness of the headteacher. However, a sizeable number do not feel that the school works closely with parents or that they receive enough information about how much progress their children are making. Some parents also consider that the school does not provide sufficient activities outside lessons or the right amount of homework for pupils.
46. Inspection evidence shows that the school has established an effective partnership with parents and tries hard to work with them, for example in its efforts to improve pupils' attendance. The long established Parent-School Partnership which is run by the local education authority, provides an excellent 'gateway' into school-life, encouraging parents to follow courses such as creative writing or behaviour management, which help them to help their children to learn. During the inspection week various parents offered to help with the establishment of a lending library for sacks containing mathematics games, which is a new EAZ initiative in the school. Parents feel confident to



approach staff, including the headteacher, if they have concerns and are confident that they will be listened to with respect.

47. The quality of information provided for parents is unsatisfactory. Neither the prospectus nor the governors' annual report include all the required information and, although the school sends home lively and useful newsletters on a regular basis, teachers do not provide information for parents about what their children will be learning in the coming term. Parents find the meetings with teachers to discuss their children's progress useful. However, pupils' written progress reports do not give them a sufficiently clear indication of how much progress their children have made in each subject, what standards they have achieved and what they need to concentrate on in particular in order to move their learning forward. This is a similar situation to that found at the time of the previous inspection.
48. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. The majority listen to their children read at home and ensure that they attend school regularly and punctually. They are willing to meet with staff and discuss any concerns and when asked to, for instance, lend pets for a science lesson, or collect vouchers for computers, they do so generously. The school's new senior management and other staff have established a firm foundation on which to build an increasingly strong partnership with parents in order to enhance the quality of education provided by the school.

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

49. The headteacher and deputy, who were both appointed in the last school year, are leading the school with energy and enthusiasm. Along with the governors, who are now more effective in their role than at the last inspection, they are committed to raising standards. Together, they have tackled some of the issues identified at the last inspection that were still outstanding when they arrived. For example, standards in the Foundation Stage and the Key Stage 1 curriculum have been improved. They have also addressed other issues, which have arisen since the last inspection took place, such as taking measures to ensure a projected budget deficit did not arise. However, there are still some weaknesses that were identified the last inspection, for example systems for checking on teaching and learning are not yet in place. However, there is sufficient evidence of improving achievement in key areas of the school to judge that leadership and management is satisfactory.
50. The headteacher has had a particular impact on improving standards in the Foundation Stage. He identified the key areas for action and sought support and advice from a range of sources to help bring about changes in teaching, learning and the curriculum. He also ensured that staff were appropriately trained and deployed. As a result, significant improvement has taken place and children now enter Key Stage 1 with a firm foundation on which to build. This is just beginning to show through in children's achievements in Year 1 in particular. The deputy head has redesigned the curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2, with input from key staff and support from the governing body.

Teachers, particularly at Key Stage 1, now have a clear picture of what to teach in each subject to each year group and this is beginning to ensure that pupils' build steadily on previous learning. The head and deputy have worked hard to build good relationships with parents. As a result, the majority of parents have confidence in the way they are leading the school and feel that the school is approachable and responsive.

51. There are areas that still need improvement. Effective systems for checking and improving standards of teaching are not yet sharp enough. As a result, it is difficult for the management team to clearly identify what needs to be done to improve unsatisfactory teaching and teaching which is just satisfactory, or to ensure consistency. Whilst the school has recently set targets for all pupils related to national curriculum levels and has a clearer idea of what children are capable of achieving, this information is not yet fully used by teachers to plan the next steps in learning for all groups. More able pupils, in particular, are not challenged sufficiently enough, as a result.
52. Subject leadership is currently at an early stage of development. After significant reorganisation of responsibilities by the headteacher, most teachers have only had charge of their subjects for three weeks. A satisfactory start has been made, but as yet, they have not had time to bring about improvements. However, the management of special needs provision, including the language unit is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good overview of pupils' progress towards their targets. She has devised clear and consistent administrative systems across the school. This ensures that individual pupils are well supported and achieve well, in relation to their abilities.
53. The governing body has improved since the last inspection and now gives satisfactory support for the work of the school. Governors are now more aware of their roles and responsibilities through training. They are better at holding the school to account because they have a growing understanding of some of its strengths and weaknesses. This is because the information they receive from the headteacher and key staff is better than in the past. It is helping them to give appropriate support and they are beginning to ask the right questions in some areas. They are now more involved in decision making and principles for ensuring that best value in the school's work are soundly applied. They check the value of the services they buy and consider different options and their costs. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, they have started to check the school's performance against national standards and against similar schools. The responsibilities they hold as individuals reflect closely the particular skills and expertise they bring. For example, the governor with responsibility for special educational needs is a former health visitor and understands the needs of children well. She takes a keen interest in the area and gives valuable help and advice. However, the Governing Body still does not fulfil all of its statutory responsibilities. For example, they have not yet taken steps to ensure that adequate health and safety procedures are in place.
54. Financial management is good. The headteacher and governors have avoided a potential budget deficit by taking difficult decisions related to staffing, after

exploring a range of possibilities. This has enabled the school to continue to make satisfactory provision for pupils. Funding for specific purposes is used appropriately, for example to provide a support worker for pupils learning English as an additional language. Good use has been made of funding and support from the Education Action Zone and as a result, teaching and learning in the areas of literacy and numeracy are starting to improve.

55. The recently established systems for checking on the school's performance are helping senior staff and governors to correctly identify broad areas for improvement, such as writing and Key Stage 1 mathematics. However, the school development plan drawn up to address these does not focus clearly enough on the key priorities within these broad areas, or state exactly how improvements will be secured. It also covers too many areas. This limits its usefulness for sharply focusing the work of the school and makes checking on progress more difficult. More work needs to be done in drawing sharper conclusions from the data that is analysed. Key priorities for action need to be more clearly set out to distinguish them from more minor issues.
56. There is a sufficient number of teaching staff and a good ratio of support staff to pupils. The school has implemented a sound performance management system through which objectives have been set for teachers. This is guiding staff training. Procedures for inducting newly qualified teachers into the school are also sound and ensure they have appropriate support from a designated colleague.
57. The accommodation is now of very good standard and is well maintained by the caretaking and cleaning team. It provides a high quality environment for teaching and learning. Resources are good in most subject areas. However, there is insufficient provision of accommodation and resources for the teaching of ICT. As a result, standards in this area are still not as high as they should be. Good use is being made of the excellent facilities at the local high school to provide for older pupils. However, this will not, in itself, be enough to raise standards across the school. The school's current resources need to be better organised.
58. Given the value that the school is adding to its pupils and what this costs, it is judged to be giving satisfactory value for money.

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

59. The headteacher, staff and governing body should now:
  - a) **Improve standards of attainment in English, mathematics, some aspects of science, information and communication technology, religious education, music at Key Stage 2 and geography by:**

### *English*

- paying greater attention to improving pupils' speaking skills;

- giving pupils more opportunities to write for different purposes;
- improving the range of strategies pupils use in their reading;
- improving standards of handwriting.

(paragraphs: 3, 4, 5, 8, 31, 60, 82, 85, 86, 88, 97)

### *Mathematics*

- giving pupils more opportunities to undertake investigative and problem-solving work;
- giving pupils more opportunities to collect and use data;
- giving pupils more opportunities to use their knowledge of number in other subject areas;

(paragraphs: 6, 8, 92, 96)

### *Science*

- providing more opportunities for pupils to find things out through scientific investigation.

(paragraphs: 7, 8, 98, 99)

### *Information and communication technology, religious education and geography at both key stages, and music at Key Stage 2*

- ensuring that aspects of each of these subjects are taught in enough depth so that pupils develop the necessary knowledge and skills;
- ensuring that more time is given to developing skills in ICT and using these more effectively in other curriculum areas;

(paragraphs:10, 31, 33, 89, 110)

## **b) Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:**

- providing work which is matched more closely to the needs of the more able pupils;
- making lessons more interesting by using a greater range of teaching methods, including allowing pupils to take a more active part in lessons and show initiative;
- spreading existing good practice more effectively across all classes;
- making better use of marking to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

(paragraphs: 6, 7, 8, 15, 17, 20, 25, 86, 89, 94, 96, 101)

## **c) Make better use of the assessment information available on pupils by:**

- ensuring test results are used to identify particular strengths and weaknesses for different groups and to decide what pupils should learn next;
- develop assessment procedures in those subjects where there are none.

(paragraphs: 17, 44, 83, 87, 89, 99, 107)

d) **Identify and prioritise key areas for development more sharply by:**

- having more clearly identified priorities in the School Development Plan;
- giving more detail of the action to be taken.

(paragraphs: 55, 87, 96, 108, 120)

**e) Monitor and evaluate the work of the school more effectively by:**

- developing more rigorous systems for checking on teaching and learning;
- ensuring that procedures for monitoring health and safety meet statutory requirements.

(paragraphs: 20, 40, 49, 51, 53, 90, 95, 102)

**f) Develop pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures by:**

- giving them a wider range of experiences in this area.

(paragraphs: 38, 111, 119, 137, 138)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the plan:

- i. continue to implement and develop strategies for improving attendance;
- ii. improve provision for personal, social and health education;
- iii. improve the quality of information given to parents.

(paragraphs 16, 34, 47)

### **The Work of the Language Unit**

60. The work of the language unit is very good and is a strength of the school, as it was at the last inspection.
61. Pupils are referred to the language unit on the recommendation of a range of professionals. They are brought to the school in taxis provided by the LEA, from various parts of Liverpool. Some pupils attend the language unit for a short period of time and return to their local schools; others remain at Matthew Arnold for the whole period of their primary education. At the time of the inspection, these places were not taken up. There are 20 pupils on roll, taught in two classes, one for reception to Year 2 pupils and one for Year 3 to Year 6 pupils. Each class has one teacher and one assistant. The children are included in all the activities that the school has to offer. Good systems for links between home and school are in operation and are seen as vital in ensuring that parents, who often live some distance from the school, are fully informed of their children's progress.
62. Pupils' attainment is often, but not always, below average. This is particularly the case in the core subjects and in subjects which require the understanding of abstract ideas and concepts, such as history. However, in subjects such as art pupils attain average standards. All language unit pupils make at least good and often very good progress. This is a direct result of very good teaching.

Their speech and language needs are very well met as a result of the excellent teamwork between all the professionals involved in their care, including speech therapists who give high quality support. Detailed assessments lead to carefully set, precise targets that are shared with the pupils and their parents. Progress towards these targets is regularly monitored and evaluated and all planning for the pupils is undertaken jointly. Re-integration into their neighbourhood schools or to mainstream classes within Matthew Arnold is managed with care and sensitivity, ensuring smooth transition. This is also the case for pupils who transfer from the unit to high school.

63. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons for regular, individual speech therapy sessions. However, this rarely impacts negatively on progress because on their return to class, teachers are particularly careful to ensure that children are well supported in their learning and make up lost ground.
64. Pupils follow the same curriculum as their classmates in other parts of the school and often join them for particular activities. Speech therapists also support children in class, on occasions, if this is deemed necessary for pupils to access the same curriculum as others. Although several age groups are taught in the same class, careful planning ensures that work is very well matched to the needs and abilities of individuals. Reception pupils are taught with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. However, regular, planned visits to the Foundation Stage classroom ensure satisfactory access to the appropriate learning experiences.
65. The quality of teaching in both classes is very good, overall, particularly in English and Mathematics. Teachers plan a wide variety of hands-on, practical activities to motivate their pupils and develop their understanding. For example, in history in the Key Stage 2 class, pupils were encouraged to dress up in Victorian clothes, which developed their understanding of how restrictive these were for Victorian children. In mathematics in the Key Stage 1 class, pupils decorated cakes as they learned to add and subtract numbers to 5. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the way in which all staff explain tasks carefully, paying particular attention to the language needs of their pupils. They also handle pupils' speech difficulties sensitively, giving appropriate thinking and response time and encouraging all their efforts. This increases pupils' confidence in their own abilities and helps them achieve well. The atmosphere created in both classes is happy and relaxed, yet purposeful and hard working. Teachers and other staff have high expectations of pupils in terms of attitudes and behaviour. They respond well to this by working hard and behaving well almost always.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

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

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	16	17	3	0	0
Percentage	4	17	35	37	7	0	0

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

### 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)	22	215
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	20
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		75

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.4	School data	1.1
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	14	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	23	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (62)	77 (69)	77 (52)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	10	12	10
	Total	23	26	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (59)	84 (72)	77 (72)
	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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	15	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	14
	Girls	10	6	8
	Total	22	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (69)	50 (43)	61 (49)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	12
	Girls	10	8	11
	Total	21	18	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (49)	51 (40)	66 (46)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (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	1
Black – other	16
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	3
White	190
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35
Average class size	30

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	251

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	613524
Total expenditure	627964
Expenditure per pupil	2533
Balance brought forward from previous year	75784
Balance carried forward to next year	61344

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	259
Number of questionnaires returned	69

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	23	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	36	0	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	42	4	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	32	13	7	3
The teaching is good.	68	29	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	26	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	17	3	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	25	4	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	54	29	14	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	35	1	1	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	30	6	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	30	12	3	10

*Figures are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.*

## **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**

66. Children are admitted to the nursery as soon as they turn three years of age. There are currently 27 children on roll, who attend in either the morning or afternoon. The reception class admits children in the September of the year in which they become 5. This year's class has 23 children, most of who have transferred from the nursery. In the last report, the quality of provision for the Foundation Stage children was described as satisfactory in reception but unsatisfactory in the nursery. It is now much improved and children get off to a strong start, progressing well in both classes because of consistently good teaching and a well-planned curriculum.
67. Children are assessed by teachers on entry to both nursery and reception classes. When they begin nursery, their overall attainment is well below average when compared to that of other children of their age. Particular weaknesses are evident in language and communication skills and some show limited development of social skills. When they enter reception they are assessed on a wider range of skills. Although they have achieved well during their time in nursery, the majority are still below average in the key areas of language, mathematics, social development, and knowledge and understanding of the world.
68. Children with special needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their difficulties. This is because they receive carefully planned support that is effective in raising their confidence to attempt new experiences. As children with higher levels of attainment begin to be identified, they are given more challenging tasks to undertake which enable them to make good progress in their learning.
69. Relationships are very strong in the Foundation Stage and all staff concentrate very hard on preparing children to be able to work and play both independently and with others. This drive to raise confidence and social awareness pays dividends in the ease with which children settle into school and in their good attitude to both work and play. Very careful and regular assessment helps the teachers to decide what level of activity is appropriate to offer next. This helps them to provide a good match of challenge to all groups of children.

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

70. This is a priority area for all the nursery and reception staff, and throughout the planning of all areas of learning, they ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote children's personal and social skills. As a result, children progress well and most are on course to achieve the learning goals for children aged 6 by the time they leave reception.

71. Good teaching helps children to feel secure as they settle into the routines of the nursery. Adults spend a lot of time talking to individuals and groups and listening to their ideas as they co-operate over tasks. They pick up on children's suggestions, incorporating them in play situations and this raises children's self-esteem and confidence to contribute to lessons. The open teaching area shared by nursery and reception children helps to develop this confidence, as the older children join the new arrivals for milk and 'snack.' They may hear a short story together or practise a new counting song and the teachers' high expectations in respect of their behaviour or attentiveness helps them to understand what is expected and why simple rules are needed.
72. As children progress through reception, they are beginning to display very good work habits, staying on task for sustained periods of time. Often they show that they do not require close supervision, such as when they work in a group to build a wall for 'Humpty Dumpty' or sit in pairs to attempt a simple number task on the computer.
73. A key strategy used in both nursery and reception is to introduce the children to the idea of taking responsibility for their own learning. They do this by getting the children to select their own tasks from a range of options. In nursery this is done using a box of simple objects to represent specific activities, such as a plastic spade for sand work, a paintbrush for the art task or a pencil for the writing corner. Children show their choices by the object they select. Reception children are expected to take this idea further by attaching their own name card to their choice on the activity board. This development of independence is reinforced at the end of each session, when all children are expected to tidy up after themselves.
74. The consistency of expectations amongst teachers and support staff in both the nursery and reception has helped to create a very positive learning atmosphere in the Foundation Stage.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

75. Many children have low levels of attainment for their age in this area when they start nursery. Staff are good at developing children's skills in speaking and listening and in the early stages of writing, and as a result they make good progress in both nursery and reception. Because they are building from such a low base however, only a few children are on track to attain the expected level of development by the time they reach six years of age. Even by reception age, children's vocabulary is not extensive and teachers plan to introduce specific new words with each activity they undertake. This is steadily building children's ability to speak about their experiences and offer explanations and ideas, but responses to teachers' questions are often limited to very simple phrases.
76. In the nursery, children learn how to handle books correctly as adults sit with individuals or pairs to look through favourite stories. They are introduced to different types of books in group reading sessions and a range of practical activities including painting and model making are built around nursery rhyme

or story characters such as 'Humpty Dumpty' or 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. This helps children to become familiar with the stories and gives them a meaningful context in which to explore ideas such as rhyme as they look for rhyming names in the class for example. On the same theme, reception children take their understanding further as they begin to explore the idea of stories having characters and a plot to follow. Whilst nursery children learn to recognise and replicate letter shapes, reception children spot familiar words as they follow text in 'big books' with their teacher. Staff are skilled at telling and reading stories and this helps engage the children's interest in books.

77. Good teaching in this area helps children to use the letters and words they are beginning to recognise in their early writing experiences. For example, both nursery and reception children are helped to make get well cards for 'Humpty' after his fall. According to the children's ability level, some carry a picture message and need the children's explanation, others have written copies of the teacher's suggested wording, and some are written independently. The encouragement and reassurance offered by adults who support such activities ensures that children are not afraid to make mistakes. This helps them to learn quickly. Some writing opportunities such as making out receipts are offered in the role-play shop, but there is some scope to extend these and to ensure that children take advantage of them when they select this activity.

### **Mathematical development**

78. Children make good progress and most are in line to reach the expected standard by the time they leave reception. This is the result of good teaching and well-planned activities supported by well-chosen resources.
79. In the nursery, children are presented with a wide range of interesting tasks, which help to reinforce concepts of shape and number. They count the letters in their names, deciding which have more or less and use resources such as 'Fantastic Frogs' or 'Compare Bears' to match and sort. Adults pay close attention to their progress in lessons and are careful to prompt them when necessary without giving them too much support, which would reduce their learning. Activities that the children consider to be play, often have plenty of 'hidden' learning for them. For example, when they are in the role play shop area they are steered towards mathematical learning by having to match pairs of shoes, measure feet against footprints or hand out pretend money as change. Simple jigsaws give them the opportunity to recognise and match basic two-dimensional shapes, which they achieve well.
80. Reception children are given a similarly wide range of activity, but are challenged to take their learning further. For example, when they build a wall of plastic bricks they are asked to estimate how many they have used, or how many more would be needed to make a wall as tall as the one that the teacher has made. On occasions, children are over challenged, such as when they had to estimate how many bricks would be needed to construct an identical wall from smaller bricks. However, the teacher keeps a close enough eye on their progress to adjust the questions she asks in the light of the children's

responses. Imaginative ideas such as using a puppet called 'Bugsy' who has mysteriously jumbled up the 'Teddy Bear number line,' capture the children's imagination as they work together to recreate its numerical order. Their good progress is evident, as they become familiar with numbers to ten and in some cases to twenty. Plenty praise as children learn their numbers and shapes, encourages them to work hard and succeed.

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

81. Many children have limited understanding of the wider world as they enter the nursery, compounded by their difficulty in expressing what they know. They make good progress as they go through the nursery, particularly in their knowledge about simple scientific phenomena and in their information and communication technology skills. Reception children experience an interesting range of activities as they are challenged to begin thinking scientifically. A few of these children are on course to achieve the expectations for their age at the end of the year, but despite progressing well most are still below average because of their low starting point.
82. Teaching is good and staff plan exciting and practical things for children to do. They help to make scrambled eggs in the nursery and in reception they observe the differences between raw and boiled eggs, recording their observations in words or pictures. Few opportunities to explore the world are missed in these activities, as teachers ask the children where eggs come from, going on to look for examples of egg laying creatures in non-fiction books. Teachers give good attention to children's health and safety, pointing out for example that they should wash their hands thoroughly before handling food. Some reception children are beginning to develop the confidence to work unsupervised in pairs at the computer. They show that they can complete simple mathematics games such as matching the size of shoes to the size of a character's feet. Other children still need the encouragement of support staff to move programs along as they grasp a concept.

### **Physical development**

83. Children make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes and most are on course to reach expectations by the age of 6. They bring reasonable levels of attainment in this area as they begin school and the experiences planned for them build their capability in both manipulative and larger physical skills.
84. In the nursery children are given the opportunity to work with a good range of small construction kits, making walls with 'duplo' bricks or an ambulance with 'mobilo' to take Humpty Dumpty to hospital. They show average skills with scissors as they cut up paper for their artwork and some are adept at threading a plastic needle as they sew their initial onto material. Others need a lot of patient help from support staff as they attempt this. The staff sensibly provide only enough support to enable the children to continue. In larger activity, children are given daily outdoor time when they practise skills such as



pedalling and steering small wheeled bikes and trikes around a roadway, or throwing a Frisbee. Teaching is good. A key strength is the imaginative context in which children are asked to work in the hall. For example, to prompt their ideas of movement, the teacher provided a 'feely bag' full of different footwear from ballet shoes to wellingtons. The children then had to mime different walks and movements according to the clues given by the different shoes. They did this well and enjoyed the experience.

85. Reception children are moving towards Key Stage 1 activities as they practise rolling balls to each other or work to develop their batting and catching skills with small balls and beanbags. In their movement lessons they explore actions such as rolling and jumping and they show increasing control and awareness of others around them. Teachers give attention to children's health education, questioning them for example, on the effects of exercise on the heart. Children show their growing understanding saying 'Stand still. It stops your heart getting faster.'

### **Creative development**

86. Most children are on course to achieve expectations for their age by the end of reception in their artistic and musical awareness. Their difficulty in using imagination in independent role-play and drama and their limited ability to express and communicate their ideas depresses their overall attainment and few are in line to achieve enough in these areas to reach expectations.
87. However, children make good progress from a well below average starting point in this area. When they start in the nursery, their drawings show little maturity, but they improve steadily until by reception most are able to create recognisable pictures of subjects such as nursery rhyme characters or members of the family. Older children in reception paint portraits of the class, as well as experimenting with printing using their fingers or taking rubbings of bricks and other textures. They enjoy these fun activities. Teaching in this aspect is good, with support staff playing a big part and expectations of children's independence high. As nursery children made collage pictures for example, the nursery nurse offered support with a demonstration of paper folding, but expected the children to complete their own after seeing how it was done.
88. Teachers build children's musical awareness well. In reception for example, a very well taught music session helped children distinguish between different types of instrument. They showed good patience and concentration as they waited to play their instrument when it matched the sound made by another. In this way they begin to remember the different instrument names and the sounds they make.

### **ENGLISH**

89. Over the past few years, standards in English have remained well below the national average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. There are some significant

factors that influence the school's national test results for English each year and affect standards. One is that pupils enter school with well below average language skills and have much ground to make up. Another factor is that thirty-seven per cent of pupils have special educational needs. Although the school provides good support for these pupils and they achieve well in relation to their abilities, many do not reach average standards. Throughout the school, standards are higher in reading than they are in writing. They are better in listening than they are in speaking, in which children leave the school with standards that are below average. Standards in handwriting are below average, also. Few pupils at ages 7 and 11 achieve higher than expected levels in the national tests.

90. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. However, a number of recent changes have improved pupils' achievement and they are now making better progress in reading and writing than in recent years. For example, pupils are now given a good start in nursery and reception. Letter sounds and blends are taught more systematically in Key Stage 1 and 'catch up' programmes are being used effectively to support some pupils who are having difficulties. In addition, the school has recognised the need to improve standards in writing and as a result, has started to limit the number of printed worksheets children use. Improvements in teaching are also resulting in children learning at a better pace. Despite these improvements, there is still some way to go. For example, assessment is not used well enough to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for more able pupils and they could achieve more.
91. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well at both key stages and in all areas of English. This is because appropriate targets are set for them and they are well supported in achieving them. Pupils who learn English as an additional language attain satisfactory standards because they are given appropriate support. Other pupils who are identified as needing some extra support with reading and writing also achieve well. This is because they focus on key aspects of reading and writing in small groups, supported by adults. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
92. Standards in reading are below average, largely because in the past, too much emphasis has been placed, on 'sounding out' words and too little attention given to helping children develop the wider range of strategies needed to help them understand what they are reading. This has particularly affected more able pupils and explains, in part, why the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels in national tests in reading are low. Many pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2, rely too heavily on adult support when reading and are lacking in confidence when they read aloud. However, from the beginning of the year, a number of changes have taken place. These are bringing about improvements, particularly at Key Stage 1, where good teacher expertise is now evident. The teaching methods recommended by the national literacy strategy are firmly in place and teachers are receiving good support from the local education authority and the Education Action Zone to help them improve their skills. At Key Stage 1, there is now good emphasis on reading aloud with the teacher.

This is now helping to build their confidence and skills. Teachers choose books well, to give children experience of different types of texts, including poems, instructions and information. This is increasing their enjoyment as well as their knowledge. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 have not had this range of experiences in the past and their reading diet has been too narrow. As a result, they find it difficult for example, to 'read between the lines' to find the authors' intended meaning. They have also been given too few opportunities to use books to find out information for themselves. This limits their knowledge of how information books work and slows the achievement of the more able pupils in particular.

93. The teaching of writing has been identified as a school priority. However, pupils' work has not yet been analysed closely enough to determine exactly what needs to be improved. As a consequence, standards at both key stages have remained well below average and pupils are not achieving as well in writing as they are in reading. However, as with reading, better teaching is now resulting in better achievement. Teachers are improving their skills and more opportunities are being given in some classes for children to write independently, rather than using printed worksheets. For example, in Year 2, pupils wrote their own sentences about Florence Nightingale, rather than filling in missing words on a sheet. There are other signs to indicate that writing is improving at Key Stage 1. Pupils are beginning to understand how to write a sentence correctly and some more able pupils have learned to punctuate their sentences appropriately with full stops and capital letters. In some junior classes, writing is also showing signs of improvement. More opportunities are being given in these classes for pupils to write longer stories and poems. This is starting to benefit more able pupils, who are beginning to write well-constructed and imaginative pieces. There is little provision, however for pupils to write for a wider range of audiences and purposes. Writing in other subjects is not developed well enough. For example, pupils have too few opportunities to develop investigative reporting in science. Standards in handwriting are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Handwriting is not taught systematically and insufficient attention is given to pupils developing a good, joined handwriting style. This is a weakness that causes older pupils, in particular, to have presentation problems.
94. Assessment in both reading and writing is unsatisfactory. It is ineffective because systems the school devised with the support of the local education authority are not used consistently in all classes. As a result, teachers do not identify the next steps in children's learning clearly enough to ensure that work is closely matched to their abilities. This particularly affects more able pupils, who are not sufficiently challenged. Assessment is good for pupils with special educational needs who have individual work programmes because specific targets are set for them and their progress is measured against these. This good practice needs to be adopted across the school.
95. For pupils aged seven, standards in speaking are below expected levels. They enter Year 1 with communication skills, which are below average for their age and find it difficult to express their thoughts and ideas clearly or sustain a prolonged conversation. Many are keen to talk but have a limited vocabulary

and struggle to describe their experiences with precision. Although teachers value all children's responses and encourage them to 'have a go' at answering questions, they do not always encourage pupils to try to extend their answers beyond one or two words. In a Year 2 science lesson, for example, the teacher answered for a child who was searching for the right vocabulary in answer to a question about snails. This did not help the child develop his own skills. At age 11, pupils are more confident, but skills remain below average. For example, when drawing together a class summary of 'Oliver Twist', pupils expressed their ideas in a limited way, despite encouragement from their teacher. Most pupils are willing to speak to adults, but some still find difficulty in expressing themselves precisely and have a limited vocabulary for pupils of this age. Opportunities for development of spoken language skills are not planned systematically enough to enable pupils to build on their previous experiences from year to year. In contrast, pupils' listening skills are in line with expected levels at both key stages because all teachers place a high emphasis on this. They are particularly good at listening to their teachers, for example when they are reading to them in literacy lessons; this helps them learn more effectively. They also listen well to each other and take turns to speak.

96. Teaching in literacy is satisfactory overall. It is better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2 because teachers are more secure in their knowledge of the subject. Where teaching is good, teachers' literacy knowledge has improved. This is partly due to the training and support from the local education authority and Education Action Zone. In almost all lessons, teachers manage pupils well and good relationships are evident. Pupils, therefore, want to please their teachers by paying good attention to their tasks. In some lessons, teachers use resources well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, good use was made of a 'big book' to teach pupils about contents pages and indexes. This caught their interest and helped them learn quickly. One drawback in the planning of some lessons is that teachers do not always express what they want pupils to learn clearly enough. This results in less effective assessment of what pupils have learned and what they need to learn next. In the few lessons where teaching is less successful, pupils still spend too much time completing worksheets and tasks are not always matched closely enough to their ability levels. This reduces achievement, particularly for the more able. In Years 5 and 6 teachers do not always encourage independence. For example they provide spellings for less able pupils rather than supporting them in using dictionaries. Teachers do not mark work sufficiently well. They give little guidance to pupils through marking of how they might improve their work. As yet, teachers make too little use of computers to support pupils' basic literacy skills or to provide opportunities for research. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects, such as science and geography.
97. The new subject leader has made a satisfactory start. However, as yet, her work has not had time to have an impact on standards and the inconsistencies in teaching and learning have therefore, not yet been addressed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

98. A look back at test results shows that over the past few years, standards have remained well below the national average at the end of Year 2 and well below those reached by pupils in similar schools. At the end of Year 6, standards have been below the national average, though close to or the same as those in similar schools. Standards are now set to improve. A number of recent changes have lifted pupils' achievement and they are now making better progress, especially in Key Stage 1.
99. Pupils' work from last year suggests that the previous low standards in Key Stage 1 have been largely due to the work the pupils were given and the way mathematics has been taught. Many plodded their way through commercial workbooks that did not challenge or stretch them. There is little evidence that these pupils, now in Year 3, learned appropriate skills through challenging mental arithmetic sessions. Hence many were not able, when taking their tests, to answer questions such as those involving halving or doubling numbers. This low platform at 7 leaves too much to be caught up in the junior classes, though pupils have had some success in getting closer to average in number. Analysis of the junior pupils' work from last year and discussion with the current Year 6 shows they have had too few opportunities to use their skills to solve problems or to learn about the collection and use of numerical data. For example, whilst they are quick and accurate to answer questions on their multiplication tables and have a satisfactory understanding of place value, they find it difficult to solve problems such as working out how many coaches are needed to transport a number of children on an outing. This makes it harder for higher achieving pupils to reach the higher levels in tests at 11.
100. From the beginning of this school year a number of changes have taken place. Changes of teachers have raised the quality of teaching and learning. The teaching methods recommended by the national numeracy strategy were evident in all the lessons seen, which has increased the consistency between classes. A different teacher has taken responsibility for managing the subject and the expertise available from the local authority and action zone numeracy consultants is being used to sharpen teachers' skills through further training. The school is now analysing pupils performance in tests to identify particular areas or skills that need improving. Although there is much more work to be done, the school has reviewed the way teachers' assess pupils' attainment, the outcomes of which were especially inaccurate for infant pupils. Targets have been set for pupils to achieve, although to be realistic, the setting of these needs to take fuller account of individual pupil's circumstances and previous achievement.
101. In both key stages, teaching and learning in half the lessons was good and in half satisfactory. All lessons featured some aspects of good teaching but no lesson displayed them all. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher used a home made resource of cardboard cats jumping across a gap between two walls to very effectively help pupils understand addition and help them count. The cats enchanted them and their attention was easily gained. In other lessons, pupils' attention wandered in question and answer sessions when the opportunity was not taken to use resources such as small writing boards and

pens to encourage pupils' full participation. In some lessons teachers asked very penetrating questions that encouraged children to think deeply and try to explain their thinking. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher asked a pupil 'Can you explain to me why you broke the number into two sets of three to take away?' The pupil gave a good explanation, after which a classmate offered a different way of doing the same calculation. The teacher then went on to ask if anyone 'had used number bonds?' and a third way was drawn out. This high quality of questioning motivates the pupils and encourages them to develop their thinking. Another strong feature seen in some lessons was when the teacher shared with the pupils at the start what they should know and be able to do by the end. This helped them to understand their work better and gave the teacher a means of checking up on their learning at the end.

102. The new subject leader has made a satisfactory start but not yet had time to bring about improvements. A major weakness that needs to be tackled is that regular checks are not carried out on standards, teaching and learning. This means that inconsistencies between classes are not spotted and that good practice, as described above, is not shared as much as it could be. Key areas for development have not been identified sharply enough in the past.
103. The pupils' best achievement in lessons was seen during the mental starters and the direct teaching that followed. In this part of the lesson, teachers usually challenge all the pupils appropriately. For example, teachers ask harder or easier questions for those with good ability and those who struggle to understand. This level of challenge is not always sustained for all pupils in the activities part of the lesson where they practise or improve their skills. Pupils with special needs usually make good progress, especially in those lessons where they are supported by teaching assistants. They help the pupils understand their work and complete their tasks. However other groups are not always as effectively challenged. Higher achieving pupils are sometimes given work which is too easy; for example when they are given calculations they find simple rather than the opportunity to apply their knowledge in solving problems. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls despite some classes having uneven numbers. Not enough use is made of ICT, particularly in developing pupils' data handling skills. Some teachers give close attention to developing mathematical language, encouraging pupils to use terms such as 'digit' and 'inverse'. However many struggle in putting their explanations into words because of weak speaking skills and too little practice previously.

## **SCIENCE**

104. In 2000, teachers assessed standards at the end of Key Stage 1 as being well below the national average, but in line with those of schools similar to Mathew Arnold. This was a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection. In this year's assessment, the proportion of pupils judged to have reached the expected level rose by 16 per cent bringing the school closer to the national average. However, a significant factor in the pupils' attainment is that none managed to exceed the expected level. This lack of higher attainment has

been a long-standing feature of the school's performance. There is a similar picture for 11 year olds, with very few pupils attaining the higher level 5 in their test results over the last few years. Despite this, in their test scores at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion reaching the average level has risen steadily over the past three years with a steeper rise of over 20 per cent over the last year. Although this brings the older pupils' performance closer to that of other schools, the overall picture is still below average because of the very small number achieving the higher level.

105. In both key stages, there is clear pattern to pupils' achievement. They perform reasonably well in those areas where they are given factual information to record, but less well when they are asked to find things out through scientific investigation. This is because the curriculum has not featured enough practical work in the past, with pupils spending too much time filling in missing words on work sheets or copying explanations and accounts provided by the teacher. In Key Stage 1 for instance, pupils' books show exactly the same words as they write down examples of materials such as plasticene or rubber bands that will stretch or change their shape in response to forces. In last year's Key Stage 2 work on a similar theme, Year 6 pupils all wrote 'freezing, melting and evaporation are all examples of changes of state'. This is correct, but there is no indication that they went on to find out what this means in everyday life, or to investigate the effects of these phenomena.
106. Talking to pupils, it is clear that they have retained enough knowledge and factual information to indicate that most are making satisfactory progress at both key stages in the areas of life processes, materials and their properties, and physical processes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because classroom assistants and other adults give them plenty of encouragement and support. More able pupils however make unsatisfactory progress at both key stages, because they are not given work at the right level of challenge. There are two reasons for this. Firstly teachers do not always expect enough of these pupils. They offer them the same work as others without extending their understanding through extra questions such as 'Why do you think that happens?' or 'What else could you find out about this?' Secondly, the school has no systematic way of assessing pupils' attainment and progress in science. This makes it harder for teachers to set work that will move pupils' understanding on from what they already know or understand.
107. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall with strengths outweighing weaknesses. Good features include the use of well-prepared and interesting resources such as garden snails for Year 2 pupils to observe. Teachers capture pupils' interest during introductions and use questioning well to check what they remember from previous lessons. Along with support staff, they also keep a very close eye on whether pupils are coping with the tasks they have been set, intervening to help when needed. Relationships are good in class and teachers make good use of the children's own class rules if they need to be reminded about what is expected. In Key Stage 2, teaching is again satisfactory overall, but there was one unsatisfactory lesson. This was largely because of the difficulty of maintaining the attention of a few Year 6 pupils,

without any classroom support. The time given to this slowed the pace of learning for others. Good aspects of Key Stage 2 teaching include the emphasis given to using correct scientific terminology such as 'insulator' and 'friction' and the time given to ensuring that there are no misconceptions after explanations have been given. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on electrical circuits, the teacher twice invited those who were still unsure about the term 'conductor' to say so. Eventually about half of the class responded and were given an additional explanation that enabled them to move on with their task.

108. There are some aspects of teaching across the school that need improving to raise the standard above the ordinary. Lesson aims need to be even more specific and more effectively shared with the pupils so that everyone knows exactly what is expected. Teachers need more guidance in handling practical sessions so that investigations are more tightly focused and less likely to wander 'off track'. Also, teachers need to plan greater challenges for the more able pupils so that they will be more fully stretched in their learning.
109. Leadership of the subject has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection, with shortcomings not being addressed with any urgency. However the newly appointed co-ordinator is quickly coming to grips with what is needed to develop the subject. She has identified the areas for development and begun to take action. For example, teachers are now planning far more practical work than before, and there is an established scheme of work for them to follow. Resources are now better organised to support teaching and they are beginning to be used as a result. The organisation of effective systems for checking pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching are the main priorities, which need to be addressed with some urgency.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

110. Only one lesson was seen in art during the period of the inspection. However, the art work on display around the school indicates that children build steadily on the firm foundations laid in the nursery and reception classes and by the time they leave the school they have achieved satisfactory standards. Art is also currently being used imaginatively and successfully as a way of encouraging a child who speaks little English to communicate his feelings.
111. Examples of work in Key Stage 1 demonstrate that children have experience of colour-mixing, painting and collage work. They are given adequate opportunities to study shape and form, through drawing portraits of themselves and to explore the different colours needed to make flesh tones, as they paint these. In Year 2, children use a computer art programme to produce abstract designs. However, there were no examples in either Key Stage of large projects undertaken by groups of pupils and few examples of 3-dimensional work.
112. In Key Stage 2, there were displays of batik printing, tie dying and clay tiles, demonstrating that children have the opportunity to use a satisfactory range of interesting techniques and media. Paintings and pastel work in the style of



famous artists such as Van Gogh show that children build well on their early experiences with colour and form. There were also good examples throughout the school of art being linked to history, for example, sketches of artefacts in Year 2 and a Victorian display in Key Stage 2.

113. In the one lesson seen in the Key Stage 2 Language Unit, teaching was very good and pupils made very good progress. This was because the teacher gave very good explanations and demonstrations. She encouraged and motivated pupils to try out new ideas and techniques, as they practised colour mixing and colour-wash. Children enjoyed their work and persevered well.
114. The new subject leader has made a satisfactory start. She has some sensible ideas about how the subject might develop. However, as yet she has had limited opportunity to assess the priorities for the subject. The school has recently implemented a nationally recommended scheme of work for art, which is guiding teachers' work effectively. Systems are not yet in place for assessing children's progress and determining the next steps in their learning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. There was insufficient evidence available to judge standards in design and technology and no lessons were seen. However, the school has implemented a nationally recommended scheme of work, which is providing sound guidance for teachers. All staff now plan appropriate experiences for pupils in relation to this. A new subject manager has made a satisfactory start in deciding on how to move the subject forward, through use of the new scheme.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. No geography lessons were taught during the period of the inspection. Analysis of children's work shows standards in both key stages are below average. Geography has not been a priority in recent years within the school, as literacy and numeracy have been given a higher profile. Standards are therefore not as strong as they were at the last inspection.
117. At both key stages, achievement is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 1, not enough time has been given to the teaching of geography. This is largely because it has been taught as part of an overall topic, resulting in key geographical knowledge and skills being overlooked. This was a weakness at the last inspection. There is some evidence, however, that the nationally recommended scheme of work recently adopted by the school is just beginning to have an impact on teaching and learning. This is because teachers now know what they should teach to each year group to ensure that progress is made. Some good examples of work on the locality around the school were seen in Key Stage 1, as a result of this.
118. As a result of their limited experiences at Key Stage 1, pupils have limited skills to build on in Key Stage 2. They do not achieve well enough by the time they leave the school, partly because of this and partly because much of the

work they have undertaken has been based on printed worksheets. Often these require no more than the placing of given words into gaps in sentences or colouring maps. As a result, pupils do not develop the skills of geographical enquiry or explore ways of presenting geographical information. This limits achievement for the more able in particular, as the work lacks depth and challenge. Not enough use is made of computers for independent research, or for example, for producing graphs and charts from data. The rich geography of the local area is also underused. Year 6 pupils have only a basic knowledge of Liverpool and its place in the British Isles and beyond. Although the pupils had studied a topic on rivers in the previous year, they could not relate this knowledge clearly to the River Mersey. The new scheme has not yet begun to have an impact as classes are currently studying history and will not cover geography until next half term.

119. The subject leader has only recently taken charge of the subject. However, she has made a satisfactory start. She has already arranged to team up with a local primary school recognised as having good practice in this area, for advice and support. This is a benefit to the school as part of the Education Action Zone initiative.

## **HISTORY**

120. Standards in history are similar to those found in most schools and pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. This is not quite as strong a picture as it was judged to be at the last inspection, when progress in Key Stage 2 was judged to be good. However, there have been improvements in the planning of the history curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. A nationally recommended scheme of work has now been implemented and this gives teachers a clear indication of what should be taught in each year group.
121. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly when they have adult support in lessons. More able pupils however, are not always set work that is appropriately challenging. An over-use of printed worksheets in some classes limits opportunity for these pupils to record their own work. This also occasionally affects the learning of below average pupils who find the reading demands of some sheets too difficult. However, current work at Key Stage 1 is moving away from this approach. At both key stages pupils have a better knowledge of important people and events in history than they have of where events are located in time.
122. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know about events such as the Great Fire of London and can talk about the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale. They can distinguish between some features of life in the past and life now for example when talking about toys and games. Year 1 pupils were able to talk about the fact that years ago children would not have had electronic toys 'because there was no electricity'. In Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of how people lived in Ancient Egypt and in Victorian times. They

can describe how archaeologists discovered Tutenkhamun's tomb and name important inventions and discoveries of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

123. In contrast, however, pupils' understanding of how key historical events relate to each other in time is weak. The oldest pupils in the school are unable to place King Henry V111 in time, in relation to the present day even though they can remember aspects of his life. All but the most able pupils were similarly hazy about when Queen Victoria lived.
124. Teaching in history is satisfactory overall. Most teachers plan effectively and teach history with enthusiasm and good knowledge of the subject. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities for 'hands on' learning. For example, in Y1, the teacher has started to make a class museum of old toys that the children are able to use. Pupils are fascinated by these and are prompted to ask questions and seek answers, giving depth to their understanding. Where teaching is more ordinary, tasks are mundane, such as writing sentences to explain a picture. This limits children's enthusiasm and independence.
125. Visits to places of historical interest such as Speke Hall and Croxteth Park are undertaken and enrich pupils' experiences. During the inspection week, a friend of the school talked to Y1 pupils about his life as a small boy in a Welsh village. This caught the children's imaginations and they were held spellbound by his stories. However, more use could be made of the rich heritage the city of Liverpool offers, as a source for historical learning. Children have opportunities to undertake some independent research using books from the school library and are encouraged to find information for homework. However, opportunities to use the computer for research purposes are very limited.
126. The history co-ordinator has only recently taken charge of the subject. However, she has made a satisfactory start. She has sensible ideas about how to develop the role to give guidance to colleagues. However, as yet she has had limited opportunity to determine the key priorities for the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

127. As at the time of the last inspection, standards by the end of each key stage are below what is expected of pupils for their age. Although there has been some progress since then, the subject has not improved as quickly as it should have done and there is still a lot to do to catch up with other schools.
128. There are some areas of the subject that show improvement; more staff have the confidence and expertise to teach computer skills and this has raised the quality of teaching in most classes. A scheme of work has been introduced that sets out what each year group is expected to cover. However, these improvements are recent and have not yet led to better achievement for the majority of pupils for several key reasons. Firstly, good practice in teaching is not always spread amongst all staff, so there is still too much inconsistency in teachers' knowledge. Also, the pupils have too little opportunity to practise the skills they have been taught. This is because, despite some improvement in

the range of hardware and software available, there are still too few computers for children to use regularly in lessons. Opportunities are sometimes missed, also, to make the best use of those that are available. Finally, there is no system in place to check how well pupils are progressing with their skills. This makes it difficult to set work at a level that will challenge them to reach the next stage in their learning.

129. In Key Stage 1, pupils are becoming familiar with the basic keyboard functions and use ICT to build reading and mathematics skills through such programs as 'Tizzy's Toybox'. They are motivated to choose such activities when available, because they find them fun to use. In the Year 1 lesson seen, very good teaching engaged all pupils' interest as they were introduced to 'The Apple Game'. The teacher explained cleverly that this simulation activity was like 'playing a game in a pretend land', going on to tell the pupils that computers can 'make models of real worlds'. In Year 4, pupils had their first experience of learning from the newly acquired teaching screen as the teacher-demonstrated techniques such as altering font size, cutting and pasting. Pupils' enthusiasm helped them to make sufficient progress in understanding those word processing skills despite some 'teething troubles' with the new hardware. Activities such as these show that there is the potential to raise standards, but they have so far been too infrequent to enable pupils at both key stages to make satisfactory progress.
130. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants, and by other pupils, as they work at computers. There is no significant difference in the progress made by other pupil groups, apart from more able, who are poorly provided for in terms of challenge.
131. Pupils in Year 6 are building on very limited previous experience by making good use of the nearby high school computer suite. The planned weekly visit is enabling them to make rapid progress from a low base because of good teaching, high quality resources and plentiful adult help. Clear and precise explanations enabled them to move step by step to manipulate text, frames and borders and they acquired good basic desktop publishing skills with some support. However, pupils will need more practise opportunities than the weekly visit can offer if they are to close the gap with what is expected of 11 year olds across the various aspects of ICT. This will require better organisation of the school's own resources.
132. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in supporting pupils' work in other subjects. Year 4 pupils have used data handling software to produce a range of graphs to represent class survey results, but such examples are few and far between.
133. The subject leader for ICT has only held the responsibility for three weeks. Previously, there has been a lack of effective leadership in the subject since the last inspection. There has been no systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, expectations have not been clearly set out, resources

have not been organised to best effect and the school still lacks a coherent strategy to raise pupils' standards.

## **MUSIC**

134. Standards are typical of that seen in most primary schools in Key Stage 1 but below in Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection in Key Stage 1 but remains an area for development in Key Stage 2. Achievement is now satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2.
135. At the end of Key Stage 1, improvements are largely due to good teaching. This leads pupils, for example, to reflect and appraise unfamiliar and challenging pieces of music. Pupils express their feelings by relating the music to events in the world and their own personal experiences of sadness and joy. Their spirituality is awakened as they begin to understand the nature and purpose of religious music. This is a direct result of the high expectations teachers have of them and indicates their capacity to absorb and learn through musical experience. They respond well to the strains of Latin lyrics by recognising the prayerfulness of the singing. Pupils with special educational needs respond equally well to such experiences. The high quality teaching of different aspects of music raises their understanding and helps them to understand the way the music works. They can identify repeated phrases and explain the overlap of two contrasting high and low voices. Teaching here encourages pupils to talk about their feelings in response. All pupils are challenged musically, by the teaching of key terms such as 'end stops.' However, achievement is only satisfactory overall because pupils have too few opportunities to compose and perform their own music.
136. Achievement for pupils at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory, overall, because not enough time is devoted to its teaching in the oldest classes. Also, as at Key Stage 1, there is a lack of opportunity to compose and perform music. Pupils of average ability are, however, sufficiently able to recognise beat and rhythm and demonstrate limited capability in composition by making simple raps. They also recognise and explain the differences in various kinds of music. They understand and attempt to describe musical texture and 'flavours' of music in their own words. However, they are unable to use computers in making music because of a lack of resources. The limited use of instruments for the majority of pupils in both key stages is part of the reason for the unsatisfactory standards in composing and performing music.
137. The school uses the services of a music teacher from the Liverpool Education Authority Music Service to provide opportunities for pupils who show a talent or interest in the subject. This experience gives these pupils the chance to explore different instruments and learn simple performing skills. It enriches their experience. The new Learning Mentor uses instruments imaginatively, to encourage and support the quality of pupils' learning for a small group of mainly Key Stage 2 pupils. Pupils explain that they compose simple musical patterns, '... we make our names by beating.' The majority of Key Stage 2

pupils, however have had limited experiences, mainly related to singing and rehearsing, with some appreciation of music through dance.

138. The subject leader for music is new to the role, but has made a satisfactory start. A new scheme has been implemented which is starting to give better guidance to teachers. However, this has had little time to impact upon standards, as yet.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. Standards at the end of both key stages are typical of those seen in most schools. Achievement is satisfactory. Dance continues to contribute to pupils' appreciation of the performing arts as at the last inspection.
140. Pupils in Key Stage 1 build steadily on the firm foundations laid in the Foundation Stage. The best progress is made in dance because it is skilfully taught. In Year 2, pupils are relaxed, confident and animated as they respond to music in dance. They use space well as they move, darting and weaving to avoid each other, as they interpret the music by being sharks. Year 2 pupils are also learning to refine and develop their skills by examining their own performances and those of others. Pupils in Year 6 are given good opportunities to develop their expertise in PE through regular visits to the local high school. This is because they are taught by a specialist PE teacher , in addition to their own class teacher. Pupils are very enthusiastic about these lessons and their motivation is increased as a result. Year 6 pupils have weekly swimming lessons and as a result, most are able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. This represents satisfactory achievement in this area.
141. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This was in Year 2 and was judged to be satisfactory. A good feature of this lesson was the way in which the teacher managed the pupils, enabling them to learn steadily. The teacher also used language well to increase pupils' understanding of movement words such as, 'weaving in and out, gliding and tilting'. Discussions with pupils in the Year 6 class show that teachers generally encourage awareness of the links between exercise and good health. Most pupils are aware, as a result, of the need to warm up their bodies before exercise and can explain how the heart rate changes according to how energetically they have worked.
142. As yet, the new co-ordinator has had insufficient time to develop the subject. However a sound start has been made. A new policy is now in place and a nationally recommended scheme has been introduced to guide teaching. The new playground and school hall are well designed to promote physical education. The extensive space available and good quality resources are an excellent improvement on the previous provision.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

143. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection and are now below what is set out in the locally agreed syllabus at ages 7 and 11. Standards are not high enough mainly because the children have not been taught some of the required content in the syllabus. Also, much of the past work pupils have been given has been neither challenging nor interesting. For example, most of the work in the exercise books of last year's older junior children consists of all pupils copying the same passages of writing and colouring pictures with felt tip pens. In another class, a series of worksheets offered little challenge at the right level. More variety was evident in Year 3, both in the tasks children were given to do and in the curriculum covered. Elsewhere, an emphasis on the study of Christianity is evident but there is little evidence of the exploration of the other religions that pupils should learn about.
144. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. A group of the present Year 5 pupils, for example, have a low level of knowledge, though they were eager to share their thoughts. They struggled to recall that Muslims worship in mosques or to recount any of the rituals of the Jewish Sabbath. They were confused between feasting and fasting. They have found the subject boring. The pupils' rate of learning is not fast enough and as a result, Year 6 pupils do not have the knowledge and understanding they should. For example, they show only a vague knowledge of facts about Christianity and the Bible, though their understanding of the messages in it is better. Whilst pupils with special needs are often given good support by class teachers, higher achieving pupils are not challenged enough because their work is not made harder. Pupils have very limited opportunities to use ICT, for example for their own research.
145. Though the teaching seen during the inspection was of mixed quality, there are signs that recent changes are for the better, and teaching and learning are becoming more interesting. Most was good, but there was one unsatisfactory lesson. This was mainly because the teacher did not make the explanation about the 'Ten Commandments' at the start of the lesson simple enough and the task which pupils were then asked to do was too difficult. Consequently the children did not understand the content well enough. However, in other lessons, interesting and well pitched introductions brought just reward. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher re-enacted typical Shabbat practices in a Jewish family, using candles, pretend wine and bread. Pupils participated keenly and their later writing showed they had learned from it. Pupils in Year 4 were fascinated by the story of Mother Theresa, with skilled questioning by the teacher challenging pupils to express their views in full sentences. In Year 6, good explanations and the use of a quiz helped pupils to reflect on the messages for their lives in the story of David and Goliath. One Year 6 pupil commented that he had never thought religious education 'could be so interesting!'
146. There has been no improvement in religious education since the previous inspection as it has not been a priority. For example, weaknesses in assessing pupils' work and checking pupils' progress are still evident. The inconsistencies in practice between classes noted at the time have continued. This is because teaching and learning have not been monitored by the

headteacher or by the co-ordinator. No action has been taken to ensure consistent use of the scheme of work. For example, there is repetition in different years of parables and stories from the Bible.



