

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wallasey

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 104999

Headteacher: Mrs H Ryan

Reporting inspector: Mr J D Eadie  
20191

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 244614

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Love Lane  
Woodstock Road  
Wallasey  
Wirral

Postcode: CH44 5RN

Telephone number: 0151 638 6008

Fax number: 0151 639 9571

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Miss K Hobson

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20191	Mr J D Eadie	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
10478	Mrs A Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19507	Mrs B Andrews	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8358	Mr A Blank	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
26405	Mrs C Bond	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Religious education	
25074	Mr J Collier	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language English Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Park Primary School is situated in an urban area towards the old docks in Wallasey, taking children from the ages of four to eleven. There are 264 pupils in the school, of whom 36 are of reception age with 12 of these being in a mixed Year 1 and reception class. The school serves a mixed area of local authority, privately rented and owner-occupied housing, where social conditions vary. Many of the socio-economic indicators for the area are well below average and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The school is part of an Education Action Zone, an initiative designed to raise educational standards in the area. Almost all the pupils are of white British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. One pupil has a statement of special need, which is fewer than one would expect to find in a school of this size, although there are several who are well on the way through the statementing process. Most pupils with special educational needs have specific learning difficulties. Children generally have below average attainment on entry to the school.

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

Park Primary School is an improving school that is effective in providing a sound education for its pupils. Current standards are broadly in line with the national average, the pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are good and the school gives sound value for money.

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

- The school is well led and managed.
- Standards in art, geography and history are above average by the time the pupils leave.
- A good start has been made to assessing the pupils' attainment and tracking their progress.
- The school cares well for its pupils.
- The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Behaviour is good.
- The school successfully involves parents in the life of the school.

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

- Always providing appropriate work for children of different abilities in all classes.
- Some aspects of the provision for the children of reception age, particularly in the mixed age Year 1 and reception class.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators, who do not have sufficient responsibility for monitoring standards in their subjects.
- Some aspects of the accommodation. The ICT suite is too small, there is no secure outdoor play area for children of reception age and the temporary classrooms are unsatisfactory.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1997 and has made sound progress since then. The issues from that report have been addressed satisfactorily. For example, good systems of assessment have been set up for English and mathematics to enable the teachers to plan more effectively for future learning for their pupils. Standards have risen in the National Curriculum tests in recent years. A number of new systems have been put in place in the last year or so, since the appointment of the present headteacher. The school continues to improve and is well placed to make further progress.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	B	E	D
Mathematics	D	D	C	B
Science	D	C	C	B

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

Apart from the standards achieved in English in 2001, standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 have improved in the last few years. The major reason for the drop in standards in English last year was staffing changes for the term before the tests. This was not the case in mathematics and science, where the pupils had the same teacher in the period running up to the tests. The school set appropriate targets for the pupils' achievement in the tests last year and the target was achieved in mathematics, but not in English. Statistics show that the pupils who took these tests made good progress in mathematics and science from the tests that they took in Year 2 in 1997.

The judgement of the inspection is that standards are now average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Standards in the National Curriculum tests in Year 2 have also been improving in the last couple of years and the inspection team judge that they are now average in English, mathematics and science at this age. Statistics also show that these pupils have made good progress since they joined the school. The pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time in the school, though their progress is not consistent, being better in some classes than in others. The pupils with special educational needs and the higher attainers generally achieve as well as the rest, although they are not always provided with work to suit their particular needs. Standards in art, geography and history are above average by the time the pupils leave.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is good. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and the pupils' personal development are good.
Attendance	The attendance rate is slightly below the national average.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.*

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, though it is variable between classes. Nearly half of the teaching observed was good or better and only a small minority of lessons were unsatisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory and the pupils learn the skills of literacy and numeracy appropriately. The teachers usually meet the needs of all their pupils successfully, although there are a number of lessons in which the work set does not match the abilities of all the pupils in the class. The teachers usually manage their classes well, ensuring that there is a calm environment in which the pupils find it easy to learn. The teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. This leads to their confidence in teaching skills and knowledge, which the pupils learn well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when there were shortcomings in the teachers' knowledge in some subjects. The teachers' marking is sometimes good, particularly in English and mathematics, but on many occasions there is no effort made to help the pupils to see what they need to do to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Due importance is given to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, whilst other subjects have retained their proper place in the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is well managed. When they are organised into a separate group, they are well taught and make good progress, but on many occasions they do not receive appropriate help in their own class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the occasional pupil with English as an additional language. These pupils are enabled to take a full part in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The provision for their cultural development is satisfactory although the pupils do not have sufficient awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. There are good assessment procedures in place for English and mathematics and teachers have made a good start to using the results of these assessments to plan for pupils' future learning. However, these assessments are not in place in all subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works successfully to involve the parents in the education of their children and the parents have very positive views of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management overall are good. The fairly recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational direction for the school. She is ably supported by the new deputy headteacher. Most co-ordinators are effective in managing their subjects, but their role has not yet been sufficiently developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are involved, well-informed and supportive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance satisfactorily. This is an area that is developing.
The strategic use of resources	All resources available to the school are used effectively. Staff and governors apply the principles of best value satisfactorily. There are sufficient staff and learning resources to deliver the curriculum. However there are inadequacies in some aspects of the accommodation.

## 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>• The school has high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and the headteacher and teachers are approachable.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with most positive parental comments. However, although there is good teaching in some classes, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The pupils therefore make satisfactory progress overall. The judgement of the inspection is that the parents receive good information from the school about their children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of work seen in the inspection in English, mathematics and science are average. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time in the school. Standards have improved in recent years at the age of seven and at the age of eleven.

Strengths in standards achieved are:

- the pupils are making good progress in a majority of classes, although progress is satisfactory overall;
- standards are above average in art, geography and history by the end of Year 6;
- standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to similar schools in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2001;
- standards were above average in mathematics and science when compared to similar schools in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001.

Areas for development are:

- the pupils with special educational needs (SEN) do not always make sufficient progress in their own classes;
- the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and do not always make the best progress possible.

2. The results in the National Curriculum tests at the age of eleven in 2001 were average in mathematics and science and well below average in English when compared to all schools. The poorer results in English were largely due to staffing changes for the term preceding the tests, whereas the teaching of mathematics and science was continued by the same teachers for the entire year. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the results were above average in mathematics and science and below average in English. Closer analysis of the performance of these pupils shows that they made rather better than average progress in mathematics and science but unsatisfactory progress in English from Year 2 to Year 6. Apart from the result in English in 2001, standards have generally been improving in recent years. Appropriate targets were set for the pupils' attainment in the tests in 2001 and they were met in mathematics but not in English. Standards are now average in English, mathematics and science at the age of eleven. Most pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. This progress is no better as the quality of teaching is variable between classes.

3. Inspection evidence shows standards to be average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were average when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Statistics show that these pupils made good progress in their time in the school to attain these standards. Standards in the tests for seven-year-olds have been improving over the last three years.

4. Children generally join the school with below average attainment, although this is very variable and some of the children who joined the school in September 2001 had well below average attainment. They reach average levels of attainment in all areas of learning for the Foundation Stage by the time they start the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1. The

children generally make good progress in the reception class, though those in the mixed age class with some Year 1 pupils do not have the same provision and do not make such good progress. The progress of children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> is satisfactory overall. Their progress in speaking and listening and in mathematical development is good as the teachers put due emphasis on these areas of learning. Although the children's physical development is satisfactory overall, it is unsatisfactory in some aspects as there are few opportunities for structured play with large apparatus in a secure outdoor environment.

5. Standards in English and in literacy are average by the end of Year 2. They are average in all aspects of the subject by this age. The pupils listen well, this skill being successfully developed by the teachers in Years 1 and 2. The speaking skills of some of the pupils are limited, though most convey meaning through what they say. The pupils' have satisfactory strategies for reading unknown words. Standards in writing are improving and are now average owing to structures that the school has put in place to improve the pupils' progress in this aspect. The pupils make satisfactory progress in English in Years 1 and 2.

6. The standards that the pupils achieve in English and literacy are average by the end of Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 3 to Year 6 and standards are average in all aspects of the subject. In speaking and listening, the pupils listen well but some struggle with the vocabulary to express their thinking. The pupils have good technical skills of reading, with most pupils reaching at least the expected standard. They converse in an interesting way about books, though some are reticent about this. The pupils' writing conveys meaning and is interesting, though vocabulary is limited in some cases.

7. Standards in all aspects of mathematics and numeracy are average by the end of Year 2 and the pupils make satisfactory progress in this subject in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils of this age explain how they achieve answers. They have sound knowledge of the basic number bonds. The pupils explore the characteristics of shapes from an early age and name and describe a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes and their properties.

8. The pupils achieve average standards in mathematics and numeracy by Year 6. They use and explain a variety of strategies for solving problems. The pupils have satisfactory knowledge and ability with the four rules and can carry out complex calculations, some being able to manage these in their heads. They have sound understanding of shapes and measure accurately, for example, drawing angles to the nearest degree. A relative weakness is their ability to handle data, this skill not being sufficiently reinforced by the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 3 to Year 6.

9. Standards in science are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils make satisfactory progress in science through the school. Standards in scientific enquiry have improved since the last inspection owing to the emphasis that is placed on the teaching of the subject through an investigative and experimental approach which has been encouraged by the co-ordinator. Standards in all aspects of the subject are average by Year 2 and by Year 6.

10. Standards of work seen during the inspection in art and design, geography and history are above average by the time the pupils leave the school. The standards in geography and history are higher than average owing to the high priority given to enquiry and research skills within the curriculum for these subjects. Standards in art and design are above average due to the range of opportunities that the pupils are given and the way their work is celebrated in

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage contains children who have not started the National Curriculum, in other words those of reception age.

displays around the school. In all other subjects standards are average. This represents a significant improvement in ICT, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. The pupils make satisfactory progress through the school in all subjects, with good progress in art.

11. The pupils with SEN make sound progress overall throughout the school. When they are taught in a small, specially organised group, receiving good support from their teacher, they often make good progress. This occurs in literacy for those in Years 2, 3 and 4. Where they are part of the whole class and work is not planned specifically for them, their progress is just satisfactory. Those pupils with particular gifts and talents and the more able pupils make barely satisfactory progress through the school as they are not given challenging work often enough.

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

12. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good, they are well behaved and their relationships are a positive reflection of the caring ethos of the school. These judgements represent an improvement since the last inspection. At that time a particular concern was expressed that over-boisterous play, especially during the lunchtime, contributed to a high number of accidents. The school has addressed this matter successfully.

Strengths in the pupils' attitudes and personal development are:

- the pupils enjoy coming to school;
- the pupils settle down quickly and are keen to learn;
- the pupils behave well in class and around school;
- the pupils get on well with each other and with adults in the school.

There are no areas for development in this aspect.

13. The pupils are keen to come to school and have good attitudes towards learning. They settle down quickly and in most lessons are keen to participate. Skilled teaching encourages this desire to learn and a good example of this was seen in a Year 3 and 4 geography lesson, in which the pupils were investigating noise levels around the school. The pupils concentrated well and worked hard, both individually and as a class group. The pupils with SEN are particularly responsive when they are taught in small groups, such as the 'Catch-Up' literacy sessions, or in the specially organised English classes for those in Years 2, 3 and 4. Children in the Foundation Stage clearly enjoy coming to school, and show good concentration and perseverance in their work. In tasks set by their teachers they demonstrate good attitudes to learning. When activities are less directed they usually behave well, but find it difficult to stay with one activity for long unless an adult is there to exploit the opportunity for learning.

14. Behaviour in lessons, in the playground and around school is generally good; parents support this judgement. The pupils have a clear idea of what they should and should not do and follow the school's guidelines. They play well together in the playground with a separate area available for quieter pastimes. All Year 6 pupils are invited to join the 'Buddy' system and most do so. They respond well to this responsibility and are eager to explain the benefits that follow. This approach makes a good contribution to the social development of the pupils. Behaviour in the dining room is good and children welcome the opportunity to talk with their friends. The pupils themselves consider bullying is rare and recognise that the school responds swiftly and successfully to any such instances. No pupils have been excluded from the school in recent years.

15. There is a welcoming atmosphere in the school. The pupils are friendly and helpful, making visitors feel welcome. Even the youngest pupils can work together. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in a reception class where the task was to recognise and recreate simple number patterns. The pupils were focused on this task, worked together with enthusiasm and sat sensibly in a circle when required to do so. The vast majority of the pupils listen carefully to each other and to their teachers.

16. Almost all parents feel that their children are helped to become more mature and responsible. The inspectors agree that the pupils' rate of personal development is good. The pupils have opportunities to be involved in a number of responsibilities around school and in Year 6 they act as school monitors in an enthusiastic and responsible manner. Many pupils choose to take part in the 'Wirral Civic Award' scheme and this promotes their understanding of how to become useful members of the wider community; an effective support to the citizenship module taught in school.

17. The school has succeeded in maintaining an attendance rate virtually in line with the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is very low. The registration process is conducted briskly and efficiently, but there are a limited number of pupils who do not arrive punctually at the start of the day.

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

18. The quality of teaching and the consequent quality of learning are satisfactory. The standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- the teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach;
- the teachers manage their classes well, creating a good working environment in which the pupils find it easy to learn;
- the teachers use an investigative approach in geography and history.

Areas for development are:

- the quality of teaching is not consistent between classes;
- marking of the pupils' books is inconsistent and does not always help the pupils to see what they need to do to improve;
- the teachers do not always provide work appropriate to the needs of the differing abilities or age groups in their classes.

19. Almost all the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, and in nearly half of all lessons it was good or better. A small proportion, about one in ten lessons, was very good. A very small proportion, less than one in twenty lessons, was unsatisfactory. The standard of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection, with teaching that is at least sound in English, mathematics and all other subjects. There is good teaching in art and design throughout the school and in geography for the older pupils. Although there are no significant differences between the key stages, there is some variation between classes; in some the teaching is rarely better than satisfactory, whilst in others almost all the teaching is good or better. In these classes the good diet of teaching is having a significant impact on the learning and the progress of the pupils. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they are expected to teach is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The confidence with which the teachers present their lessons retains the interest of the pupils and ensures that they learn well the necessary knowledge and skills.

20. There is some inconsistency in the teachers' lesson planning and in some lessons there is no clarity of objectives for learning<sup>2</sup> for the pupils. In one such lesson, the lesson lacked focus and the pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. In literacy and numeracy sessions, the objectives for learning are usually displayed at the front of the class and are often shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson. However, frequently the opportunity to give the pupils a greater understanding of what they have learned is missed by the teacher not returning to review the objective at the end of the lesson. In most lessons the teachers have particularly high expectations of how the pupils should behave. The high standards of discipline set ensure that there is a purposeful working environment in which it is easy for the pupils to learn. However, there are important shortcomings in the teachers' planning. They do not always take account of the variety of needs of the pupils in their class. For example, there are a number of occasions when those pupils of potentially higher attainment are not sufficiently challenged. There are also occasions when the planning does not take account of the different ages of the pupils in the class. This is most noted when there are children of reception age with pupils of Year 1 age. In all these cases, there are some pupils who do not make satisfactory gains in learning. There was no common weakness in the unsatisfactory teaching observed. One lesson was unsatisfactorily planned and did not have a clear focus for the pupils' learning. In another the teacher's management of the class was unsatisfactory.

21. A particular improvement since the last inspection is the introduction of investigative methods in a number of subjects. The teachers use this approach in science and it has led to rising standards in this subject. The major success of this approach is in geography and history, where the teachers encourage investigational and research skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This has led to above average standards in these two subjects. For example, in a good lesson observed in Years 3 and 4 on improving the environment, the active involvement in investigation of the pupils led to sound understanding of the reasons why noise affects the environment.

22. There is a limited number of teaching assistants and the teachers do not always plan effectively when this extra help is available in their lessons. There are too many occasions when the adult helper is sitting and listening without being involved in helping pupils learn. There are also occasions when they do not have sufficiently specific instructions about how they can help the pupils with whom they are working.

23. The marking of English and mathematics is often good, with the teachers giving clear targets for improvement to the pupils, so they know what they need to do to progress. However, in other subjects the teachers rarely give very clear guidance on how pupils might improve their work; most restrict themselves to congratulatory comments or ticks. Homework is not always consistently used by teachers but usually makes a valid contribution to the pupils' learning.

24. The teachers do not always plan appropriate work in whole-class lessons for the pupils with SEN and the learning targets on the individual education plans (IEPs) for these pupils are not always addressed in focused activities. In an unsatisfactory lesson observed, for example, the work planned for those with SEN was well within their capabilities and the teaching assistant had not been properly briefed on how to extend their learning. They therefore made unsatisfactory progress. In contrast, the SEN pupils in Year 2, working in a separate class for their English lessons, received good support from their teacher. She had planned challenging work for them and, by skilful questioning, helped them to find words to describe the character in a story. They responded enthusiastically and suggested words

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<sup>2</sup> Objectives for learning are the skills, knowledge and understanding that the pupils are expected to have gained by the end of the lesson.

such as 'cross', 'sulky' and 'embarrassed'. By reinforcing this good vocabulary in their subsequent written work, they made good progress by the end of the lesson.

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

25. The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum, satisfying statutory requirements, and in which subjects other than English, mathematics and science have retained their importance. The Foundation Stage follows national guidelines; however the provision in the class where reception children are with Year 1 pupils is not suitable. Improvement since the last inspection is sound.

Strengths in the curriculum provided are:

- the school has maintained the importance of the foundation subjects;
- peripatetic music;
- updating schemes of work and current practice to meet new requirements.

An area for development is:

- the provision for the mixed age class in the Foundation Stage.

26. The curriculum for the core subjects of English and mathematics is supported well through the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies that have been put into practice since the previous inspection. These strategies together with improved systems of assessment, 'Booster' classes and a structured programme of reading support, provide pupils with the necessary basic skills in literacy and numeracy to enable them to do as well as possible. The co-ordinator for science has adapted commercial schemes to produce a good curriculum for this subject.

27. The school has adopted national guidelines to enhance its current practice. Good quality policies and schemes of work guide teaching at classroom level. Although teachers do not specifically plan opportunities, pupils are encouraged to use the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects.

28. Strengths within the curriculum lie in the provision for art and the importance given to independent research skills in geography and history. The school quite rightly puts provision for the core subjects first, whilst still maintaining and valuing a broader range of learning experiences. The time spent studying the foundation subjects and a range of enrichment activities secures a broad programme of learning experiences for all pupils.

29. During the year there are many opportunities for pupils to take part in visits that help them with their studies. Such experiences add relevance and interest to learning about the past and present. Visits that help pupils to gain greater insight into geographical, historical and artistic matters are particularly valuable. For example, older pupils recall with enjoyment their visits to Birkenhead to study Birkenhead Priory or Hamilton Square and to Liverpool Museum where they learnt about ancient Egyptians. In the course of these visits pupils have opportunities for map reading and using co-ordinates to identify locations in relation to Wallasey.

30. The school is strongly committed to equal opportunities for all pupils and for the most part pupils take a full part in all class activities. Provision for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but provision for younger children in the mixed age class is unsatisfactory. The staff are alert to potential differences in performance between boys and girls and are taking initiatives to address the issue.



31. The provision for the pupils with SEN is well organised. The school is already implementing the main requirements of the new Code of Practice. The teachers each have a file in which these and other records for SEN pupils are kept. The IEPs include suitable targets for learning and strategies to achieve them. However, not all the teachers plan work with these targets in mind and lessons often require the SEN pupils to tackle the same work as everyone else. When pupils are withdrawn, for 'Catch-Up' English sessions for example, the work is well matched to their needs and they often make good progress. The school is aware of the need to monitor the times of withdrawals so that the pupils do not always miss the same lessons every week. The school makes very good arrangements to support pupils with statements of medical need. The school also makes good provision for those pupils with English as an additional language, and these pupils are quickly assimilated and able to take a full part in all school activities.

32. The range of extra-curricular activities available is satisfactory and has a positive effect on pupils. Pupils and parents view this provision as enjoyable and social occasions when they can extend their skills. The after-school clubs offer a range of sporting and musical opportunities. A Civic Award scheme, open to older pupils extends the school's citizenship programme. There are also opportunities for those pupils who are musically talented to extend their skills both during the school day and after school. For example local education authority music tutors provide individual tuition and a dedicated music teacher offers group tuition after school. During the school day pupils from all year groups contribute to work on the 'Tots Plots' garden project, producing sufficient vegetables to provide soup for the whole school.

33. The overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is sound. Adults in the school make considerable efforts to help pupils develop positive relationships. The 'Buddy' system gives pupils in Year 6 good opportunities to exercise responsibility in supporting young children starting school to find playtimes less daunting. Behaviour is monitored through lunchtime behaviour books, alerting the school to possible concerns. A policy for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is being developed and outlines a two-year cycle of topics, timetabled to be covered during a PSHE week each year. Clear guidelines identify PSHE themes implicit within other subjects. Teaching about sex education and the misuse of drugs is supported by visits from the school nurse and Wirral Christian Drugs Action Team. There is no formal monitoring of the pupils' personal and social development; however teachers know their pupils very well and informal monitoring is sound.

34. There is a good school policy for ensuring continuity and liaison between the community and local schools. The school is a member of an Educational Action Zone (EAZ) along with ten other neighbouring schools. Continuity between local primary schools is fostered through cluster group meetings when teachers have opportunities to share ideas about the subjects for which they are responsible and discuss how to raise pupils' achievement. An example of how the EAZ supports schools effectively can be seen in the funding identified to employ a professional artist to work in each school every day for a week during the Wallasey Arts Festival in the autumn term. Links with local secondary schools ensure the smooth transition of pupils from the primary sector to secondary education.

35. Horizons are broadened through visits to places of interest, for example an opportunity to experience a live performance of a professional orchestra when pupils visit the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Links with the Oasis Church Centre include before and after-school care, opportunities for the choir to entertain senior citizens and assemblies taken by members of the church. Visits from theatrical groups, professional footballers and various Christian and health groups add to pupils' experiences and understanding of the community.

## **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

36. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, enabling them to make good progress in their social development. There is satisfactory provision for cultural development, and there have been improvements in the provision for the pupils' moral and spiritual development since the last inspection.

Strengths in the provision for the pupils' personal development are:

- the provision for the pupils' personal development is good overall;
- assemblies are valuable in the pupils' spiritual development;
- the implementation of behaviour policy;
- good use is made of music in assembly;
- the 'Buddy' system.

An area for development is:

- the pupils do not have sufficient awareness of the multicultural nature of our society.

37. The school promotes a climate in which pupils feel valued and respected. This is evident in most classes, particularly those in which the teachers encourage independence in learning. Through specific periods for reflection in assemblies and lessons pupils are offered good opportunities to explore values and beliefs, and the impact these may have on human emotions. Five-year-old children consider how the crowd might have felt on hearing of Christ's patronage of the hated tax collector, Zaccheus, and pupils in Year 6 explored their own feelings about being in trouble. The Fauré music selected for assemblies creates a calm and solemn atmosphere, enhancing the impact of the presentation on 'helping hands', and reinforced by a slide of Albrecht Dürer's engraving of praying hands. A striking display of flags in the hall encourages appropriate thinking about the process of achieving world peace. Pupils appreciate the endeavours of their peers while listening to them playing musical instruments as they leave assembly.

38. The implementation of the school's behaviour policy has a positive impact on the development of pupils' moral learning. Pupils are generally encouraged to think through the consequences of their own actions, and to take account of others' needs in their daily routine through attitudes to such things as bullying and litter. These are dealt with well by the school overall, although there are occasional examples of inappropriate management of classroom behaviour. Ploys such as the Behaviour Wall for the oldest children encourage personal responsibility well.

39. There are many good opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate social skills in the school. The 'Budd' system which pairs new reception children with Year 6 pupils has a very positive impact for both year groups, and creates a caring atmosphere from the start. Appropriate and sensitive behaviour is encouraged and modelled by the older pupils, enabling them to develop valuable personal qualities and self-respect. Younger children feel secure and included in school life, able to participate in playground activities without fear. All classes enjoy trips out of school to visit local amenities such as Birkenhead Priory and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Many Year 6 pupils help organise the school day by, for example, taking responsibility for collecting in milk cartons or holding the door for late arrivals to assembly. Pupils believe 'it's a friendly school'.

40. The school enables pupils to develop a sound cultural awareness through, for example, a positive emphasis on music and art, and through the study of important historical events. Personal achievements are recognised in music and sport, as well as in academic and social contexts. Eye-catching displays around the school reflect the cultures of other lands such as Greece. Pupils explore the values of Christianity and begin to appreciate the

beliefs of other faiths. However, they have limited opportunities to appreciate the cultural diversity of our society today.

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

41. The school makes good provision for the welfare, health, safety and personal security of its pupils. In so doing it meets a major aim of the school, which is 'to provide a safe, secure, happy and stimulating environment'. Following the last inspection the school has responded to particular concerns about the timing of registration and the level of playground incidents. Several aspects of support and guidance have also improved since the last inspection and there has been good progress overall.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- pastoral care and concern for the pupils' well-being;
- good procedures for ensuring child protection;
- good procedures for promoting attendance;
- effective procedures for promoting good behaviour;
- good procedures for promoting the personal development of pupils.

An area for improvement recognised by the school is: -

- to monitor and improve punctuality at the start of the school day.

42. There is an extensive range of policies and procedures in place to ensure health, safety and security and these matters are given a high priority. Regular fire drills each term ensure that safe evacuation procedures are well rehearsed. Procedures for child protection have improved since the last inspection and are good. The headteacher is the designated person and, together with the Years 1 and 2 co-ordinator, has attended appropriate training. Her knowledge has been passed on to all adults in the school so that a high level of alertness is maintained. Two members of staff are fully trained in first aid and a recent training day was devoted to basic first aid for all staff.

43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are effective. Registers are kept properly and absences are monitored regularly. Good use is made of the educational, social and welfare office service and, more recently, the resources of the local EAZ.

44. Procedures for promoting acceptable behaviour are good and their effectiveness can be seen around school. Pupils and staff have discussed the behaviour code and this code is on prominent display throughout the school. The school has measured the success of this new approach by the reduction of incidents recorded. Most pupils show a good understanding of the impact of their actions on their peers. The school continues to pay close attention to anti-bullying and racism initiatives and instances of bullying or unacceptable behaviour are very low (confirmed by pupils). The level of supervision at lunchtime and in the playground is good.

45. The good procedures for promoting the personal development have the support of most parents with almost all of them agreeing that the school is helping their children to grow in maturity. The pupils approach and perform monitor roles with a sense of responsibility. They also seize opportunities to gain experience from after-school clubs and games. The use of the 'Buddy' system, to help the youngest children to settle, works very well and also serves to encourage pupils to befriend other new arrivals at school.

## Assessment

Strengths in assessment are:

- assessment in English and mathematics is good;
- tracking of pupils' progress and target setting to improve learning are developing well.

An area for development is:

- not all subjects have systems for assessing standards and progress.

46. The school has good systems for assessing the standards that pupils achieve and the progress they make in English and mathematics and systems are also developing well in science and ICT. Systems of assessment are also in place for history and geography but need to be developed in the remaining subjects. The other subjects of the curriculum do not yet have any assessment arrangements. Assessment data is collected from a variety of sources: from the baseline tests when pupils enter the reception class, from the required national tests at seven and eleven and from standardised reading, spelling and end-of-year tests. The teachers use the data to predict what level of attainment each pupil might achieve by the end of the year in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the year, interim assessments are made of specific pieces of work so that the pupils' progress towards these targets can be tracked. This is good practice and alerts the teachers to anyone falling behind and anyone making particularly good progress. The teachers also identify on their lesson plans those pupils who have not fully learnt what was planned and those who have exceeded it. However, the information is not always being used to refine the teachers' subsequent lessons so that work is planned to meet the needs of all abilities within the class.

47. In order to help the pupils become aware of how they can improve their work, the school is trying out a system whereby everyone is given a specific target for improving the standard of their writing. This is helping the pupils to focus on a particular aspect that is weak and is proving helpful in raising standards. As teachers become more confident about refining their judgements of the standard of pupils' writing and knowing specifically what is required to raise it from a Level 2a to a Level 3c, rather than from a Level 2 to a Level 3<sup>3</sup>, the pupils' targets will become more precise too.

48. There are satisfactory systems for identifying the pupils who have SEN. Individual education plans are drawn up detailing the targets to improve learning and they are regularly reviewed. Reading and spelling tests are given periodically to track progress and, as a result, some pupils move off the register. Particularly good provision is made for the pupils with statements of special need in this respect.

49. There are good liaison arrangements with outside agencies, particularly to support those pupils with physical or medical conditions. A physiotherapist gives particularly good support, for example.

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

50. The school and parents work well together. In many respects this strong partnership makes a significant contribution to the school and represents good progress since the last inspection.

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<sup>3</sup> The National Curriculum judges attainment in 'Levels' (1 to 5 and sometimes 6 for primary schools) but within those levels it is becoming common to refer to intermittent stages a, b and c.

Strengths in this aspect are:

- the very positive views the parents have of the school;
- the significant contribution made to the daily life of school by the parents;
- the very effective involvement of the School Association;
- the good quality of information provided by the school.

An area for improvement is:

- to provide better information for parents about the topics their children are to study.

51. All parents interviewed, those who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who completed the questionnaire have very positive views of the school. More than 90 per cent of them agree that their children like coming to school, that they behave well and that school is helping them to become mature and responsible. Equal numbers find the school approachable and believe the school is working closely with parents. Almost all parents have signed the home/school agreement.

52. The school provides good quality information for parents. There are good procedures for ensuring that young children are welcomed when they start school. For example they come into school during the term prior to their starting and meet their 'Buddy' who is an older pupil who will take care of them. The format of the school prospectus and the governors' annual report has been revised recently; both are informative, clear and easy to read. Parents also find the monthly newsletter very useful. There are opportunities in the autumn and spring terms for parents to meet their child's teacher when progress can be discussed and parents can also make appointments to discuss the annual written reports in the final summer term. A minority of parents feel they are ill informed of their children's progress. However the annual reports describe what pupils have done and also identify areas for further effort, often indicating what parents can do to help. These reports also comment on personal development, consideration for others and presentation of work. The inspectors judge the annual reports to be of good quality. The school provides good information for parents of pupils with SEN and they are regularly invited to participate in the review of their child's progress. Targets on the IEPs are shared with parents and they are invited to discuss these, particularly when the time comes for them to be reviewed. Recently the school circulated a useful leaflet to explain the new Code of Practice for children with special needs.

53. The school promotes effective links by seeking the views of parents. Recently opinions have been sought on changes to induction and consultation evenings, 'before and after school' clubs and security fencing. The school also works hard to involve the parents and carers in the life of the school and in their children's learning. Many parents, particularly for a school of this size, help in the classroom and around school. The school values this help highly and it makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Literacy and numeracy sessions and 'Keeping up with the Children' workshops help parents to understand what their children are learning; they also help parents to realise that their contribution is valued by the school and by their children. The inspectors do not agree with the very few parents who think the school could be more pro-active in involving parents.

54. The School Association is very active in arranging an interesting variety of functions for the pupils and their families. The next event will be the sponsored 'Wirral Coastal Walk'. In addition to their successful fundraising, the School Association makes many other contributions to the school. Most recently they have improved the internal and external environment of the school. A team of parents decorated the school corridors, including some very bright and cheerful stencils and the School Association organised bulb-planting in the school grounds. Volunteers helped with the vegetable and fruit garden stemming from the 'Tots Plots' initiative and children enjoyed soup made from the products of this enterprise. Overall, parents make a varied and helpful contribution to school life.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher provides good leadership. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have begun to develop good systems to manage and monitor the performance of the school. The governing body is supportive and well informed. Subject co-ordinators do not take sufficient responsibility for monitoring provision and performance in their subjects.

Strengths in the leadership and management of the school are:

- the headteacher has demonstrated good leadership in taking the school forward since her appointment;
- the deputy headteacher provides good support in managing the school;
- the governing body are well informed and clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- staff training is well planned and relevant;
- there is a bright and lively environment and display in almost all classrooms is good.

Areas for improvement are:

- the role of subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped;
- there are inadequacies in the accommodation.

56. In the short time she has been in post, the headteacher has gained the confidence of the school community and demonstrated good leadership in a range of initiatives and developments. Definite improvement has been made in tracking the progress made by pupils within year groups. This has enabled teachers to identify those who are not making sufficient progress and for them to take steps to improve the situation. The fabric of the school has been improved so that a somewhat dingy corridor is now bright and lively, and this has pleased pupils who can see it as a tangible improvement. Perhaps most importantly, the headteacher has begun to establish systems that monitor the performance of pupils and the school as whole so that the effectiveness of initiatives can be evaluated.

57. The deputy headteacher combines an almost full teaching responsibility with a determination to assist in managing the school as an institution. He makes a good contribution to the management of the school and has led in the monitoring of teaching in numeracy, where his specialist skills and knowledge have been of great benefit.

58. The role of subject co-ordinator is developing and some subject co-ordinators have begun to provide effective leadership in their subjects. This has begun with a whole-school definition of the role. Some co-ordinators are further on than others in their experience of leading and monitoring a subject throughout the school. Several have provided in-service training for their colleagues and led the way to developing a suitable curriculum. However, as a general feature the role is not sufficiently developed in almost all subjects and does not include sufficiently regular monitoring of pupils' work and, when possible, teaching and learning in classes.

59. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is well informed, particularly through governors' links with specific subjects and work on committees. The cycle of development and the need to co-ordinate this with the school budget is well understood and carried out effectively. Governors are careful about how they order services and supplies, looking for the most competitive quotations for the best quality products. The school development plan is a useful document containing both one-year and five-year time scales. It links intentions with actual developments in a meaningful way, ensuring that priorities are set that meet with the majority views of management and staff and where relevant, pupils and parents.

60. The school is part of the local EAZ. This has only been in existence for three months and its impact and effectiveness in raising standards cannot be judged at present. There are several initiatives planned that appear interesting, in particular the joint approach to staff development that will share expertise and resources between the participating schools. A further useful development planned is the employment of a learning mentor to work with disaffected pupils and to improve pupils' and parents' attitudes to school.

61. The school is run efficiently on a day-to-day basis and the recommendations of the latest audit report have been responded to. Financial planning is efficiently carried out and special funds are used appropriately, for instance in boosting the pupils' performance in Year 6 before national tests are taken.

62. The funds allocated to support pupils with SEN are properly spent and the SEN co-ordinator provides good support for other teachers and ensures that provision is well organised. The SEN register is kept up-to-date and IEPs are clearly written. The governor who takes a special interest in this aspect is very supportive of the school's work. The co-ordinator is very conscientious and gives up a great deal of her own time to ensure that the pupils receive their correct entitlement and that outside agencies are contacted so that suitable help is available in school. She is not given enough time away from her class to carry out her duties fully effectively.

63. There are enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach the National Curriculum and religious education (RE). The teachers are supported well by a barely adequate number of teaching assistants. These support staff are sometimes well briefed but this is not consistently the case. Training needs for all staff have been clearly identified and a good programme of staff training is under way, clearly linked to the good performance management procedures and the school development plan. The organisation and administration of this training is particularly meticulously carried out. There are good policies and procedures to ensure that staff new to the school quickly settle into the school's routines. The accommodation is unsatisfactory in several areas. There is no secure outdoor area for the children in the Foundation Stage, suitably equipped with large toys. The ICT suite is too small for a whole class, which means that some pupils are given time-filling tasks while the rest of the class is either being taught ICT skills or library skills. A significant part of the school's larger than average underspend is being retained to address this issue. The two temporary classrooms are inadequate; only one has a water supply and neither has toilets. One of the temporary classrooms is a considerable distance from the nearest toilet facility. The main school building has recently been redecorated and is bright, clean and well-maintained. Almost all classrooms and communal areas have very good displays of pupils' work and aids to their learning. Resources are satisfactory for all subjects and they are used well by all staff and pupils. They have a positive impact upon the pupils' achievements.

64. The school has established sound financial procedures that are based firmly upon the principle of best value. Taking into account all relevant factors, the school provides sound value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to raise standards and continue the improvements already started, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Ensure that appropriate work is always set for pupils of all abilities to ensure their better progress, particularly that:**
  - pupils of potentially higher attainment are consistently challenged; (paragraphs 20, 82, 95)
  - pupils with SEN are suitably supported with work that matches their needs in all lessons; (paragraphs 11, 20, 24, 31, 83)
  - the pupils of differing age groups in each class are set appropriate work. (paragraphs 4, 20)
  
- (2) Ensure that the provision for the pupils in the mixed age class containing reception children and pupils of Year 1 age is appropriate for both groups.** (paragraphs 4, 20, 30, 66, 68)
  
- (3) Raise the profile of the subject co-ordinators so that they:**
  - have responsibility for raising standards in their subjects; (paragraphs 55, 58)
  - administer the budget for their subject; (paragraph 55)
  - play a full role in monitoring standards of learning in their subject. (paragraphs 55, 58, 91, 112, 122, 128)
  
- (4) Work together with the local education authority to improve the accommodation so that:**
  - there is a suitable secure outdoor space with appropriate large equipment for the children under five; (paragraphs 63, 77, 80)
  - the ICT suite is enlarged so that whole class teaching is possible; (paragraphs 63, 100, 133)
  - the temporary classrooms are improved so that the pupils presently in these rooms are not disadvantaged. (paragraph 63)

In addition to the areas for development above, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in their action plan.

- (1) Continue to develop systems of assessment so that there are systems for all subjects that can be used to track the progress of pupils and set targets for their improvement. Allied to this, improve the consistency of marking so that the pupils know what they need to do to improve. (paragraphs 23, 46, 105, 112, 116, 122, 128, 138)
  
- (2) Improve the pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of society today. (paragraphs 40, 147)
  
- (3) Ensure that the co-ordinator for SEN has sufficient time to carry out her role effectively and particularly to ensure that the teachers plan to address the special needs of the pupils in their lessons. (paragraph 62)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	24	33	3	0	0
Percentage	0	10.4	35.8	49.3	4.5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	264
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	88

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	91

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Years 1 and 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	19	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	17
	Girls	18	19	19
	Total	34	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (80)	89 (85)	95 (85)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	16
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	33	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	92 (78)	89 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Years 3 to 6

Number of registered pupils in Year 6 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	17	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	17	22
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	30	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (79)	73 (63)	85 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	16	16	15
	Total	34	35	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (77)	85 (75)	80 (81)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	261
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	26.4

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136.3

*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	2000/01
	£
Total income	531544
Total expenditure	526066
Expenditure per pupil	1820
Balance brought forward from previous year	42736
Balance carried forward to next year	48214

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	53

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	43	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	43	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	49	13	0	0
The teaching is good.	45	51	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	43	17	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	35	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	51	6	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	49	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	38	9	0	8

*Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding*

## **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. The school gives children a sound start to their education. The children are admitted to the school with attainment that is below average, particularly in the key area of language development. This year, a significant minority of younger children demonstrate attainment that is well below average. There is good provision to support this group, enabling them to make sound progress. The school provides a variety of learning opportunities that will enable the majority of children to achieve almost all the Early Learning Goals<sup>4</sup> by the time they leave the reception year. However, the curriculum for children in the mixed reception and Year 1 class does not always cater effectively for children in the Foundation Stage. Provision in both classes for children's learning in the area of physical development is barely adequate. Satisfactory development in provision since the last inspection has improved the quality of play experiences available to reception age children, and has begun to implement the spirit of the Early Learning Goals satisfactorily.

Strengths in the provision are:

- the good subject knowledge and hard work of the co-ordinator;
- the good teaching in speaking and listening;
- the good quality learning in personal and social development;
- the varied experiences provided in knowledge and understanding of the world;
- the children's good attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement are:

- sharpening the focus in planning to ensure that all Foundation Stage children are offered an appropriate curriculum throughout their reception year that fully reflects the stepping stones of learning for this age group;
- providing more structured adult intervention during children's activity time to move learning forward appropriately;
- developing a suitably equipped outdoor play area.

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

67. The children make good progress in this area of learning. Most are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they move to Year 1. Teaching is generally good, as adults create a warm and secure environment that enables children confidently to follow classroom routines and understand the reason for school rules. The children behave well at all times, and take care of each other. They listen hard to instructions or conversation, and are excited about the learning they are offered. Children with SEN are particularly well supported, learning independence and self-control through sensitive management.

68. There are too few opportunities for all reception age children to develop their thinking through structured adult intervention in play. There is a wide range of suitable equipment provided for this learning, where children organise themselves well. But adult support, though sensitive, reacts to the children's needs rather than moving learning forward. Other activities are often too dominated by the teacher. Both situations reduce the children's opportunities to develop individual reasoning strategies. The children in the mixed-age class particularly have little time to explore learning through structured play routines.

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<sup>4</sup> The 'Early Learning Goals' are the expected levels of attainment for children as they start the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1. 'Stepping stones' are the steps leading towards these goals.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

69. The quality of provision in this area of learning is sound and half of the children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. A significant number of this year's reception class are very young or have low levels of language development on admission. Although they make steady progress along the stepping stones of learning, many of this group may not have achieved the levels in reading expected for five-year-olds by the time they move to Year 1.

70. There are some very good opportunities for the children to develop skills in speaking and listening, and they show good progress in both classes. The children respond well to drama sessions in the mixed age class, speaking with confidence and clarity as they follow the lead of their teacher. The children in the reception class are keen to answer questions, listening well to each other's contributions. Many lack correct sentence structure and have immature speech, but they are given many good opportunities to widen their vocabulary, for example in times on the carpet when discussing different materials, or when recalling events such as a visit to a nearby café. There is little conversation during activity sessions, however, and few children have the confidence to initiate conversations with adults. Nevertheless, most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception year, as teaching is sound in this area.

71. The teaching of reading is carefully planned but is not always pitched at the appropriate learning level for the needs of individual children. Overall, the children make steady progress in developing early skills. Most enjoy listening to stories, pretending to read as they look through books and talk about the pictures and characters. They have good opportunities to become familiar with letter sounds, as they begin to relate this to the printed word. Whole-class sessions introduce children to the sequence of stories, with good opportunities for them to explore information texts too. Some of these sessions are too long, however, or the tasks, such as matching upper and lower case letters, are too challenging. The children then lose concentration. Older or higher attaining children are beginning to use good strategies to sound out unfamiliar words, and some are beginning to read with expression.

72. All the children show an enthusiasm for writing, both in formal sessions and when, for example, compiling orders at the Snack Attack café. They have a mature pencil grip, and most are able to form their letters correctly, showing good progress in the mechanics of writing. Development of the content of writing is less structured. In both classes the children have too few opportunities to construct their own sentences to copy or to attempt to write out themselves, supported by adults talking through the decision-making process at their side.

## **Mathematical development**

73. The children show confidence and enjoyment when talking about numbers and shapes, and most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in mathematics by the time they leave reception. Teaching is sound, sometimes good in the reception class, and good use is made of well-prepared resources, particularly in whole-class sessions. Teachers use imaginative practical activities to aid understanding in, for example, making repeated patterns. Most children count easily to 10, and recognise number values to five. They respond with enjoyment to the challenge of ordinal numbers as they fix items of clothing on to a washing line in the correct sequence. Mathematical language such as 'more' and 'behind' is used regularly in classroom conversation, giving good reinforcement of learning. There are too few opportunities, however, for the children to use this knowledge in their play experiences, where they could begin to solve problems for themselves with the support and

guidance of well-briefed adults. Many activities are directed by the teachers, who monitor children's responses, but miss opportunities to develop learning further.

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

74. The children have stimulating experiences on visits and the teachers make good provision to develop their understanding of the world about them. They make sound progress in their learning and most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. The quality of teaching in this area is good overall.

75. The children enjoy sorting out objects to put into different piles. Concentration during these sessions is exceptional, as children tap and shake their chosen object, and consider how it feels and what it is made of. Language development in these sessions is good, giving children a sound basis for their thinking. Some ask questions such as 'is it made of glass?' and some very sensitive teaching helps children to work out the answer for themselves by referring to a recent visit to a nearby shop where the object was made. A similar sensitivity enables the children to notice the differences between two pieces of wood, and to begin to think about the impact of the weather on objects left outside.

76. Other sessions are less successful in developing children's thinking, however. The planned learning is often only thought through for whole-class sessions, and not for the independent section of the lesson. Activities are appropriately laid out to give opportunities for the children to play independently, but the key learning from these is unclear to the adults in support. Consequently, children's exploration is limited, and they move quickly on to another activity. Adults often monitor behaviour and how well instructions are being followed, or deal with the practicalities such as tying apron strings, missing vital opportunities to extend learning from the good introductory session.

### **Physical development**

77. Provision for children's physical development is barely adequate. Although most of the children move confidently and are able to negotiate space around each other well in the classroom and playground, there is no suitable outdoor play provision to develop their learning appropriately. There are weekly sessions in the hall where children learn effectively an awareness of body control and movement under the direction of their teachers, but there is no provision for them to explore using wheeled toys or climbing equipment, or where they can also develop their imagination appropriately. The outdoor area has some appropriate line markings, but use of these is limited by the weather. There is no covered area outside.

78. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are many missed opportunities to develop learning further in hall sessions. Taped lessons are used, for example, which give structure to dance activities, but teachers rarely stop the tape to provide demonstrations of movements. This limits the potential learning available to many children. Reception children use scissors and pencils well, and enjoy manipulating various materials with developing control. Sometimes they are given too little challenge in these activities, as adults over-prepare materials for them.

### **Creative development**

79. Although much of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is sensitive, and children are provided with a secure environment, particularly in the reception class, opportunities for creative development are not always exploited fully. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, but planning places a greater emphasis on experience of activities rather than on helping children to develop their own ideas. These activities enable the children to learn the skills and



techniques required to produce satisfying results, and they make satisfactory progress in this. However, that learning is not then sufficiently extended to help children to express their own ideas in a truly creative way.

80. Most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals through their exploration of colour, texture and shape and through musical activities. There are some good role-play opportunities, led by adults, in literacy and RE contexts. But these are planned to exploit learning in those specific curriculum areas, and miss opportunities for the children to develop their own creative ideas. Play in the Snack Attack café and home corner is limited and underdeveloped, and the lack of covered outdoor provision restricts the use of sand and water activities that would contribute to learning in this and other areas.

## **ENGLISH**

81. The overall standards currently being achieved in all aspects of English by the seven- and eleven-year-olds are average and the pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards for those aged seven were judged to be above average, with good progress being made. By eleven, standards were average and progress was satisfactory. The differing abilities of the various cohorts are the reason for the apparent fall in standards, but satisfactory progress has been made in this subject since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the assessment, tracking and target-setting systems;
- the good support for pupils with SEN when they are taught in a separate class or in small groups;
- the attention paid to developing pupils' research skills;
- the opportunities for practising writing during extended literacy lessons.

Areas for development are:

- lesson planning to meet the needs of all abilities within a class;
- planned opportunities to develop speaking skills and the use of a wider vocabulary;
- the use of ICT to support the development of literacy skills;
- improvement in the stock of library books, particularly non-fiction books.

82. The teachers are observing the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy correctly. As a result of a particular drive by the school to clarify the exact learning that is to take place in each lesson, this is now clearly expressed on lesson plans and conveyed to the pupils who are therefore able to focus on their learning. The main weakness in planning is that teachers do not meet the needs of all pupils through the activities that they ask them to complete. Too often, all the pupils are required to carry out the same task. There is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils to find, for example, more exciting vocabulary to illuminate their writing. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher recognised that some pupils of average ability needed a framework to help them plan their story in the style of the author Anna Sewell and this good practice helped their learning. The higher attaining pupils were not given this framework and were suitably challenged.

83. Planning also often fails to recognise the needs of the lower attaining pupils and those with specific learning difficulties. When classroom assistants are in the room, they are employed effectively to help these pupils, as in the reception and Year 1 class where they were helped to sequence the story of 'The Lion and the Mouse'. However, there are not enough assistants to cover every class that has the full ability range within it. The problem is solved to a certain extent in Years 2, 3 and 4 because good learning is promoted by a teacher who conducts lessons with pupils with SEN in a separate room. With the Year 4 pupils, for

example, she explored rhyming words. When a girl suggested that *howl* will rhyme with *growl*, the teacher initiated a good discussion about animals that make these sounds, thus giving the pupils ideas for their limerick. The school also provides specific help for pupils in small groups often with a teaching assistant. The 'Catch-up' programme is very well structured to include some reading, writing and spelling practice in a short, concentrated lesson. Two seven-year-olds particularly enjoyed a computer program that challenged them to spot whether pairs of words are spelt the same and to measure the time it took them so that they could improve next time.

## Speaking and listening

84. Teachers do not specifically plan work that will improve speaking skills and the pupils in Year 6 do not remember partaking in drama activities or debates recently. However, because literacy lessons offer opportunities every day to engage in discussions and because teachers generally ask a wide range of pupils to answer questions, standards in speaking and listening in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in other schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the oldest pupils were judged to have below average speaking skills. Eleven-year-olds talked to inspectors confidently this time and gave their opinions on a wide range of school issues. They talked clearly and often gave lengthy explanations of events that happen in school and sensible reasons for liking one subject better than another. Similarly, a Year 2 pupil clearly explained the rules for playing 'Bingo' and, at the end of the lesson, those who are chosen to read their sentences about the character Preston that they have been studying, did so confidently and in a loud enough voice so that everyone could hear. However, many pupils throughout the school have a limited vocabulary and the teachers have to work hard to extract unusual or exciting words during the discussions at the beginning of lessons. They correctly praise pupils who offer such words, such as 'embarrassed' from a Year 2 pupil describing Preston, which encourages others to 'have a go'. The pupils generally listen well. Attitudes in English lessons are positive and the pupils generally behave well. They only become restless when lesson introductions are too long. This happens quite often and curtails the time available for activities.

## Reading

85. The teachers, especially those in Years 1 and 2, recognise the importance of teaching basic skills, such as building words from sounds, and this contributes to the standards in reading, which, technically, are good but overall are average throughout the school because of the difficulties that many pupils have in fully understanding what they are reading. Again, the lack of a wide vocabulary prevents them from achieving higher standards. The Year 2 pupils have good knowledge of letter sounds and they use this to read unknown words, recognising the initial sound even when the rest of the word is too difficult to decipher. A below average pupil used the picture and the context of the sentence to read 'doctor' but another had to be told 'television' even though he knew the 't' sound and there was a picture of it. Above average pupils read with expression, especially when speech is indicated, and average pupils read accurately and fluently. The teachers keep satisfactory records of the key words that the pupils know and make notes of the strengths and weaknesses as they read in their groups.

86. The pupils throughout the school talk freely about their enjoyment of reading and about favourite books and authors – Jacqueline Wilson being a particular favourite in Years 3 to 6. They regularly read in groups as part of their literacy lessons and most read at home. However, there is no consistent policy about reading diaries. Some classes have them but not all. The pupils often write book reviews and they are conscientiously completed with perceptive evaluations, especially as pupils get older. The pupils are keen to challenge themselves with *Harry Potter* being successfully tackled by average and above average Year

5 pupils and *The Hobbit* being the choice of a higher attaining pupil in Year 6. The below average pupils in this year-group have simpler books that they read accurately. They are particularly good at self-correcting words when they realise from the rest of the sentence that they have made a mistake. An average pupil worked out how to read 'fatigue' but did not know what it meant.

87. There are plenty of fiction books and sets of books for group reading are of good quality. The library, however, is not well stocked with non-fiction books and they are only broadly classified into subject sections using a numbering system. Very few pupils can explain how to find a particular book using this system although many know the purpose of a contents and index page. The criticism in the last report that the pupils did not carry out enough research has been addressed. Because whole classes cannot be accommodated in the computer suite, pupils take it in turns to sit in the library with a teaching assistant and carry out research into a variety of topics. This is promoting good learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, have found information about the Niagara Falls as part of a topic about 'Water'.

## Writing

88. The school has made good use of its assessment system to identify that writing and spelling are relative weaknesses in English. Time is available each week for extended writing and this is helping the pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, to produce lengthy pieces of work. The school has also initiated a target-setting programme that highlights for each pupil a particular feature that needs to be improved. These targets are regularly reviewed and most teachers refer to them when they mark work. Marking generally in the school is thorough and helpful to the pupils in giving advice about how to improve. The teachers themselves set a target that they expect each pupil to achieve by the end of the year in reading and writing and there are at least termly assessments to ensure that no-one is falling behind. This is good practice. The teachers are still not entirely confident in judging the precise level of work, not just against broad levels as defined in the National Curriculum.

89. Standards of writing at present are average across the school but, within this, there is a wide range of work. Some above average pupils at seven and eleven are likely to achieve the higher level of attainment in the forthcoming national tests but not enough amongst the older ones to approach the national average. The difficulty for them is to use exciting vocabulary in extended sentences to arouse the reader. Occasionally, a particularly evocative phrase stands out, "Let my people go!" bellowed the shadow-dwelling person in anger.' Technically, however, these more able pupils and those of average ability write competently, with due attention to punctuation. Spelling is usually sound. Less confident pupils struggle with spelling, even with simpler words such as 'been' (*bin*) and 'with' (*whith*). Seven-year-olds generally display satisfactory standards of handwriting and a few are beginning to join letters. They regularly practise their skills. Most of them know how to construct a story and an above average girl correctly set out a thank-you letter to the Vicar. An average pupil used a good variety of 'time' words to start sentences – 'first', 'then', 'next' – but another had difficulty with grammar: 'He has bringed the king a bird'. Some below average pupils are not secure in the construction of sentences and need constant help with spellings.

90. Teaching overall is satisfactory. The teachers have good subject knowledge and they use resources well, such as an overhead projector in Year 4 to display a 'shape' poem so that everyone can see it is about a snake. The better lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. In a lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils realise that commas are needed in a text because the teacher skilfully reads a lengthy passage from *The Hodgeheg* ignoring the commas and running out of breath. The teachers do not always use the plenary session at the end of the lesson to take learning forward. Often it is just used for

pupils to report on what they have done. In a Year 6 lesson, better use was made of the time to take one pupil's work and improve it by including commas to delineate clauses. This also reinforced the need for re-drafting. The pupils are used to planning their work throughout the school and the older ones know what re-drafting involves but there was little evidence in books of this happening. Computers are not widely used for this task. Nor are they used enough to support work in literacy though there are isolated examples. Work on display in a Years 3 and 4 room has been produced on a word-processor, which has enhanced the pupils' reports about 'Liverpool' and 'Everton' amongst other topics. Work in other subjects, on the other hand, is supporting literacy satisfactorily. In history, a Year 3 pupil wrote about being a Roman soldier and showed empathy with his subject. In Year 6, there is some impressive writing about the Tudors, following on from research. Work is often completed at home as homework and this is contributing well to learning. A Year 2 boy, for example, has quizzes to help him consolidate his knowledge of the alphabet.

91. The co-ordinator continues to provide sound leadership but she does not monitor lessons. This is carried out well by the headteacher. The co-ordinator scrutinises the half-termly plans before the lessons are delivered and looks at books in order to assess standards and progress. However, there are several recommendations in the last inspection report that have still not been addressed, for example, the poor stock of non-fiction books in the library and the insufficient use of ICT. This is a cause for concern.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. Standards are in line with national averages at the age of seven and eleven. The progress made by all pupils is satisfactory overall, though it is better in some classes than others. Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is sound overall. Assessment is used well and the tracking of pupils' progress is beginning to provide useful information for teachers. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection overall and good progress in investigative mathematics.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the use of assessment;
- the subject is well led.

An area for development is:

- more use to be made of ICT especially in data handling.

93. Standards are similar to the results gained in national tests in 2001. At both seven and eleven standards are average when compared to schools nationally, though in Year 6 the number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 may not be as high as the national average.

94. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The pupils in Year 1 develop a growing understanding of number. They recognise numbers to 100 and count in twos. Pupils use their knowledge of number satisfactorily to complete sequences and carry out simple addition calculations. They have appropriate knowledge of shape and space, for example they identify simple shapes such as rectangles and triangles and more able pupils know more advanced shapes such as hexagons. In Year 2, pupils can carry out calculations such as  $62+5=67$ . There is a clear improvement in the quality of presentation from Year 1 with more formal methods for recording work being used. Pupils develop practical skills satisfactorily, such as timing and measuring the length of objects and they begin to solve simple written problems using addition and calculations such as simple division.

95. Progress in Years 3 to 6 builds on previous work extending pupils' understanding of number, both in written and mental arithmetic. Pupils in Year 3 add two digit numbers

accurately and have satisfactory understanding of fractions such as quarters. In Year 4 pupils appropriately construct bar graphs using information they have collected on classmates' preference in crisp flavours. This work does not involve the use of ICT sufficiently. This is a recurring weakness; not enough use is made of computers in mathematics generally. In Years 3 to 6 a good quantity of work is covered by pupils in regular numeracy sessions. There is also a reasonable balance between the different areas of the subject, though there is not enough work on data handling in some classes. There is clear evidence of the pupils making progress between and within year groups. Pupils with SEN make progress similar to other pupils, though not enough is done to challenge more able pupils with extension activities in some lessons and consequently, a lower than average number of pupils is on course to reach higher levels in national tests.

96. In other areas of the curriculum mathematics plays a satisfactory part. For instance, in science in Year 6 pupils estimate the weight of a tree, find the average of temperature readings and draw graphs of length of time candles burn in different sized jars. Pupils work out the cost of producing biscuits in design and technology (DT) and pupils are encouraged to calculate the cost of their dinner when they buy their lunch from the school canteen.

97. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall, but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. When the teaching is successful, the teachers deliver lively introductions that motivate pupils and make them think, often being competitive in their desire to provide the correct answer. For instance in one Year 5 class, the teacher introduced a mystery number that has four digits, and from the information provided, the pupils had to guess what it was. This involves estimation and careful consideration of facts; the pupils were captivated and totally involved in trying to find a solution.

98. In the group work, planning ensures that pupils of all abilities are challenged and work at a level that takes their understanding further and makes them think. For instance in a Year 6 class, pupils had to solve written problems. The teacher encouraged them to read the question carefully, identify what sort of calculation is necessary and then, before trying to calculate the answer, to first estimate an approximate answer. In most satisfactory lessons the teaching is somewhat mediocre, lacking spark and enthusiasm. The potential to excite pupils and to develop a real passion for the subject is missed. Though the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is understood quite clearly and followed closely, the spirit of it and the strategies to motivate and stimulate pupils are not always employed effectively. Some teachers do not appreciate the possibilities that mathematics presents for them to enthuse and captivate pupils. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher failed to deliver a suitable introduction, pupils with SEN were given repetitive tasks that did not consolidate or advance their learning effectively. The lesson was poorly conceived so that what the teacher expected the pupils to learn was not achieved with any security or revisited in a conclusion to the lesson. Some teachers do deliver lessons with vigour, for instance in one class small whiteboards were used so that all pupils could answer questions and were involved in the introduction. They all took part, writing down their answer and then describing how they came to it. In another very good lesson in Year 3 pupils had to make 20 using the four number operations; this allowed pupils of all abilities to think at a level appropriate to them and for the more able to come up with very novel solutions.

99. There is good use of assessment to monitor pupils' attainment. Tests are used regularly to provide information on what pupils have learned and annual tests provide information on where pupils are in relation to national levels and averages. The school has recently begun to use this information well to track pupils' progress within year groups and this is now enabling teachers to identify pupils who are not making good enough progress. When these pupils are identified, the school then provides special support, so that their progress can be improved.

100. Mathematics is managed well and the co-ordinator is developing a clear picture of provision throughout the school. Governors have been involved in monitoring teaching in mathematics and the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is insufficient regular scrutiny of pupils' work and the development of portfolios that could be used as reference material for judging standards, which would provide new and temporary staff with information on work carried out in school. Resources are satisfactory, as is accommodation generally, though the small ICT room makes it difficult to teach whole classes and this holds back progress.

## **SCIENCE**

101. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in science is average. Pupils make sound progress. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress. The school has made sound improvement in science since the last inspection, particularly in regard to the improvements in the teaching of experimental and investigative science,

Strengths in the subject are:

- the good subject knowledge and commitment of the co-ordinator;
- the good organisation and sharing of information;
- the developing of assessment and monitoring procedures;
- the improved opportunities for pupils to make investigations;
- the good attitudes of pupils to their work.

Areas for development are:

- the inconsistency of opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning;
- the unwillingness of pupils to use scientific language;
- the lack of structure in recording experiments.

102. Teaching in science is satisfactory overall across the school, with some good teaching in Year 2 and Year 6. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, and the implementation of a new commercial scheme is enhancing the school's commitment to planning a curriculum that enables the pupils to build up new skills and knowledge in an appropriate way. Lessons are lively but well managed, with opportunities for pupils of all ages to conduct experiments and discuss their findings with each other. Teachers generally model scientific language such as 'fair test' and 'hypothesis' well, but older pupils find it difficult to recall the correct terminology when answering questions. Younger pupils sort out materials into man-made and natural, and articulate the reasons for this classification accurately. Effective questioning by the teacher enables them to extend their language appropriately to include 'transparent' in their descriptions.

103. The pupils work well together, for instance in Year 6 where pupils were exploring the relationship between air resistance and material in the performance of parachutes. They demonstrated a good understanding of the physical processes involved as the parachutes fell to earth. They were less clear about the definition of a fair test for this experiment, however, and had no clear structure in place for recording the key features as evidence. Occasionally, for example in Year 5 when exploring evaporation, lessons contain too little challenge, particularly when text books are adhered to too rigidly, limiting pupils' independent learning opportunities.

104. Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 use scientific equipment well as they investigate the roots and stems of plants. Their learning is enhanced by the use of an electro-microscope which enables all the class to see that water is transported through stems. Pupils produce clearly labelled diagrams of a high standard, and are able to express good ideas about the

life-processes they are investigating – for example, ‘roots are like a straw’ – in answer to some effective questioning by their teacher. In some lessons, however, teachers answer questions for the pupils, limiting the opportunity for pupils to think through their own learning.

105. Assessment of pupils’ progress is developing well. Teachers regularly check pupils’ understanding of concepts in units that have been taught, and the co-ordinator, who leads the subject well, keeps meticulous records of the development of the subject across the school. As yet pupils’ attainment is not recorded systematically in terms of National Curriculum levels, but this has been started in Year 2. Marking of work including tests is also carried out inconsistently. A portfolio of pupils’ work indicates curriculum content, but does not yet contain any evaluation of the standards.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

106. Throughout the school attainment in art and design is above average. The pupils make good progress across the school. The pupils with SEN also make good progress in relation to their ability. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils’ enthusiasm;
- the quality of work displayed;
- good subject leadership.

Areas for improvement are:

- assessment;
- the monitoring of teaching and learning.

107. The pupils’ attitudes to learning throughout the school are very good because teachers prepare lessons carefully to enable all pupils to experience success and recognise that their contributions are valued. The high quality of work displayed around the school celebrates the work of individual classes and demonstrates whole-school collaboration. The contributions of each year group form a lively and good quality collage in the entrance foyer entitled ‘Going to Work’, based on a painting by the twentieth century painter, L S Lowry.

108. The knowledgeable way in which pupils discuss their artwork, shows that the work of pupils throughout the school is above average and that they are achieving well. For example, Year 2 pupils talked about the detail of their work in the style of the portraits painted by the artist Modigliani. They compared the ‘smooth’ effect achieved when they use paint or pencil, with their portraits painted over crumpled paper. Older pupils discussed their work with enthusiasm, explaining the various ways they created texture through scribbling, shading or cross-hatching to produce furry, smooth or spiky effects.

109. Teaching is good because teachers plan well, start lessons by explaining clearly what they want pupils to do or find out, question to make sure that they understand what is expected and ensure that all the necessary resources are accessible. Throughout the school the teachers place strong emphasis on observational skills and encourage pupils to explore different ways of recording their findings. This helps pupils to understand how pattern, texture, line and space can be utilised to express their impressions. In one lesson, the pupils from Years 3 and 4 closely examined sections cut from the trunk of a tree. Before they weaved threads of different colours and different materials to represent their views, pupils sketched the ‘growth rings’ of their tree sample, or created computerised images of the patterns they wished to create. One outcome of their study of texture, pattern and colour resulted in impressive representations of large scale flowers produced in the style of the modern American artist, Georgia O’Keefe.

110. Older pupils used more advanced skills when they investigated decoration in different forms and cultures. The masks made to represent those worn by the ancient Greeks combine historical and artistic skills to produce good quality three-dimensional work. There is a developing maturity in the way pupils use their observational skills to mark and shade in order to create a realistic image. The way in which pupils use shade and light in their drawings of 'trainers' is evidence of the good progress that is made by pupils by Year 6.

111. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and her enthusiasm is a key factor in the good standards achieved in art and design. The policy for the subject and the comprehensive scheme of work provide clear guidelines for teaching and learning, resulting in the good standard of work produced by pupils. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development, with the bright and imaginative artwork displayed in classrooms and corridors contributing to the welcoming atmosphere of the school.

112. Teachers' plans are monitored, ensuring that all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered. However, there is no monitoring of teaching and learning in art and design to ensure that pupils achieve their best work. Teachers assess pupils' work but this information is not as yet used to identify areas for development. Resources are good and well organised. There is an impressive photographic record of collages and displays created by groups of pupils. Regular opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning and a comprehensive system of assessing progress and attainment are necessary in order to further raise standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

113. Standards in DT are average at the age of seven and at eleven. Pupils make satisfactory progress due to the sound teaching of the subject. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils' skills of construction;
- the leadership of the subject;
- the pupils' attitudes to the subject.

Areas for development are:

- to improve the pupils' evaluative skills;
- assessment.

114. Standards of work seen during the inspection were average. For example, the pupils in Year 2 had completed a project on moving parts, using pivots and levers to make working cardboard models. These models were carefully made and colourfully decorated. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 had completed Tudor houses to link in with their work in history. These houses showed varied and individual designs and were soundly constructed, showing above average skills in this aspect of the subject. Pupils' written work in DT showed some evaluation of their projects, but not in sufficient depth. For example, although the pupils were asked to say what worked well in their design, they were not taking it the next stage to say how they might change their design in a future project, thus neglecting the cyclical nature of the subject. The pupils have a fair knowledge of the design process, making clear, labelled drawings of what it is that they wish to construct.

115. A significant part of the reason for the standards being attained is the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. The pupils in Years 5 and 6, quite naturally, showed considerable excitement in two lessons seen during the inspection where they were evaluating



commercially manufactured biscuits. Although some evaluative language was introduced, in one of the lessons the pupils were doing little more than give the various aspects scores out of ten. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 also worked very hard and keenly when investigating a variety of switches in their project on alarms.

116. The subject is well led. The acting co-ordinator has carried out audits of where developments might be needed in the subject and has continued the good work started by the previous co-ordinator in adapting a commercial scheme of work to suit the needs of the school. At present there is no system of assessment so the teachers are not entirely sure how well skills have been mastered in previous classes.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards in geography that are average and the pupils make satisfactory progress, including those pupils with SEN. Standards are above average by the age of eleven. All pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the school was previously inspected.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the range of ways in which work is recorded;
- the pupils' research skills;
- management of the subject.

Areas for improvement are:

- resources;
- fieldwork.

118. Throughout the school the pupils respond to learning opportunities positively. Stimulating activities inspire high levels of interest, effort and concentration. For instance, younger pupils talk knowledgeably about the differences and similarities between the fictional Scottish Island village of Struay and their home environment of Wallasey. They identify and contrast the transport and jobs undertaken at both locations, recording their findings in tables. They make the point that because there are no cars on Struay there would be no need for mechanics, whereas, in Wallasey, mechanics are important. They successfully extend their sense of place by following the travels of Barnaby Bear, from home to a seaside resort, noting the distance the bear travels and sequencing the journey, recording their observations in pictures rather than writing.

119. Older pupils express well-informed views about the quality of their local environment and the importance of a supply of clean water to sustain an acceptable quality of life. They outline well the process and note the importance of supplying clean water to everyone. Their good knowledge of the significance of water in the sustenance of life is reinforced as they extract information from a range of sources that highlight the effects of weather on the environment. This information is recorded in a variety of ways such as graphs, tables or written accounts. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrate very good observational skills as they report their investigation of noise levels throughout the school. They identify the reasons for variations, for example, the noise level in the dining hall at 13.00 hours is high because the lunch-time supervisors discuss the behaviour of pupils at lunchtime. On the other hand, they note that it is always busy and quiet in their classroom because pupils are eager to succeed in their work. They analyse their results through Venn diagrams, identifying noisy and quiet areas and where there is a mixture of both.

120. The observation of two lessons in Years 3 to 6, reinforce the evidence in what was seen in books and confirmed by talking with pupils that both teaching and learning are good.

Geographical skills are developing well as pupils independently undertake detailed research of different places and environments, using a range of sources of information, for example books, photographs, posters and the Internet. As a result of this research they discover that water is plentiful in Western regions but scarce in Middle-Eastern countries. They trace the causes of erosion that contribute to the development of inhospitable and parched, desert areas.

121. Teaching is good because teachers are secure in their understanding of the subject and plan well to interest and challenge pupils to do their best. Generally teachers provide stimulating learning experiences in geography for pupils at all levels. They extend pupils' literacy skills by encouraging them to think of questions that help them to find out more about the features and characteristics of places and to write about their findings. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed as pupils use tables, graphs and write accounts to record their work.

122. The management of geography is good. A well-formed policy guides provision and the scheme of work ensures that there is progression in pupils' learning. Assessment is undertaken at the end of each unit of work, and, although there is scope for fine-tuning, is being used by teachers to help with their planning. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has identified areas for development that include monitoring of teaching and learning. Although resources are adequate, the co-ordinator is keenly aware that more are needed in order to continue raising standards in geography. Pupils undertake fieldwork in their studies of the environment and local areas; this is also an area that has also been identified by the co-ordinator as in need of development.

## **HISTORY**

123. The standards of attainment in history are average for pupils by the age of seven. The pupils make sound progress. However, the examination of pupils' work and discussion with pupils indicate that standards of attainment by the age of eleven are above average. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- effective use of secondary sources of information;
- the subject knowledge of teachers;
- use of questions to guide and challenge learning.

Areas for development are:

- monitoring of teaching and learning;
- resources.

124. By the end of Year 2 pupils distinguish clearly between past and present and understand that different events happened at different times. They are beginning to recognise why people in the past acted as they did. For example, they study text and suggest reasons why Guy Fawkes was condemned to death. Careful discussion of photographic evidence enabled pupils to suggest the level of impact that Florence Nightingale had on hygiene procedures in hospitals then and today. The pupils draw out similarities and differences between places and are aware that the way people live affects the environment.

125. The structuring of the curriculum fosters a good sense of the passage of time. This supports effectively insights into changes in the way of life in Britain. As pupils retrace the lives of Tudor and Stuart kings, teachers help them to relate their experiences to those of people in past times. Pupils' progress over the years is good and this is reflected in their writing. Much of the recording by pupils is of a high quality, and includes a range of different

ways of presenting work. The work conveys an overall impression of enjoyment and effort in learning. Discussions with pupils confirm these positive attitudes and support the good progress made by pupils at all ability levels, including for those pupils with SEN. Pupils' cultural attainment is significantly enhanced by their work in history.

126. No history lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2. The lessons observed and the learning recorded in pupils' work show teaching to be good in Years 3 to 6, and occasionally very good. This is largely due to the secure historical knowledge of teachers, ensuring that what the teachers expect the pupils to learn in lessons is relevant and that historical themes meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Learning is well supported by visits to sites of interest, such as Birkenhead Priory and Liverpool museum, where pupils study the life of monks in Tudor times and of Egyptians in a much earlier era.

127. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' written work and the range of work seen included some very good reports of the lives of famous people and explanations of the impact of their behaviour on the lives of others. For example, older pupils contrast well the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times with those of the rich and poor in present times. They identify very clearly how village and country life were bound up with the life of the Church and contrast the priorities of society today.

128. The management of history is effective. There is a policy and a scheme of work that ensures that the pupils make good progress in the subject, and arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are developing well. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and the work in pupils' books. Resources are adequate and supported by loans from the public library. However there are insufficient school based resources to support the development of research skills. This was a concern at the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to continue to raise standards, including monitoring of teaching and learning and increasing resources.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

129. Standards achieved in ICT at the ages of seven and eleven are average and pupils of all ability levels, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when raising standards in ICT was one of the key issues. Teaching of the subject is satisfactory.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the curriculum planned for the subject;
- the assessment procedures;
- leadership of the subject;
- the pupils' attitudes to the subject;
- improvement since the last inspection.

Areas for development are:

- to ensure that the teachers' skills are up-to-date;
- the use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum;
- to enlarge the computer suite.

130. The pupils throughout the school are very confident in their use of the computers. Even quite young pupils in Years 1 and 2 load programs and use menus with assurance. For example, the pupils in Year 2 downloaded a previously saved picture by the artist Mondrian and then used the facilities of a painting program to reproduce effective images based on the picture that they had seen. There are also examples of these pupils using a database to

produce graphs, for example of their favourite party food. By the time the pupils reach Year 6, they combine text and images to produce pleasing posters. They use a spreadsheet to input information and support their work in mathematics by using it to work out averages. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 use the Internet for research in subjects such as history and a start has been made to using electronic communication, for example e-mail. These standards represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

131. The pupils are enthusiastic in their use of the computers and their good attitudes contribute to the progress that they make. They work sensibly in the confined space of the computer suite and share turns well at the computers. They persevere well, with high levels of concentration. For example, during lessons seen where pupils from Years 5 and 6 were trying to program a lighthouse to come on when the sun went down, the pupils found this task difficult, but there was no hint of lack of effort or any giving up.

132. The subject is very well led, the co-ordinator having adapted a commercial scheme of work to suit the school. She has also conducted an audit of training needs and organised very effective training for staff. However, this training happened a little while ago and there are now some minor uncertainties in some teachers' knowledge of the programs that they are using. There are effective and useful assessment procedures in place, but the co-ordinator recognises the need to simplify these and is adapting them to suit their current needs. She is also aware of the limited use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. Although some use is made of ICT in mathematics, in word processing for English, and in some other subjects, for example in research for history, it is not sufficient.

133. The small size of the ICT suite means that teachers cannot take their whole class into the suite at one time. Usually, a classroom assistant takes some pupils to learn library skills, a valid use of their time in which good learning takes place. However, in all lessons seen some pupils worked on a task that can best be described as a time-filler to occupy them until it was their turn on the computer.

## **MUSIC**

134. As at the last inspection, standards in music at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average and pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

Strengths in the subject are:

- provision for instrumental tuition;
- extra-curricular music;
- the contribution of music in assemblies.

Areas for development are:

- the use of ICT to support learning in music;
- an assessment system for monitoring standards and progress;
- the range of musical instruments.

135. Music has a high profile in the school and the pupils have good opportunities to learn a wide range of instruments – recorders, strings, woodwind and brass, for example. A good number of pupils take advantage of these facilities and they practise before school, during breaks and at lunchtime. Some of them belong to a 'Saturday Band' and there is a small orchestra in school as well as a choir. Instrumentalists supplement the piano accompaniment during assemblies and this enriches the sound and adds colour to the singing. When all the pupils sing together, they make a pleasant sound. Most sing in tune and words are clear but there is sometimes a lack of verve. In some class lessons, teachers

have high expectations that the pupils can cope with challenging work with the result, for example, that by the end of their lesson, the oldest pupils competently performed a round in two parts with a sustained instrumental accompaniment. The Year 2 pupils responded to the teacher's directive that they should be 'a proper choir' when they performed 'Yellow Submarine'. Consequently, without being prompted, they stood up straight, opened their mouths wide and showed that they enjoyed their singing. This represents the culmination of a very good lesson that concentrated on learning the song and recognising the long and short sounds within it.

136. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers display levels of confidence and expertise when they teach music, ranging from barely adequate to very good. In two lessons, the teacher was reluctant to use musical terms, allowing the pupils, for example, to describe a crotchet as 'a black note with a stalk'. In an unsatisfactory lesson, the older pupils were allowed to produce an accompaniment for a song that simply copied the rhythm of the words. The problem was compounded by some fussy behaviour by a few of the pupils that gave others the opportunity to sit doing nothing and resulted in a loss of valuable time. In three of the four lessons seen, the teacher was not the class teacher. In some cases the substitute teacher has a particular flair for or expertise in the subject, and good learning took place in these lessons. However, in the other lesson the teacher was less confident and learning was unsatisfactory.

137. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. The music of famous composers is played when the pupils enter the hall for assembly and information is displayed about it on a screen. The pupils in Year 6 listened to 'The Planets Suite' during a lesson and they evaluated the effect it had on them. They have also studied the instruments of the orchestra and, every two years, they spend a day with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The whole school occasionally benefits from a performance by the peripatetic music teachers who also talk about their musical instruments. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the children from the reception classes enjoy their singing time together and they do very well to perform rounds in two groups, each following the adult leading them. The pupils generally enjoy music and teachers ensure that everyone has a chance to join in and have a turn with instruments. This helps to ensure that all the pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress. In their lesson, the oldest pupils each had a chance to compose an accompaniment for 'London's Burning' before a group was chosen to play during the final performance. Year 2 pupils are starting to produce simple graphic scores to represent their compositions. However, there are no computer programs being used, for example to help pupils in their composing activities.

138. Resources are only just satisfactory to deliver the curriculum and there are not enough instruments from other cultures. In two lessons, there were barely enough instruments for each pupil to have one and the teacher had to arrange for one group to practise a 'clapping accompaniment' to overcome the problem. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and support for her colleagues. She works hard to run the musical clubs outside school time and has a good understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses in the subject, for example that there is no system for assessing the standards and progress of each pupil.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. Standards in physical education (PE) are average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the subject. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good or very good. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities though pupils would benefit from more opportunities to take part in competitive sport. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- teaching is at least satisfactory and often good;
- pupils experience a full range of activities;
- provision is enhanced through the use of visiting coaches and extra-curricular activities.

An area for improvement is:

- to increase opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport.

140. Standards throughout the school are average and pupils make satisfactory progress in all years. In gymnastics, early movement skills such as travelling at different speeds and in different directions with control are developed further up the school. By Year 3 pupils can put together sequences of jumps that involve different types of take-off and landing. They experiment with turns and twists and use a range of means of travelling to link their jumps.

141. In games, pupils develop satisfactory early ball skills in Year 2. They bounce balls into hoops, then work in twos practising passing and catching. By Year 6 pupils are playing formal games such as rounders and cricket. Pupils regulate their own games playing with fairness and observing rules. Bowling and batting skills in cricket are sound. Pupils bowl overarm with accuracy and display good hand-eye co-ordination when striking the ball in both rounders and cricket.

142. Teaching in PE is at least sound and sometimes good and very good. In the better lessons teachers are enthusiastic, they motivate pupils and keep lessons going at pace; they have good knowledge of how to develop pupils' learning and performance and use pupils as good examples for others to watch and learn from. In the better lessons the warm up is thorough so that pupils are breathless and can feel their heart working hard. In less successful, but still satisfactory, lessons, teachers frequently allow too little time for warm up activities and they do not stimulate and excite pupils, so that the lessons are effective, but unremarkable.

143. The school does not have its own playing field, but uses an adjacent park. Good use is made of the hard play areas to teach a range of games. For instance, professional coaches from a local football club are used to teach football skills to pupils in Years 3 and 4. The quality of teaching in these sessions is very good, as basic skills are taught, practices organised to apply them and then pupils put these skills into action in small-sided games.

144. Provision in PE includes swimming for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and standards of swimming are satisfactory. Many pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by teachers to play sports such as football and netball as extra-curricular activities. There are limited opportunities for playing competitive sport. The school has taken advantage of several opportunities to obtain resources through special initiatives and as a result resources are satisfactory.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average, and pupils, including those with SEN, make sound progress across the school. All pupils are taught effectively according to the locally agreed syllabus. There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the recent implementation of the new Wirral Agreed Syllabus;
- the contribution of the subject to pupils' moral and spiritual development.

Areas for development are:

- the development of teaching to include greater emphasis on other faiths;
- greater coherence in planning across the school.

146. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils show good attitudes to their learning, particularly when, as in a Years 3 and 4 lesson on Abraham and the Promised Land, they relate the concepts and facts to present day events. These good attitudes promote good learning in many lessons. There is a good link in the planned syllabus between pupils' spiritual and moral development, and knowledge and understanding of the religious traditions of the principal religions in this country. At present, coherence in planning across the school in order to blend these two aspects effectively is inconsistent and unsatisfactory.

147. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are sufficiently aware of the key facts and symbols of most of the major faiths. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, write some very good descriptions of the Islamic faith, and also consider the personal application of Christian values. The curriculum is heavily dominated by the teaching of Christianity, particularly for the younger children in Years 1 and 2, and there is little opportunity for pupils to make useful comparisons with other faiths as they move through the school. The richness and diversity of different faiths is not exploited fully by, for example, opportunities for pupils to meet visiting speakers from other faiths, or to visit various places of worship.

148. Assemblies, which are mainly Christian, contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual learning. All pupils participate well in hymns and prayers, and are generally keen to answer questions about the stories they hear. Many demonstrate a thoughtful approach to the issues raised, such as sharing and caring.

149. At present, there is no procedure to identify key learning objectives for pupils as they progress through the school. The co-ordinator plans to introduce a system to address this.