

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. ELIZABETH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Litherland, Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104932

Headteacher: Mrs K. Sullivan

Reporting inspector: Mrs O.M.Cooper
10859

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 June 2002

Inspection number: 244812

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Webster Street Litherland Liverpool
Postcode:	L21 8JH
Telephone number:	0151 922 5752
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Father B. McAllister
Date of previous inspection:	Infant School 14 March 1997 Junior School 3 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10859	Mrs O. Cooper	Registered inspector	English Music Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9928	Mr A. Dobson	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?
20270	Mrs J. Tracey	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	
23081	Mrs C. Waine	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage	
17907	Mr M. Bowers	Team inspector	History Geography Physical education Special educational needs	

15109	Mr T. Comer	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large primary school was established in September 2001 following the amalgamation of St Elizabeth's RC Infant and Junior Schools. The school serves the surrounding, relatively deprived area of Litherland and in particular the Parish of St Elizabeth's. It is a voluntary aided school catering for the equivalent of 435 full-time pupils; 232 girls and 203 boys. The pupils are predominantly of white, British heritage and of the very small number from African and Caribbean heritage none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs are above the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties. The attainment of pupils on entry to the nursery is well below average for their age, particularly in language and social skills. The school receives funding from the European Growth Fund, which is used efficiently to provide courses for parents and other people in the local community. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The amalgamation has gone smoothly and the school is providing a sound education for its pupils. There are some significant strengths, but with other areas requiring improvement, most of which the school has already identified. Overall standards are currently below average by the time pupils transfer to high school and partly reflect the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school received an achievement award earlier this year for the improvement in standards. Since the amalgamation the school has been well led and managed and the headteacher is providing clear educational direction in order to raise standards further. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory because the teaching overall is sound, the pupils are happy, well cared for and have very good attitudes towards their work. The school has maintained the very good partnership with the parents and is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art and design, physical education and music are above those expected by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 as the teaching is good overall.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational direction, concentrating on raising standards.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work and behave well.
- The school looks after its pupils well, reflecting the Catholic ethos.
- The school works in very close partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards by the end of Year 6, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 to match that found elsewhere.
- The procedures and deployment of staff who support pupils with special educational needs, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The number of adults working in the nursery.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School has not been inspected previously. However, the separate Infant and Junior schools were last inspected in March and November 1997 respectively and judgements about overall improvement can be made. Since that time good improvement has been made in raising standards in the Infant school and satisfactory improvement in the Junior school, where the former headteacher was absent due to illness for significant periods of time. The action plans to remedy the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection reports were largely successful, the only significant issue not overcome is the library provision in the

juniors, although it is hoped the building project to link the two buildings will include space for a library. Overall teaching has improved in the infant classes and has been maintained in junior classes.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	C	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	D	B	
Science	C	C	D	B	

By the end of the Foundation Stage (end of the year in reception classes) overall attainment is below average. In language and number a significant number of children are unlikely to reach the expected level for their age despite their good progress and achievement and standards are below average. In their knowledge of the world, personal, social, creative and physical development the large majority are on course to reach the expected level for their age and standards are average.

The Infant school's 2001 results of national tests at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in reading, were well above in writing and were average in mathematics as these pupils achieved very well. These results compared very favourably with similar schools, being well above the average in reading, writing and mathematics and in writing were in the top five per cent. Teachers' assessments showed standards in science were above the national average. The results have shown a notable improvement in the last two years. Current standards of work among Year 2 pupils are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The current Year 2 has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than usual and fewer higher attaining pupils, which lowers their overall attainment. Pupils continue to achieve well to raise their levels of attainment from those on entry to the nursery. In art and design and physical education standards rise above average by the end of Year 2. In all other subjects standards are average, except for design and technology where they are below those expected by the age of seven.

The Junior school's 2001 results of national tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but were still above the average when compared with similar schools. Current standards of work among Year 6 pupils are below average in English and mathematics, but are broadly average in science. This represents satisfactory achievement. These pupils have not had the benefit of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies throughout their time in the school or the assessment procedures, which are now identifying where pupils have made insufficient progress and need a boost to their performance. Standards in music, art and design and physical education are above average and in all other subjects inspected, standards are average with the exception of design and technology and information and communication technology where they are below average.

The trend in improvement between 1997 and 2001 has been broadly in line with the national trend. The Junior school did not achieve the challenging targets set in English and mathematics in 2001. The 2002 targets for Year 6 pupils are challenging and unlikely to be met in English, but are likely to be achieved in mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy to come to school and eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of	Good. In lessons, at play and in the dining hall behaviour is good. No bullying

classrooms	was seen and very little reported. No incidents of racism have been reported. There have been no exclusions for unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Levels of respect are high and there is a strong sense of community.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching of English and mathematics is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects in Years 3 to 6. The overall strengths in the teaching are in the management of pupils and in the use of homework to consolidate pupils' learning at home. The weaknesses in satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching are in the leisurely pace, the inconsistency in marking and in the sharing of specific learning objectives so pupils know what they are expected to learn. The teaching meets the learning needs of the large majority of pupils and enables them to acquire knowledge and develop skills at a satisfactory pace in most lessons. Pupils' interest and concentration are key factors in their learning. However, a few higher attaining pupils could make more progress if they were sufficiently challenged in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive insufficient support in lessons, for example in art and design and geography to enable them to make as much progress as they could.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and the provision includes all required elements. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the provision. However, there is inequality in the provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 which leads to unsatisfactory provision in these year groups.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Pupils receive good support in mathematics. However, the withdrawal of pupils for whole literacy lessons, and for some other lessons, in Years 3 to 6 is not socially inclusive and in this aspect the provision is unsatisfactory. Some pupils' targets are not specific enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is very good and for moral and social development is good. Christian values are central to the school and there are good opportunities to develop personal and social skills. Pupils are effectively taught right from wrong and have very good opportunities to learn about different cultures and traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is due regard for pupils' health and safety. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good, with those for assessing pupils' attainment and progress being satisfactory.

The school has very effective partnership with its parents, which benefits the pupils and their learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is providing clear educational direction for the work of the school and is well supported by the senior management team. The management roles of curriculum co-ordinators have developed this year, but further development is required so they can make a more effective contribution to raising the quality of teaching and standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. The new governing body has only just become fully established, with an effective committee structure to enable them to carry out their work efficiently. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is beginning to monitor its effectiveness through analysing data about the progress of individual pupils and providing support for those falling behind, but acknowledges there is further work to be done.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory. Reserves are too high, although much is earmarked for improving the accommodation. The funding for pupils with special educational needs is not used in the best interests of all these pupils. Support staff deployment is uneven; it is too generous in the juniors and insufficient in the infants.

There are sufficient staff, both teaching and support teaching. The resources for learning are adequate, except for the range and quantity of library books and the number of up to date computers in the junior classes. The accommodation is cramped in some classrooms and overall is unsatisfactory. The governing body is only just getting established and is applying the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children and they make good progress • The way their children become responsible and grow in confidence. • The good quality of the teaching. • The approachability of staff. • The school is well led and managed. • The way the school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents are not happy with the amount of homework. • A few parents feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors agree completely with parents' positive views on the approachability of staff; the way the school is led and managed; the way the children become mature and responsible and the partnership between home and school. The quality of the teaching, the progress the children make and the teachers' expectations of the children are not consistent throughout the school. They are better in infant classes than in the juniors. Inspectors do not agree with the parents who have concerns. The provision of homework is good and the range of school clubs is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for children of their age, particularly in their language and social skills. There are few higher attaining children in most years and this lowers the overall attainment level. The children make good progress and achieve well, including those with special educational needs, because of the wide range of learning experiences and opportunities provided and the overall good teaching. Most children are on course to reach the level expected for their age by the end of their year in a reception class, in their knowledge of the world, their personal, social, physical and creative skills. In language and number their skills remain below average for their age despite the good progress and achievement.

2. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in the Infant school, standards of attainment were above the national average in reading, well above average in writing and broadly average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools the results were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and in writing were in the top five per cent of schools because of the well above average proportion who exceeded the expected level for their age. Teachers' assessments showed pupils' attainment in science was above average overall, with an above average proportion of pupils reaching the level above that expected for their age. These pupils achieved very well over time in the school. Test results at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated since the previous inspection, but improved overall in 2000 and again in writing in 2001. Taken overall standards have been above the national average over the last three years. The Infant school received an achievement award in 2000 in recognition of the improvement made, with the primary school receiving an achievement award in 2001. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, which was very similar to the national picture.

3. Current standards of work amongst Year 2 pupils are average in reading, writing and mathematics and reflect a different range of ability from the previous year group. The current Year 2 contains a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs relating to literacy and fewer higher attaining pupils which lowers the overall attainment. Standards in reading are slightly below those achieved in 2001, both for the expected level and the higher level. In writing the proportion of pupils reaching both the expected and the higher level has declined noticeably, although the proportion reaching the expected level in spelling has improved. Nevertheless, these pupils have achieved well to reach these levels from their well below average attainment on entry. The good teaching of basic skills and the relationships between staff and pupils encourage the children to put every effort into their work in order to succeed.

4. In comparison with all schools nationally the results of 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in the Junior school were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, these results compared favourably with those of similar schools and were above the average in all three subjects. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and who did not reach the expected level by the end of Year 6 was partly the reason for the lower standards. However, the comparison of test results at age seven and eleven for these pupils showed some underachievement among higher attaining pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics. The results at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated slightly from year to year and were broadly average overall in two of the last four years and were below the national average in the other two years. Taken overall, the trend in improvement in standards over the last five years was broadly in line with the national trend.

5. Current standards of work amongst Year 6 pupils are below average in English and mathematics and are average in science and overall achievement is satisfactory. There has been some underachievement amongst pupils in this year group when they were in Years 3 and 4, particularly in writing, spelling and mathematics. These pupils have not had the benefit of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for the whole of their time in school. The Junior school identified this shortcoming in pupils' progress and attainment through implementing tracking procedures and put in place a programme to boost the performance of those who were underachieving. This has had some success, but has not been sufficient to recover all the lost ground, particularly in English. Most of these pupils are average attaining pupils who only just reached the expected level at the age of seven and who need consistently good teaching to reach the level expected nationally by the end of Year 6. There is less evidence of underachievement among higher attaining pupils than at the time of the previous inspection, with the proportions working at the higher level in mathematics being slightly higher than in 2001. However, in a few lessons, they are still insufficiently challenged.

6. The challenging targets set in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6, were not achieved in 2001. The targets for 2002 are very challenging in English, and unlikely to be met, especially as a small, but significant, number of higher attaining pupils from this year group have left the school. In mathematics, the pupils are on course to achieve the challenging target.

7. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Many of these pupils have poor pencil control or have difficulty in settling to their work. The targets in their individual education plans are, in some cases, too general and do not direct the teacher to specific learning objectives. In Years 3 to 6, pupils with special educational needs make better progress in mathematics than in English. This is because, in English, pupils are sometimes expected to complete the same work as the classmates in their group, who are designated as below average. This work is not always appropriate and consequently they do not make the progress they should. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make the same rate of progress as their peers. Talented musicians are well catered for and make good progress.

8. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are continuing to have a positive influence on standards. Pupils in all classes, except the nursery, have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, both in literacy hours and in other subjects and these develop well. However, the range of vocabulary is still limited and affects the development of writing skills. Satisfactory emphasis is placed on developing subject specific language, but this is better in some classes than others. Reading skills are taught both in literacy lessons and at other times and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in developing strategies to attempt unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, average and higher attaining pupils read information books to support their learning in other subjects. Reading skills continue to develop satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6, but lower attaining pupils often struggle to understand the author's intentions. Writing skills develop well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6, where teachers make more use of worksheets in other subjects and time is wasted colouring them in. There is insufficient emphasis on pupils spelling correctly words they have already learned and too much time spent copying instead of recording their work independently. There is a consistent approach to teaching handwriting, but some pupils are allowed to revert to printing after being taught how to join letters together and this leads to some untidy presentation of their work. Numeracy skills develop well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. During introductory sessions in lessons they improve their skills in mental recall of number facts and develop strategies to help them carry out mental calculations. They gain a satisfactory understanding of shapes and measures and of handling data. Insufficient use is made of number skills in other subjects such as design and technology and science.

9. In other subjects, current standards of work in Year 2 are above average in art and design and physical education. In history, geography, music and information and communication technology (ICT) standards are average. Standards in design and technology are below average for the pupils' ages. In Year 6, current standards of work are above average in art and design, music and physical education, are average in history and geography but fall below average in design and technology and ICT. Insufficient time has been given to teaching the skills in design and technology. In ICT, the computer suite for Years 3 to 6 has only been in use for a short period of time and the training made available for all teachers is still being undertaken. Consequently there is some lack of knowledge and confidence in teaching all aspects of the subject. The Year 6 pupils have not had the benefit of the current resources throughout their time in the school and this has affected their rate of progress and attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils have very positive attitudes to school and to learning, their behaviour is good and they form very good relationships with other children and staff in the school. These judgements are similar to those reported in the previous inspections apart from the pupils' attitudes, which have improved.

11. Pupils enjoy school life. They are proud to be at St Elizabeth's, which they consider to be a good school. In lessons they settle down quickly and are keen to learn although a few pupils, particularly in Years 4 and 6, require skilful teaching to motivate them effectively. The vast majority of pupils are very enthusiastic learners who participate fully in lessons and work hard when given a task to do. They try to do their best. Pupils' enthusiasm is greatest when the teaching is very good, for instance in a Year 2 mathematics lesson where pupils were learning about telling the time. The level of involvement by the pupils was very high, hands were shooting up for every question, challenging questions were being tackled eagerly and by the end of the lesson, most pupils could successfully convert times correctly between digital and conventional clocks. They had had an enjoyable lesson, and they had been learning very effectively.

12. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 enjoy their group tasks; they wait for their turn when involved in practical games activities. When in class they confidently take part in class discussions and are keen to answer questions. Many pupils attempt difficult tasks and are prepared to ask for help and support when needed. In Years 3 to 6, those pupils who receive opportunities to work individually or in pairs with their teacher show increasing confidence in answering questions and persevere to complete their tasks.

13. Behaviour is good overall and at times very good; a situation recognised very strongly by parents. The pupils know the rules well and think they are fair. The collection of rewards for good behaviour is taken seriously throughout the school. Lessons are orderly with an atmosphere conducive to learning. A few pupils regularly challenge the system but the teachers know these pupils well and the school's discipline procedures are usually effective. Behaviour in assemblies is very good; pupils are attentive, participate well, particularly when singing and are respectful during prayers. Dining in both dining rooms is a civilised occasion with noise levels that allow conversation. Table manners are generally good. The playgrounds have a very friendly atmosphere and no signs of oppressive behaviour were apparent during the inspection. Bullying in school is rare and not a concern amongst pupils. There is no evidence of racism. There have been no exclusions in recent times.

14. Relationships are very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and the adults in the school. Pupils are friendly, polite and very chatty although their speaking skills are not always well-developed for their age. They make visitors very welcome. In lessons pupils collaborate very well and are happy to listen to each other's views and ideas.

15. Pupils' personal qualities develop well during their time at school. They take responsibilities seriously, for instance looking after the school environment. Older pupils enthusiastically use the opportunities to help younger ones – ranging from the 'special friends' system between children in reception and nursery, and the 'faith friends' between pupils in Year 5 and Year 2. However opportunities to help in the running of the school are limited to mainly monitor type duties and could be extended. Pupils work very well in large groups. This was apparent in the two class assemblies observed during the inspection when the pupils clearly loved performing and did so in a very sensible manner. Pupils throughout the school take homework seriously. Participation in school clubs is good. The development of independent learning skills is inhibited by the lack of opportunities for pupils to investigate and research subjects by themselves.

16. The pupils' very positive attitudes to school life and their good behaviour are having a significant impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and consequently on their learning.

17. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is satisfactory. Registration is prompt and efficient allowing a positive start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but is better in some year groups than others. The teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good and is one of the key factors in raising pupils' attainment from the well below average standards found on entry to the nursery. In virtually all the lessons seen throughout the school the teaching was satisfactory or better. Fifty-seven per cent of lessons were good, including five per cent that were very good. The proportion of very good lessons in both schools has not improved since the previous inspections and this is one area where the school needs to concentrate its efforts to improve teaching in order to raise standards further. On amalgamation, the headteacher monitored the planning of lessons to ensure consistency in detail and this has been effective in maintaining and improving the overall teaching, with only one unsatisfactory lesson seen. Some teachers are not making efficient use of computers for their lesson planning, which would enable them to amend them more easily when necessary.

19. In the Foundation Stage the teaching is better in the reception classes than in the nursery. This is because the child/adult ratio is higher than in most nursery classes and affects the amount of time adults can spend talking to the children. This interaction is particularly important, as the school has identified the children's speaking skills to be poor on entry. In the reception classes the teaching is good in all areas of learning, except for physical development where it is satisfactory. In both the nursery and reception classes the activities are well planned and prepared and are interesting and enjoyable for the children. In the reception classes the activities link well to the early National Curriculum levels and prepare the children well for literacy hours and numeracy lessons. The staff in the Foundation Stage work well together as a team and this is to the benefit of the children.

20. The skills of literacy are taught well in Years 1 and 2, both in literacy hours and in other subjects where teachers often expect pupils to record their work independently. This gives pupils the opportunity to show how much they know or have learned so that their teachers can plan the next stage in learning. The teachers are confident in teaching phonics and emphasise spelling patterns and, once learned, pupils are encouraged to spell words correctly. The additional support for teaching writing skills in Year 2 and the additional provision to help pupils in Year 1 in need of a boost to their performance have been beneficial as the teaching is of good quality, with high expectations which pupils rise to. In Year 3 the teaching in literacy hours is good, but this is not as evident in other subjects where worksheets are used which restrict the amount pupils can write. The teaching in Year 4 is

mostly satisfactory and does not always provide sufficient challenge for pupils, particularly the higher attainers. For example, pupils were given sentences with missing words to complete. The missing words were given on the page. Having found the missing words the pupils then copied the sentences into their books, which required little effort on their part. The teaching in Years 3 and 4 allows the good progress made previously to slow down. The pace of learning improves slightly in Years 5 and 6 where there is less emphasis on worksheets, although there are still examples of copied writing in, for example, science in Year 6. Increased support using other national strategies has been implemented well to support pupils in Year 5 and their pace of learning increased as a result.

21. Numeracy skills are similarly taught well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily overall but are insufficiently promoted in other subjects such as design and technology, science and history. There are some good brisk introductory sessions in lessons, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 3, but this is not yet consistent throughout. In both literacy and numeracy lessons, the introductions are usually followed by purposeful direct teaching. The time towards the end of lessons is often used to consolidate or reinforce what has been learned and for teachers to assess if sufficient progress has been made, but this is not consistent throughout the classes. Occasionally activities are not planned at different levels of complexity and do not match pupils' learning needs as closely as they should. This was evident in a numeracy lesson in Year 4 and led to unsatisfactory teaching.

22. In other subjects there is a similar pattern in the teaching throughout the year groups. In science teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of music overall is good because many lessons are led by subject specialists. There was an example of excellent teaching in hymn practice with pupils from Years 3 to 6. In physical education and art and design the overall teaching is good. In ICT and history, teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teaching of geography is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6. No judgement could be made on teaching design and technology in Years 1 and 2 as no lessons took place and insufficient evidence was available. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching of design and technology is satisfactory overall, but has weaknesses in Year 6.

23. The key strengths of the teaching in Years 1 to 6 are in the management of pupils and the use of homework. Teachers rarely have to speak to pupils about their behaviour in lessons, or their attitudes to work, as relationships are very good. The policy for setting homework is very clear and there are expectations that pupils will complete it and return it on time. Teachers ensure homework is marked and returned so that pupils and parents know how well they have done. In Years 1 and 2 there are further strengths in teachers' expectations of pupils and in the deployment of teaching assistants to ensure maximum benefit for the pupils. This is a weakness in a few lessons in Years 3 to 6 where teaching assistants do not support pupils during lesson introductions. In satisfactory lessons in Years 3 to 6 there are weaknesses in teachers' expectations of all pupils, in learning objectives which are not specific enough and in the leisurely pace at which some lessons are conducted. Marking of pupils' work varies notably between the classes with some very good practice, but some which tells pupils little about how well they have done or what they need to do in order to improve.

24. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2 these pupils often begin literacy and numeracy lessons alongside their classmates. Teachers frame their questions to ensure they are fully included. In this way these pupils are included in the class organisation and are the responsibility of the class teacher. During group activities they remain in the classroom and are engaged in learning activities suitable to their needs.

25. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching of mathematics to pupils with special educational needs is good. This is because pupils are grouped according to their previous learning and these pupils work with the lower

attaining group where practical activities are often planned. Teachers have good levels of expertise in the subject and the pupils are challenged to think about mathematical concepts through skilful questioning. In English, the teaching of these pupils is satisfactory. Whilst lessons are often planned well, the range of the targets on the pupils' education plans are sometimes too general for the teacher to discriminate between the specific needs of each child. Pupils are usually withdrawn from their classes for the whole of literacy lessons and they do not have the opportunity to learn from listening to the responses of their classmates or increasing their self-esteem by being able to answer questions or enter into whole class discussions. Because some of the literacy and numeracy lessons take place when the classes are involved in other lessons, these pupils are left to work independently. In Year 5, for example, a group worked with a teaching assistant on geography whilst the remainder of the class had a literacy lesson. The involvement from the class teacher was minimal. In Year 6, a group worked on art with no support from their class teacher. This is not giving these pupils equal opportunities to learn and make progress as well as they could in subjects other than English and mathematics.

26. The teaching meets the learning needs of the large majority pupils and enables them to make at least satisfactory progress over time in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding, although the pace of learning varies between and within the year groups. The development of pupils' ICT, research and independent learning skills in Years 3 to 6 is hindered by the lack of a library and modern computers in classrooms. In the juniors, the accommodation affects pupils' learning when they are distracted by noise intrusion from other classes and people using the corridors.

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

27. The curriculum meets legal requirements for the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, and sex education as prescribed by the governors' policy. At the time of the previous inspection, there was no such policy for sex education although it had been taught for a number of years as part of the science and religious education curriculum for Year 6.

28. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has been reviewed to take account of recent national guidelines. With better staffing in the nursery, this provision could be better still.

29. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. The time given for teaching Years 1 and 2 is more than the minimum recommended by the Secretary of State but is marginally less than the recommendation for Years 3 to 6. Daily literacy and numeracy lessons for all pupils in Years 1 to 6, in line with the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, enable the pupils to concentrate appropriately on learning basic skills. Although three quarters of the teaching time is taken up by English, mathematics, science, physical education and religious education, it is to the teachers' credit that they manage to ensure that pupils have a satisfactory experience of the other National Curriculum subjects. The only exception is in design and technology where pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills in designing and making.

30. Although the school aims to provide equally for all of its pupils there is an important inequality in the provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive support within mainstream lessons in some subjects. However, they are withdrawn from lessons for extra help with numeracy and literacy and, for example, in subjects, such as art and design, and are expected to catch up in these subjects without the benefit of proper teaching, when the rest of the class is doing English and mathematics. For this reason, the overall quality of the curriculum for Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory.

31. The school does not formally identify its gifted or talented pupils although some talented footballers attend Everton and Liverpool AFC academies. A few gifted pupils attend extension activities in mathematics at the local RC high school on Mondays and a summer school is also provided. Potentially talented musicians join in leading singing activities in lessons.

32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, but some unsatisfactory features for those pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are provided with a full range of worthwhile opportunities for learning which meet their interests, aptitudes and specific learning needs. Individual education plans are satisfactory, although short-term targets in basic literacy and numeracy are too general for small steps in progress to be measured effectively. Behavioural targets are included, or individual behaviour programmes implemented for pupils in Years 3 to 6 where necessary. Pupils are taught alongside their classmates up to Year 2, but in Years 3 to 6 they are withdrawn for the whole of literacy and numeracy lessons. Because of the over emphasis on withdrawal, and the fact that these pupils sometimes have art or geography lessons when the rest of their class are doing literacy, the provision is not socially inclusive and in this aspect is unsatisfactory. The new governing body is not yet monitoring the provision for pupils with special educational needs effectively, although there is an appointed governor and relevant training planned in the near future.

33. The provision for out-of-school activities is very good and includes a wide range of sport, scientific, environmental, musical, creative art and leisure activities. Football, cricket and netball regularly take place after school and the school benefits from the Top Sport programme that helps to provide training, coaching and resources. Many pupils join clubs, which range from gymnastics and judo to the school's choir and guitar group. The school has a long tradition of musical excellence and the choir has been selected to represent the Borough of Sefton at the opening ceremonies of the forthcoming Commonwealth Games.

34. Very effective links with the local secondary school enhance the curriculum, for example, in the teaching of mathematics and science. Joint musical productions provide further effective links. Pupils also benefit from constructive links with the parishes and the wider community.

35. The provision for pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall. Christian principles are at the heart of the school's teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for sex education and for health education, which includes a sensitive approach to drug awareness and the dangers of smoking and alcohol.

36. The provision for their spiritual development is very good. All pupils take part in daily acts of collective worship with reverence, for example, in morning assemblies and in prayers at the end of the day. Assemblies are spiritually uplifting occasions which encourage pupils to consider their own values and to be aware of the need to be good citizens. In assemblies and lessons there are times for quiet reflection and thought on themselves and others. Singing makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' spirituality. Pupils have many good opportunities to understand human feelings and emotions, for example about environmental issues. The school ethos is particularly strong and encourages pupils to grow and flourish.

37. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Teachers set high standards and encourage and reward good behaviour. Pupils are effectively taught right from wrong and respect for others. Pupils are expected to be honest and well mannered and to consider those less fortunate than themselves. For example, pupils have supported the homeless in Liverpool through the 'Good Shepherd' charity, local elderly residents when distributing the Harvest produce and children world

wide by filling shoe boxes with presents at Christmas. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to collaborate, to develop good relationships and for boys and girls to work together. Years 1 and 2 pupils develop their social skills well; they act as monitors and their social development also benefits from educational visits out of school. Year 5 pupils accompany their Year 2 'Faith Friends' at their first celebration of the Eucharist and these friendships often last into secondary school.

38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils are taught a strong sense of local identity and culture by exploiting the proximity of the school to the City of Liverpool. They are taught to appreciate their rich cultural heritage and traditions through lessons, particularly in science, art and music. For example, in art, pupils are taught to appreciate the work of great artists. Pupils are taught to understand the ethnic, faith and cultural diversity of modern Britain. The school has developed partnerships with outside agencies, such as the Comenius Project, through which a Turkish/French student is spending a year in the school and this is enhancing the provision for cultural development through first hand experiences of other cultures and beliefs. In addition, the school's participation in the Teachers' International Professional Development project led to exchange visits with teachers from Turkey, adding a further dimension to the provision for pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school takes great care to look after its pupils. This is a similar judgement to the previous inspections. The school achieves the first aim of its Mission Statement - 'to develop the true potential of every child by providing an atmosphere of welcome within a safe happy learning environment'. St Elizabeth's is a friendly community reflecting very well the Catholic ethos. Pupils are cared for well and treated with respect. They are listened to sympathetically when they have concerns. Pupils get on very well with their teachers whom they look upon as friends they can trust. Supervision is good at all times and the school is a safe and secure environment.

40. Procedures for child protection are effective. Two members of staff are fully trained and all staff are familiar with current good practice. The school has effective relationships with the outside agencies. Health and safety are treated seriously. The premises are regularly inspected by the headteacher and caretaker and any concerns are effectively followed up. First aid cover is very good. Equipment is regularly checked for safety. Formal risk assessments are just getting established under the new governing body.

41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Registers are well kept and regularly monitored. Detailed records are kept of all pupils who are late, even by a few minutes. The school does not have a procedure of automatically contacting parents on the first day of any unexplained absence, which is a weakness, although they are contacted if there is a concern.

42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Rules are clear and well understood by the pupils and applied consistently by the teachers. Good behaviour is positively recognised by rewards and followed up with awards in assemblies. All serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour are recorded and parents are informed. Bullying is not tolerated and the subject is regularly aired in assemblies and class discussions. Pupils express confidence in the staff sorting out any problems that occur in school, however a few pupils have concerns about bullying out of school. Such incidents reported to teachers have been followed up. There have been no racial incidents at the school.

43. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are good; they include informal assessments on entry to the nursery and formal assessments on entry to the reception year. Information gained is used to group pupils and plan work to closely meet their needs. Staff assess children from day-to-day and

record their progress towards the national targets set for the end of the reception year each term, so that they know just how well children are progressing throughout the two year groups.

44. There is a sound range of assessment procedures in Years 1 to 6, in English and mathematics, which provide the school with appropriate information to check that pupils are making suitable progress from year to year. As this is a recently amalgamated school, this is only just beginning to provide an overall picture of progress. The information gained is being used to highlight groups and individual pupils who need extra support or who are potentially higher attainers. Whilst this is being successful in raising standards for the lower attaining pupils, it is not yet having full impact amongst the higher attainers, resulting in some underachievement amongst this group. In mathematics, the results of annual assessments are analysed thoroughly to highlight areas of the curriculum that need improvement and to set targets for each year group. Although teachers undertake frequent assessments of their pupils, there is no consistent approach to recording these, throughout the whole school, to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress during the year or to set group or individual targets.

45. The school analyses its results in national tests, in English, mathematics and science, to compare its performance against similar schools and measure the progress that pupils have made. This information is collated well by the assessment co-ordinator, but is not being used consistently by teachers to target those pupils in their classes needing a boost to their performance and to record frequently the progress being made. Assessment procedures in other subjects are not fully in place as the school has rightly concentrated on establishing those for English and mathematics. However, subject co-ordinators have action plans to introduce whole school systems of assessment. The on-going assessment of pupils' work through marking is inconsistent and does not always inform pupils of what they have done well or where they need to improve.

46. There are no specific criteria to guide teachers in considering whether a pupil has a special need, although their judgements are usually accurate. The special educational needs register has incomplete data for a few pupils making it difficult to identify the rate of progress the pupil is making. The targets in individual education plans are not specific enough to aid teachers in assessing the rate of progress. A written evaluation of each pupil's progress towards a target by the end of the allotted time is completed formally in Years 3 to 6, but not in Years 1 and 2. The scrutiny of work in Years 3 to 6 identified a small, but significant, number of pupils who have achieved the most recent targets, but a further target has not been set. There are formal strategies recorded to support pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, with daily report books so pupils know the extent of their progress.

47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are good. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that when a pupil moves from one year to the next, all necessary information is exchanged between teachers. A second formal discussion between teachers in the middle of the Autumn term makes sure that nothing has been missed. The quality of the personal sections in the pupils' reports is good. The school keeps a detailed record of achievement for each pupil and parents are encouraged to contribute to these documents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents have a very good opinion of the school and are very supportive. They hold the headteacher in high regard and find her and the rest of the staff very approachable. They consider that the school has improved since the amalgamation and feel that the school's good local reputation is fully justified. These views are based on a questionnaire that almost half of all parents responded to,

the pre-inspection meeting for parents and conversations with parents during the inspection. Parents' concerns about arrangements for setting homework and the range of activities provided outside of lessons are not supported by inspection evidence.

49. Parents are kept well informed on the school. The prospectus is easy to read and very informative. It gives a good overview of what is taught and explains clearly the school's policy towards behaviour. Regular newsletters ensure that parents know what is going on in the school. The school has regular sessions on how parents can help in their child's learning. There are termly meetings between teachers and parents, which are well attended and taken very seriously by the school. All parents who miss these meetings are contacted to arrange a suitable alternative date. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that for families who have split up, both parents are kept fully informed on their child's progress.

50. Pupils' reports are of good quality, with progress clearly stated and with a good outline of what has been covered in all the subjects. The school has plans to improve the quality of the targets, which on the most recent reports were often too general to be useful to parents. Apart from at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, reports do not give parents any indication of how well their child is doing by national standards and yet with the improved assessment in the school, this information is now available.

51. There are some inconsistencies in the school's involvement with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are invited to regular meetings where the school's policy is explained and parents are invited to termly meetings to discuss their child's progress. However, parents of infant pupils do not sign their child's individual education plan to show they have discussed it, whereas parents of junior pupils do. In some cases this is because they do not attend review meetings.

52. The school works very hard at involving parents both in their children's learning and in the life of the school. There is an easy relationship between parents and staff based on a very welcoming atmosphere. Parents are a familiar sight in the school; helping in the classroom, visiting assemblies and chatting to staff before and after school. The headteacher takes a high profile. Many courses are arranged to help parents understand how subjects are taught, such as numeracy and literacy and these are generally well attended. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's homework by signing homework diaries. The Parents and Friends' Association works very effectively, but in an informal way. Many events are arranged during the course of a year, which are highly successful, particularly as regards fund raising. The school very sensibly allows the parents to decide how to spend any money raised.

53. The inspectors judge that the school has a very effective partnership with parents and that this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Where comparisons are possible, the effectiveness of the partnership has improved since the previous inspections.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher provides good leadership and clear direction for the work of the school and enjoys the confidence of governors, staff and parents. She is well supported by the deputy headteachers and other senior management team members who lead major aspects of the school. The smooth amalgamation of the two schools was due in no small way to the programme of action in the nine months leading up to September 2001. Arrangements ensured all staff were kept fully informed, had a say in the process and this enabled the primary school to get off to a good start. A clear vision, mission statement and aims for the new school were soon agreed and these underpin its daily life and work and support the Catholic ethos. The allocation of staff to posts in the new school was managed well and has been a key factor in the way the staff are working together for the benefit of the pupils

and standards in the school. The headteacher is well aware of areas requiring further improvement, such as ICT and the organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs. The leadership and management of the school have a positive impact on pupils' attainment.

55. The governing body was only established in January of this year and has only recently filled all vacancies. Most governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as they were governors previously. They have used their strengths when forming committees and know how they intend to monitor rigorously the work of the school. The interim governing body also played its part in the successful amalgamation of the two schools when appointing staff to key posts. The governors are now in a strong position to hold the school to account for its standards. A good relationship between the governors, staff and parents has already been established. The governors are meeting their statutory responsibilities in full and have an appropriate policy for racial equality.

56. The headteacher had already started to extend the roles and responsibilities of curriculum co-ordinators in the Infant school to increase their influence over the development of their subjects, prior to amalgamation. Since the amalgamation was announced, co-ordinators have been increasing their knowledge of the whole primary age range. They have responsibility for producing an action plan for improvement based on discussions with other staff, for organising in-service training and for purchasing resources. Appropriate job descriptions have been negotiated and implemented reflecting these responsibilities. The headteacher is aware the responsibilities need to be extended further to include monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the age ranges if co-ordinators are to play an effective part in school self-evaluation and review procedures. However, there is a need for in-service training in this aspect first. Consequently, curriculum co-ordinators are not yet playing as effective a role as they could be in raising standards further. The assessment co-ordinator is playing a vital role in analysing data from national tests to pinpoint weaknesses in pupils' performance and to judge progress towards the school's targets in English and mathematics. This has led to the identification of pupils requiring a boost to their performance. Whilst most co-ordinators are leading the development of their subjects satisfactorily with a few doing a good job, there is further work to be done in developing their roles.

57. The school's documentation complies with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The staffing provision is good, with teaching assistants supporting teachers throughout the school. However, the move towards implementing an inclusive philosophy is more advanced in infant classes than in the juniors. This is because the education of these pupils is centred on classroom teaching in the infant classes as opposed to withdrawal groups in the juniors and pupils not having the opportunity to learn from the contributions of their classmates. The school is progressing satisfactorily towards the full implementation of the new Code of Practice, but still has work to do. The school has agreed a common format for education plans which is to be implemented from the beginning of the next school year. It has considered, but not yet adopted the use of group education plans for pupils with similar educational needs to make the procedures more manageable. Class teachers do not have responsibility for compiling the education plans in Years 3 to 6 and, as a result, do not always plan tasks closely matched to pupils' specific needs in other subjects.

58. Performance management procedures have been implemented fully and are helping to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The programme for other lesson observations has been scaled down this year whilst the school becomes fully amalgamated. Nevertheless the headteacher, deputy headteachers and curriculum co-ordinators have monitored planning to ensure consistency in approach and detail and this has maintained the quality of teaching. Planning is satisfactory and is supporting the teaching, although it is better in some classes than others. Appropriate measures have been taken to overcome the weaknesses in teaching music in Years 1 and 2 and have been successful. The quality of teaching could, however, be improved, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and in the overall proportion of

very good lessons, with a more rigorous programme for monitoring involving curriculum co-ordinators as well as senior managers.

59. The school improvement plan 2001-2003 is effectively based on a thorough review of the priorities contained in the 2000/01 plans for the separate schools. The early priorities after the Mission statement and aims were to improve pupils' writing skills throughout the school and there is evidence of some progress in this in most year groups. The improvement plan has all the required information and is clearly linked to the budget plan. However, the outcomes in terms of the impact on standards are not specific enough to help governors in monitoring the success of the action taken. The governors have worked hard to bring the two school budgets together but are not yet planning strategically for the longer-term development of the school. This is because they have not yet agreed on the extent of new building work to be carried out to link the two schools together. Initial plans included a library area but not in a central part of the building, which would be more accessible to all classes. The plan did not include a staffroom large enough to accommodate all staff members, which the school desperately needs. This uncertainty has led to a very large carry forward in the budget, which is unsatisfactory.

60. The school is currently accommodating two students training to be teachers. They feel they are well supported in developing their skills and knowledge and their college tutors and inspectors agree. Another strength in the leadership and management of the school is in the use of management information systems to aid the efficiency of the school. Information about pupils, finance, attendance and pupils' attainment is stored on computers for ease of updating. The day-to-day financial management of the budget is also good. Financial responsibilities have been clearly identified and procedures followed. The audit reports for the separate schools dated May 2000 showed only minor recommendations and these have been remedied. The allocation of responsibilities to administrative and clerical staff in the different buildings is effective, all know exactly what they have to do, carry out their roles unobtrusively and effectively, leaving the teachers to concentrate on teaching the pupils in their classes. The caretaker also plays an important part in the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis.

61. There are sufficient teachers and support staff, but their deployment is not as effective as it could be and is not leading to a fully inclusive school. There are insufficient adults deployed in the nursery. It is unacceptable for pupils, usually those with special educational needs, to be left to work on their own, for example, when doing art whilst the rest of the class have literacy lessons, or to be doing geography supported by a teaching assistant. Whilst this ensures pupils have their full entitlement to the curriculum, it does not provide the same level of support from teachers and leads to little progress in some instances. The withdrawal of pupils from literacy or numeracy for instrumental tuition and no arrangements for them to catch up the work missed is also unsatisfactory.

62. There are insufficient library books in Years 3 to 6, both in range and quantity and this inhibits the development of pupils' research, enquiry and independent learning skills. In addition the lack of modern computers in Year 4 to 6 classes has further impact. There is a good range and number of instruments for teaching music, of materials and tools for teaching design and technology and art and design and of apparatus for teaching physical education. The accommodation is inadequate for the primary school and its current number on roll and this is having a negative impact on the quality of teaching. There is noise intrusion in some classes because of the open plan design, which makes it harder for pupils to concentrate on their learning. There is an urgent need to join the two buildings by a link corridor with an obvious main entrance, office area and a staffroom large enough to accommodate all staff to complete the amalgamation process.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to improve the consistency in provision throughout the school and continue the drive to raise standards the headteacher supported by the governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards further, particularly in English and mathematics by:
 - placing more emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects;
 - developing pupils' range of vocabulary not only in English and mathematics but through other subjects as well;
 - developing pupils' research and enquiry skills in Years 3 to 6 through better use of the library and ICT;
 - making better use of assessment information to pinpoint where further improvement can be made;
 - displaying examples of good quality work in literacy and numeracy in all classes so pupils have a standard to aspire to.
 - providing more opportunities for practical work and for pupils to explain their working in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 (paragraphs 20, 21, 43, 45, 56, 78, 80, 82, 90, 94.)

- (2) Improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 to match that found elsewhere in the school and increase the proportion of very good teaching throughout all classes by:
 - implementing a more rigorous programme for monitoring teaching and pupils' learning by senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators;
 - ensuring all pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons;
 - planning specific learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and reviewed towards the end;
 - ensuring the marking policy is consistently applied throughout the school so pupils know what they have done well and where they can make further improvement.(paragraphs 20, 21, 22, 23,45,56, 85, 92, 99.)

- (3) Improve the procedures and deployment of teachers for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - implementing a more class based approach to teaching these pupils in Years 3 to 6;
 - considering the use of group education plans;
 - ensuring that pupils' progress is monitored regularly and effectively within the specified timespan;
 - ensuring class teachers write pupils' education plans with clear measurable targets and with support from the special educational needs co-ordinator;
 - regularly monitoring the school's provision for these pupils to ensure all documentation is kept up to date. (paragraphs 7, 24, 31, 32, 46, 51, 57, 83,104,110)

- (4) Improve the strategic use of resources to increase the adult/child ratio in the nursery to increase the level of supervision, encourage the development of speech and extend the range of the children's spoken vocabulary. (paragraphs 19, 28, 59, 65, 70)

In addition to the key issues above the governors should consider including the following minor issues in the action plan;

1. Improve the provision for outdoor learning for children in the reception classes. (paragraph 74)

2. Raise standards in design and technology by implementing fully and consistently the updated policy and scheme of work.(paragraph 106,107,108.)

3. Improve the provision for information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6 as funding becomes available.(paragraph 92, 100,113,120,123 129.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	39	31	1	0	0
Percentage	1	4	52	42	1	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	406
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	144

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	112

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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 Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	40	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	37	39	38
	Total	59	62	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (98)	98 (94)	97 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	23
	Girls	39	39	36
	Total	62	62	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	98 (92)	94 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	29	35	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	26
	Girls	27	23	34
	Total	46	43	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (73)	67 (76)	94 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	20	24
	Girls	29	24	34
	Total	50	44	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (56)	69 (69)	91 (83)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	345
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)	18.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8:1
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29:1
Total number of education support staff	1.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.6:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	2001/2
	£
Total income	1,077,774
Total expenditure	1,027,843
Expenditure per pupil	2330
Balance brought forward from previous year	180,171
Balance carried forward to next year	230,102

Financial information is based on combining the two school budgets.

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	468
Number of questionnaires returned	221

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	27	3	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	36	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	37	10	1	8
The teaching is good.	67	30	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	35	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	26	1	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	60	34	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	29	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	33	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	34	8	2	8

Other issues raised by parents

Sixteen letters were received from parents and most were very supportive of the school. No issues of concern were raised by a significant number of parents.

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

64. When children enter the nursery, in the term after their third birthday, their attainments are well below those usually found, overall, especially in their social and communication skills. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and quickly settle into school life. They build well on this good start in the reception classes and by the time they enter Year 1, most children are on course to attain the level expected for their age in all areas of learning. However, very few are likely to attain higher levels and a substantial minority, about a fifth, are unlikely to reach the expected levels in communication language and literacy or in mathematics. Overall, standards remain below average.

65. Strengths in the provision are in the good quality of teaching by the whole staff team, which results in good progress by the children; the good range of learning activities and the good new procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements. In addition the children's very good attitudes to their work, their behaviour and the effective partnership with parents have a positive influence on their progress and good achievement. Areas for development include the proportion of adults to children in the nursery, which is not high enough and opportunities for outdoor play for the children in the reception classes.

66. Since the inspection of the former infant school, satisfactory improvement has been made in introducing the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is carefully planned to ensure that lessons have clear learning targets and on-going activities, such as role-play, are varied and purposeful. Links between the nursery and reception classes are good and provide a secure environment that promotes confidence as children move between the age groups. Children experience a good range of interesting and enjoyable learning activities and teaching is good; consequently, children achieve well. Resources are good and are used well to stimulate the children and promote their interest in learning. Children with special educational needs are identified early and are taught by well-qualified and informed support staff in small groups for literacy and numeracy, so that they make good progress. No extra provision is made for higher attaining pupils but teachers know their children well and plan work appropriate to their needs.

67. Teaching is particularly good in the reception classes, where there are sufficient adults to ensure that children receive good support, not only through direct teaching, but also when they take part in structured activities of their own choice. Whilst direct teaching in the nursery is good, there are not enough adults to maximise opportunities to develop children's spoken vocabulary and extend their learning when engaged in activities they have chosen. As listening skills and spoken language are the school's main priorities for learning development in the Foundation Stage, this is a cause for concern. The shortage of adults also means that supervision of activities is very difficult, particularly when children have free access to the outdoor area, and staff are focusing on teaching particular groups of children. The quality of teamwork in all three classes is very good; it provides very good models of secure, happy and relaxed relationships with the children and promotes a good learning atmosphere. Staff manage children's behaviour very well, using praise and encouragement to raise confidence and self-esteem, so that children want to try hard to produce their best work. Teachers have recently introduced good systems for assessing children's achievements and checking that they are making appropriate progress from term to term. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.

68. The school has established very good working relationships with parents and several help in school on a regular basis; some go on to gain professional qualifications for working with children. There is a very good system for introducing children and parents to school and parents are encouraged to attend an effective and popular pre-school toddler group. Workshops and courses are provided to develop parents' understanding of school life and their children's learning. The strong relationships that exist between the school and parents help children settle into school with confidence. Parents are welcomed into school and feel they are part of the school family and this again supports children's confidence and security.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Teaching is very good. Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively. They are caring and supportive and seek constantly to promote children's confidence by praising their efforts and achievements. Staff set an excellent example of courtesy and consideration for others for children to follow, such as by listening with genuine interest to what children have to say. This leads to trusting relationships and helps children to understand that they must consider other people's feelings and points of view. The children have a sound awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong and that their actions affect other people. Children's behaviour is very good and they work together as friends, sharing equipment and waiting patiently for their turn in activities. Most demonstrate good levels of concentration and responsibility, for example they tidy away resources at the end of lessons. They develop their independence well, such as when nursery children register themselves on arriving and leaving the building by moving their picture to a classroom board and then back to their own coat hook at the end of the session. Children take care of their own physical needs competently, such as when they dress themselves independently after physical education lessons. Reception children learn to accept responsibility for caring for others through the 'Play Friends' scheme, when they link with a nursery child to help them gain confidence in moving into the reception year. Although many lack confidence when they enter school, and have weak social skills, by the end of the reception year, children attain the levels usually found in children of this age, having achieved well.

Communication, language and literacy

70. The teaching and learning of basic skills is good, for example letter sounds in reading and letter formation in handwriting. Staff focus well on developing pupils' ability to listen to each other and in extending children's vocabulary and children make very good progress in this aspect, as a result of this good teaching. For example, in lessons they encourage children to use technical words, such as author and illustrator and usually provide clear models of correct speech. Staff encourage children to use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them to read and write the unfamiliar words they meet but sometimes their models lack the clarity needed for children to understand easily how words build together. For example, they pronounce 'c-a-t' as 'cuh-a-tuh'. In the reception class, staff give children many opportunities to discuss their work, individually or in groups, and to speak to the whole class. In the nursery, this does not happen as often because of the low levels of adult support. Whilst the teacher and nursery nurse focus on this in their group activities, there is often nobody available each morning to talk to pupils when working independently on activities, such as when they play in the home corner or experiment with sand, water or dough. Although children sometimes chat together in these areas, there are many occasions when they play silently, either on their own or alongside others. This situation is sometimes improved by volunteer support but this is not a daily feature. There is also a learning support assistant working in the nursery each afternoon, but she is needed to support a child with special educational needs on a one-to-one basis. At the end of the reception year, pupils have made good progress in their use of language but standards remain below average, overall. Children

mainly speak in simple structured sentences but very few develop a rich enough vocabulary to express feelings or describe objects or events.

71. Children enjoy reading and standards are average. Most have made a sound start on the school reading scheme. Average attainers know a satisfactory number of common words and use the picture clues and initial letters to help them with new words. Higher attainers know a good range of words and read accurately, with expression. Lower attainers read confidently at their own level and many know most letter sounds, although they find it difficult to build these into words. In writing, standards are below average, although children make good progress. Higher and average attaining children write simple sentences unaided, spelling common words correctly and making good attempts at new words, using their knowledge of letters. Very few go beyond this by beginning to apply simple punctuation, such as full stops, and they do not use descriptive language in their writing. Lower attainers are beginning to form letters correctly but do not apply their word and letter knowledge well. Children have some opportunities to practise and improve their skills when working independently at a writing table or in the imaginative Garden Centre area but few choose to do so. Written work is not sufficiently celebrated in displays of work to provide good examples to others. Although the children make good progress and achieve well, overall standards remain below average at the end of their year in reception.

Mathematical development

72. In the nursery, children have many opportunities to count and play with practical equipment. However, once again, the shortage of adults means that this work is often not extended as well as it could be into other areas. For example, in counting accurately how many small bottles are needed to fill a large one, when playing in the sand or water. In the reception classes, staff ensure that children have a variety of mathematical experiences in lessons and in structured play. Higher attaining children count to 20 and beyond, look for mathematical patterns in their work and begin to add and subtract with numbers to 10. Average attainers count to 20 and record simple pictorial calculations to ten. Lower attainers work at a similar level with support. Children know and understand simple properties of shapes and identify these in everyday life. They enjoy many practical experiences that develop well their understanding of measures such as length, weight, height and capacity. For example, when baking they learn to balance ingredients against a given weight and count the number of cakes and sweets used to decorate them. By the end of the reception year, despite the good teaching and learning, standards are below average. Whilst most children achieve well and attain the levels expected for their age, none exceed them. Higher attaining children do not exceed them by applying their knowledge to solving simple problems and a substantial number of lower attainers are not confident in working with numbers to 10.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum provides many interesting lessons and play activities to deepen the children's understanding of the world and they achieve well, and reach average standards. They develop a sense of place and time through studies of their environment and their own lives. They learn about their own bodies, how they change as they grow and about how the clothes they wear change as they get older. They plant seeds and watch them grow and learn about the life cycles of plants and animals, learning to love and care for their world. Children explore the use of dry and wet sand and water, and observe what happens in different circumstances. They use a good variety of construction toys and materials and build successfully a variety of products. They learn to use computers and can control the mouse, practise their counting and letter knowledge in appropriate games and type in simple pieces of writing. However, computer skills are below average, largely because of thefts of equipment. Children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world is

deepened by a good range of visits, which bring learning to life, and by their studies in religious education. The children visit a local garden centre and the post office to increase their understanding and learn to respect the views, beliefs and customs of others.

Physical development

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make sound progress. Children in the nursery have ample opportunities to play with a sound range of wheeled toys and climbing and balancing equipment outdoors and enjoy physical education lessons in the hall. Because of the low numbers of adults, they do so with only very limited guidance and do not develop their imaginative use of equipment and extend their control skills fully. In wet weather, they cannot use the equipment because there is no covered outdoor area and no room indoors for them to use it safely. Reception children have appropriate physical education lessons and regular but limited opportunities to use the outdoor area but there are firm plans to extend and improve the outdoor area, so that they too can have free access. The provision for outdoor activities is satisfactory. Staff teach successfully the skills to help children gain safe control of finer movements, such as through many good opportunities to use pencils, glue spatulas, paintbrushes, and scissors. Standards are average by the end of the reception year as the children achieve satisfactorily.

Creative development

75. The teaching is good because in both the nursery and reception classes, staff plan work carefully across a wide variety of activities, which enables the children to make good progress in their learning, achieve well and reach average standards. Children play untuned percussion instruments, with developing control because teachers show them how to hold and play the instruments correctly. They learn how to create different types of sounds, such as long and short notes and join in well with familiar songs such as “ Five Little Monkeys”. Staff give children many opportunities for making pictures and they mix paints, such as shades of red, and use paint, crayon and pencil with developing skill. They develop good observational skills, such as when painting a vase of flowers and express themselves creatively using a wide range of media, such as pastel, paint, collage and computer generated art. Their creative success is celebrated well in many bright and well-presented displays within the classrooms and standards of work in art are above average. Children take turns to act out a role, such as the shopkeeper, waiter or customers in the very well resourced, imaginative play area set out as a garden centre in the reception classes.

ENGLISH

76. Current standards of work are average at the end of Year 2 and are not as high as in the last two years. This does not represent a decline in standards, but a year group with fewer higher attaining pupils and more pupils with special educational needs than is usual. This lowers the overall attainment of the year group. In fact, pupils are achieving well in all aspects of the subject. Overall standards over the last three years have been above the national average in reading and writing, with girls performing slightly better than boys which is similar to the national picture. The 2001 results of national tests at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in reading and well above in writing and compared very favourably against those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was well above the national average in writing and matched the national average in reading.

77. Standards of work are below average in Year 6 and similar to those in 2001. Whilst standards in reading in national tests in 2001 were above the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level, they were below the national average for the proportion of pupils exceeding this

level. In writing, standards were lower and were below the national average at the expected level and matched it at the higher level. Standards at the end of Year 6 fluctuate and for the last three years overall have been below average. Girls perform better than boys, although the performance of boys is closer to that of boys nationally than the girls to that of girls nationally. Overall improvement in the last three years has been similar to that found nationally. Current standards in Year 6 indicate satisfactory achievement in Years 3 to 6. The current Year 6 pupils achieved standards that were well below the national average in reading and below the national average in writing when they were in Year 2. Most have, therefore, achieved satisfactorily over Years 3 to 6, with some making good progress in their reading. There are however, a very small number of higher attaining pupils who have not reached their full potential owing to poor attendance and unwillingness to complete the homework set. In addition, a few pupils who only just achieved the level expected for their age by the end of Year 2 are unlikely to reach the expected level by the end of Year 6 because of the overall satisfactory teaching and slower progress in some years. Results of optional national tests show that for this year group a significant number of pupils made insufficient progress in developing their accuracy in spelling and writing when in Years 3 and 4 and the school has since worked hard to remedy this. In Years 3 to 6, there is still some variation in the rate of progress, particularly in writing, between the year groups owing to the teaching methods used. This is allowing the good rate of progress evident in Years 1 and 2 to slow down.

78. Standards in speaking and listening are average overall. By the end of Year 2, the success of the heavy emphasis placed on developing pupils' speaking skills and their confidence in expressing their views and opinions is evident in the standards achieved. Year 1 pupils leading an assembly spoke audibly and clearly to their audience. However, their range of vocabulary is still limited and this affects their overall progress in reading and writing. A very small number of Year 2 pupils are reluctant to speak. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, usually waiting for their turn to speak. They enjoy reading out loud and are encouraged to join in class discussions. The role-play areas in all classes in Years 1 and 2 have deliberately been maintained to encourage speaking skills and this has proved successful. In addition, the good number of story sacks containing the characters from nursery rhymes or from stories such as 'Going on a Bear Hunt' or 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' provide stimulating opportunities for pupils to develop further their speaking and listening skills. By Year 6, pupils speak clearly, but there is still some lack of confidence evident among lower attaining pupils, owing to the limited range of vocabulary and sometimes they struggle to find the exact words to express their views. This also affects the overall quality of their written stories. Teachers take care to ensure all pupils are contributing to class discussions and direct questions to any not participating. Whilst most teachers use the literacy strategy effectively to engage pupils in discussion, there are a few occasions when pupils are expected to listen for too long without sufficient opportunities to speak. There is insufficient emphasis on consistently developing pupils' range of vocabulary in other subjects.

79. Standards in reading are average at the end of Year 2, but are below average in Year 6, where the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level is lower than in most schools and affects the overall standards. Reading skills develop well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in other year groups as some time outside literacy lessons is devoted to reading. Children take books home and some parents hear their children read regularly which helps their progress, but a significant proportion do not receive such help and do not develop a love of literature. The school does everything possible to encourage parental participation and provides courses to raise parents' awareness of how they can help their child. By Year 2, pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, and use contents and index pages to find the information they want. Higher attaining pupils can scan pages to find the information needed to answer questions. These pupils are reading accurately, fluently and with some expression, using a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words, including letter sounds and use of context. Other pupils often use pictures to help them work out unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 6, pupils are reading a wide range of texts in literacy lessons, but few show obvious enjoyment of reading. They

do not have sufficient knowledge of a range of children's authors to make informed choices when selecting books. Most reported Roald Dahl as their favourite children's author and could name books that they had read. The only other authors named were R.L.Stine and Jacqueline Wilson. Pupils have difficulty in understanding the author's intentions when reading. The school has identified this weakness and is concentrating on improving pupils' skills in this area. Most read fluently from both fiction and non-fiction texts, but Year 6 pupils were finding it hard to translate Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' into modern language.

80. Current standards in writing are average in Year 2. The approach to teaching writing and spelling skills not only in literacy lessons, but through other subjects as well is successful in helping most pupils to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. The additional support from a part-time teacher specifically to help improve pupils' writing skills has been successful in raising standards. Pupils gain confidence in their abilities as writers, evident in the increasing amount of writing, accuracy in spelling and the use of punctuation. By the end of Year 2 pupils have sound understanding of story structure and are retelling fairy stories with a logical sequence to their sentences. Pupils understand alphabetical order and use dictionaries to help them spell words accurately. Lower attaining pupils and those with special needs use picture dictionaries successfully. The good practice of encouraging pupils to use dictionaries and of expecting them to record their work independently in other subjects is not followed through in Years 3 and 4 and this is why the rate of progress slows. Whilst the teaching in literacy hours is good in Year 3, pupils revert to using word books for spellings and the use of worksheets in many other subjects, such as history and religious education leads to lower expectations of pupils in terms of their writing skills. In Year 4 the use of worksheets containing sentences with missing words to be filled in from the list given on the page, and then to copy the whole paragraph from the sheet was insufficiently challenging and was more of a copying exercise. The pace of lessons and teachers' expectations rise in Years 5 and 6, but again pupils are not always expected to record their work in other subjects independently. For example in science in one Year 6 class, much of the work had been copied, which does little to improve pupils' spelling or skills in expressing themselves clearly in writing. There is a lack of good quality writing on display in classrooms in Years 3 to 6 to which other pupils can aspire. Pupils increase their accuracy in using grammar and punctuation and have satisfactory understanding of how to organise their writing for different purposes.

81. Handwriting is variable between classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6. There is a consistent approach to teaching letter formation and in joining letters together and most do this successfully. However, too many pupils in Years 5 and 6 have reverted to printing and those asked said their teachers did not encourage them to develop a fluent joined style of handwriting. This also affects the presentation of work for these pupils. Teachers' expectations of these pupils are not high enough.

82. Literacy skills, particularly note-taking and research and enquiry skills are insufficiently promoted through other subjects in Years 3 to 6. This is partly due to a lack of resources by way of library books and modern computers in classrooms, but also to teaching methods and expectations. Computers in Year 1 and 2 classes were often switched on but not in use.

83. There are different approaches to meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs in the infants and juniors, which the school knows it needs to tackle. Pupils in infant classes are well supported during literacy lessons by their teachers, teaching assistants, care assistants or parent helpers. They are fully included and rarely withdrawn from classes and receive effective guidance in overcoming their poor pencil control and difficulty in settling to their work. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are withdrawn for the whole of literacy hours and whilst the support is good, these pupils are excluded from class activities. Some of the targets set in individual education plans are not specific enough for small steps in progress to be recorded effectively.

84. The library provision for junior classes was an issue in the previous inspection report, which has not been overcome. There is no space in the school for a library to be created. The quantity and range of books available in different areas around the former junior building is poor. This has a negative effect on the development of pupils' research skills. In addition only Year 3 pupils have access to a modern computer in their classroom and this further compounds the problem. Pupils do have opportunities to use computers to type up their work, but this does not happen often enough.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and is good in Years 1 and 2, where teachers' expectations are high and pupils work hard to complete their work in time. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and this is continuing to have a positive impact on the teaching and pupils' learning. Teachers' lesson planning follows national guidelines but does not always contain specific learning objectives, which are shared with pupils to give a clear focus to lessons. This is a key feature of the better lessons seen. Where learning objectives are not shared, pupils are not as clear about what they are intended to learn and teaching is only satisfactory. There are examples of excellent marking, particularly in a Year 6 class, where pupils' writing is marked and assessed against National Curriculum levels and what they need to do to improve in order to move on to the next level is clear. Although all pupils have targets for improvement at the front of their books, they are rarely referred to in the marking, so pupils know their progress towards meeting them. There are examples of lessons where teaching assistants are ineffectively deployed during the initial part of the lesson and pupils do not receive the support they need to keep them fully included. The management of pupils and the use of homework are strengths of the teaching throughout Years 1 to 6.

86. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. A good literacy policy for the primary school has been implemented and the co-ordinators are gaining knowledge of standards throughout the school and have drawn up a sound action plan for improvement, although it lacks specific detail and outcomes in terms of pupils' standards. There has been some analysis of pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 to pinpoint specific weaknesses and the curriculum has been suitably amended as a result. The accommodation, particularly in junior classes is inadequate and is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient space for pupils to gather and sit comfortably when reading from large books during shared text work. In Years 5 and 6, there is noise intrusion from other classes and pupils using the corridor, which can affect their concentration in lessons. Since the previous inspections overall improvement has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

87. Currently, overall standards of work are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. The difference is partly due to the different ranges of ability in these two year groups, and partly to the fact that, in their earlier years, older pupils did not benefit to the same extent from the rigours of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). Since the previous inspection, the school has focused on raising the standards of lower attaining pupils to levels closer to those expected for their age. In this, it has met with a considerable degree of success. However, higher-attaining pupils could be challenged more, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Overall, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Their enthusiasm for the subject is not as great from Year 4 upwards.

88. In 2001, pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were similar to the national average. They were well above average compared to schools of similar background. Averaged over the past three years, results have exceeded the national average. In 2001, the proportion of pupils exceeding the level for their age was below average and not as high as in reading and writing. Pupils' overall performance in tests taken in Year 6 in 2001 was below average. This accurately reflected the ability spread of the year group, which contained a higher proportion of pupils with special educational

needs. Pupils' results were above average compared with similar schools. In the three previous years, performance was average and rose steadily year on year following the national pattern.

89. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because teachers focus on developing and consolidating numerical knowledge and skills. By the age of seven, most pupils are developing a sound understanding of place value including hundreds, tens and units. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of addition and subtraction of whole numbers. They have a reasonable understanding of number facts associated with the two, five and ten times multiplication tables, and can use them to solve simple problems expressed in numbers and words. Effective teaching of the NNS is promoting the use of mental arithmetic and encouraging pupils' mental agility. In Year 2, most pupils satisfactorily use a range of measures, including centimetres, and can tell the time on an analogue clock. Higher attaining pupils can match this to the digital equivalent. Pupils' knowledge of the properties of simple two and three-dimensional shapes is satisfactory, as is the construction and use of simple bar charts to display and interpret information. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, or between that of pupils of different ability, including those with special educational needs.

90. In Years 3 and 4, pupils satisfactorily build on their prior attainment. They extend their mathematical vocabulary and learn to apply it accurately, for example, in knowing that 'times', 'lots of' and 'product' involve multiplication. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 did not have such a rigorous grounding in mathematics in their earlier years and this is reflected in some pupils' lack of enthusiasm and confidence. They are now benefiting from being taught in classes grouped by ability in mathematics. This enables teachers to focus more specifically on particular needs and to provide work with the appropriate level of challenge. In addition, small 'target groups' are established for short periods of time to boost the attainment of pupils who are not quite achieving the standard expected for their age. A significant number of pupils in these two year groups find the retention and recall of mathematical knowledge difficult. This, often combined with limited language skills, inhibits achievement. Pupils tend to have difficulty in interpreting questions and transferring skills, rather than in the numerical operations involved. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of numbers beyond 1000 with some understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages. All but the higher-attaining pupils have some difficulty with the concepts of ratio, proportion and probability. Pupils' knowledge of angular measure and symmetry is satisfactory. In mental sessions at the beginning of each lesson pupils show satisfactory knowledge and understanding of multiplication, division and associated number facts, such as square and prime numbers. Much of the work in mathematics is completed on worksheets. These are of good quality, with questions graded in difficulty, but they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise recording their work independently. Consequently, the presentation of written work and geometrical constructions is not always as logical or accurate as it could be. Pupils would benefit from more practical work and opportunities to develop skills in explaining their working. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress where they are taught in small groups. This is because they have more opportunities to resolve their problems through one-to-one discussion with the teacher.

91. Pupils' attitudes to work are good. They work well together and gain satisfaction from finding solutions in investigative work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were particularly pleased when they found the pattern in formulae for finding the number of columns needed to build bridges with different spans. In the older year groups, boys tend to be more dominant than girls when volunteering answers. Averaged over the past few years, boys have achieved better results than girls, and to a greater extent than found nationally. Teachers are aware of this and use various strategies, such as changes in seating arrangements, in an attempt to redress the balance.

92. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The difference is due to the fact that all teachers work more closely together in Years 1

and 2 so there is greater continuity and reinforcement of the understanding of mathematical concepts as pupils progress from year to year. Teaching was consistently good in the lessons observed in Years 1 and 2. Lessons were lively, varied and interesting. They moved at a good pace leaving pupils wanting to do more. Teachers made good use of opportunities for assessment, often through informal discussion with pupils as they worked on activities. Outcomes were used well to modify subsequent lesson plans. Teaching was more variable in the lessons seen in other year groups, but was at least satisfactory in virtually all lessons, just one being unsatisfactory. At best, the same good qualities as seen in Years 1 and 2 were evident. In addition, for example in a Year 3 lesson, there was a good focus on teaching pupils how to record their work neatly and in logical sequence. The teacher checked on pupils' understanding by listening to explanations of the answers. Given many pupils' poor speaking and listening skills, this technique supports the development of literacy. The overall level of learning in Years 3 to 6 could be improved by more repeated use and revisiting of basic skills and higher expectations of the quality of written work. In Year 4, the work provided could be more carefully planned to provide challenge at an appropriate level for pupils of all ability, particularly the highest attainers. Pupils' work is marked regularly but does not always offer sufficient guidance as to how to improve further. Homework is well used to complement class work and provide information in preparation for the next lesson. The use of ICT skills to support mathematics is unsatisfactory. This is because the school does not have sufficient up-to-date computers in classrooms to support their regular use in lessons.

93. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A good feature is the thorough analysis of pupils' answers in test papers. Specific difficulties, related to the year group, are noted and passed to class teachers so that they can focus on them in lesson planning and teaching. The school organises courses for parents and their children to learn together. This helps parents to understand the NNS and shows them how they can support their children by introducing mathematical concepts into everyday family life. Parents value these courses. The school as a whole has made satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the previous inspections. To improve standards further teachers need to raise the profile of mathematics within the environment. More opportunities could be provided for pupils to work accurately at speed and to learn through the practical application of mathematics. In addition, in Years 3 to 6, there could be a better balance between the use of worksheets and pupils' independent recording of written work.

94. Most pupils use calculators satisfactorily to estimate and check computational work in mathematics. They have sufficient mathematical knowledge and skills to support work in other subjects but there is insufficient evidence to show that numeracy is being promoted in this way, for example in science, design and technology and history. The school lacks a co-ordinated approach to the teaching of numerical skills through other aspects of the curriculum. Consequently, valuable opportunities are being missed for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge purposefully and meaningfully. Taken overall, satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspections.

SCIENCE

95. Pupils achieve well in science in Years 1 and 2: they begin Year 1 with a below average knowledge and understanding of the world and, by the end of Year 2, overall standards have risen to become broadly average, with the vast majority of pupils reaching expected standards. The results of the statutory teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2001 indicated that nearly all pupils reached the nationally expected standard and that a high proportion of them exceeded the expected standard. The assessment results were well above those of schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

96. Pupils make a good start in Year 1. They learn to observe and to classify objects and phenomena according to clear criteria and begin to understand cause and effect. For example, when exploring the nature of forces, they classify them as ‘pushing’ or ‘pulling’. They investigate light and sound and learn that living things need certain conditions to thrive, for example, that plants need light and water in order to grow. Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 2 and their work in investigative and experimental science is a strong feature. Pupils observe carefully and accurately record what they see, and make predictions; for example, which of a set of toy cars of different weights travels the farthest when released from a ramp. Pupils draw conclusions from their observations and use standard metric measures of length when comparing one set of data with another. They collect data and illustrate their findings graphically, for example, in the form of a block diagram. The higher attaining pupils begin to understand the meaning and principle of a ‘fair’ scientific test. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, mostly reach the standard expected for their age by the end of Year 2, having made good progress.

97. Pupils make steady overall progress during their time in Years 3 to 6, although the standard of work varies in quality from class to class. Pupils achieve average overall standards by Year 6: although this achievement is broadly satisfactory, standards could be raised still further. The results of national tests are also average when aggregated over the past three years although they were below average in 2001. Nevertheless, the results were better than those of most other schools with similar intakes of pupils. The rising trend in results matches the national picture. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys in this subject. Standards are similar and broadly average in all aspects of the subject. Pupils’ investigative work is satisfactory, overall. Some good work was seen in Year 3 practical lessons in connection with light, in which the children made rapid progress in their understanding of the nature of shadows, and in their scientific thinking about cause and effect. Pupils undertake some interesting practical work in Year 6, for example, on soil analysis. They talk enthusiastically about science, clearly showing that they have a good depth of knowledge of the subject when they discuss food chains, forces and effects and changes of state, covering such matters as air resistance and the effects of gravity, and solids, liquids and gases. However, they do not design their own experiments and their experimental work is over-directed and lacks independence, although this aspect of practical work lies within the capacity of many of them.

98. Pupils have good attitudes towards their learning, as a result of the school’s effective ethos and climate for learning, and they are keen to learn and succeed. Occasional lapses of concentration occur when the work is not sufficiently interesting but their behaviour is good overall and often very good. Science makes a good contribution to pupils’ personal development. Boys and girls work together harmoniously and their cultural development is enhanced through their experiences in this subject; for example, that scientific knowledge and understanding is one of man’s greatest achievements. The school’s science club is regularly attended by a number of pupils. Some aspects of personal, health and social education, such as sex education, drugs awareness, health and safety, are taught effectively through science.

99. The overall quality of teaching and pupils’ learning is satisfactory. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This difference in the quality of teaching is reflected in the different quality of pupils’ learning and accounts for the difference in achievement between Years 2 and 6. The overall strengths of teaching are the teachers’ good knowledge of science and how to teach it, and their effective management of pupils’ behaviour and learning. The pupils respond well to their teachers and work enthusiastically, particularly in practical lessons. They concentrate well, listen to their teachers and understand what is required of them. They have a good understanding of their progress and what they need to do to improve. They comply with their teachers’ expectations and generally work hard. There are some weaknesses in teaching. There is a tendency to rely too much on prescriptive worksheets and younger pupils sometimes spend too long on low-level activities, such as

'colouring in'. Older pupils would benefit from more practical work and more opportunities to design their own experiments and to extend their capacity to work independently. Higher attaining pupils exceed expected standards but could be extended even further, especially in Year 6. Again, in Year 6, a good deal of the pupils' written work seen in exercise books was copied, and this can have little educational value for them and is not easy for the teacher to assess what pupils know and understand. These weaknesses could be eliminated through more monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress and standards by the co-ordinators; for example, with more rigorous scrutiny of samples of pupils' written work.

100. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory overall and science makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening. However, writing skills could be more effectively taught by expecting pupils to record their work independently. The teachers do not generally set tasks of varying difficulty for different groups of pupils and all are expected to do the same work; however, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the rest of the class because they receive effective support in lessons. In Years 3 to 6, in particular, ICT is not yet used enough to enhance learning.

101. The management of the subject is satisfactory although monitoring and evaluation of the work in the subject are insufficient. The curriculum is planned so that the teachers know what they are expected to teach but as yet there is no monitoring of the pupils' learning or of the standards achieved in lessons. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection in Year 2, but are not quite as high in Year 6 as previously reported. However, the Year 6 national test results have risen in line with the national trend since that time. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspections.

ART AND DESIGN

102. Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The scrutiny of work shows teaching is good overall. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy their art lessons and most make good progress and achieve well, except for some pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make insufficient progress. The previous inspection reports indicated that standards were above average at the end of Year 2 and that they were average at the end of Year 6. Although progress does slow in Year 6, as it did at the time of that inspection, standards remain at above average levels, which represents good improvement overall.

103. Work in Years 1 and 2 develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of processes and skills through experience of a wide range of materials and techniques. They have many opportunities to express themselves freely and creatively and their observational drawing skills, begun in the Foundation Stage, are built upon well. Pupils include an increasing level of detail in their pictures. For example, they paint pictures of famous people, such as the Queen, local football stars and pop stars, closely observing typical clothing, hairstyles and faces. They study a sound range of artists and reproduce their styles well in their own work, paying close attention to techniques. For example, they paint their own vase of flowers in the style of Van Gogh. Their work is then built upon well in Years 3 to 5, where they widen their understanding of artists styles, by wide ranging studies, such as those of the work of Appel, Klimt, Klee, Munch and Rousseau. They also undertake a good range of study of the art of other cultures, such as Aboriginal and African art, as well as Islamic architecture and Indian miniatures. Pupils work with line, colour and shape and extend their themes using a wide range of different resources. For example, in Year 5 when studying landscapes by various artists, they begin by sketching, then painting and finally making clay tiles of good quality. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 make good use of sketchbooks to practise and develop their ideas but this is not as regular in Year 6, where pupils have fewer opportunities to build upon their skills and widen their understanding. Nevertheless,

although progress slows the standard of their work remains above average, with good use of detail and line in their pictures. A good example of work was seen in the wire sculptures in the style of Henry Moore.

104. Teaching is good overall and promotes well pupils' understanding of different styles of painting and picture making using a range of materials. Teachers plan a good range of interesting activities with a clear focus on the progressive development of pupils' skills and understanding. They make good use of resources and encourage pupils to plan and make choices about materials and techniques to achieve their desired effect. Explanations and demonstrations of the basic techniques are clear, so pupils know what it is they are to achieve. Teachers support pupils well as they work, questioning them to develop their ideas and helping them improve their work. Relationships are very good and a relaxed and supportive learning environment gives pupils confidence in expressing themselves creatively. Some pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 complete their art whilst the rest of the class is having a literacy lesson, sometimes with the support of a classroom assistant but sometimes on their own. Whilst they enjoy their independence, these pupils do not have the same quality of teaching and guidance as other pupils, which limits the progress that they make. Teachers provide opportunities to use computers to generate pictures and develop pupils' skills in pattern making. They plan some good links with other subjects, such as when Year 5 pupils create Greek pot paintings, clay pots and printing blocks for Greek temples, linked to their studies in history. However, in Year 6, as at the time of the previous inspection, this is often more focused on the topic rather than the development of art skills.

105. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall and are influencing developments. A whole school policy is to be developed in the next school year. This will include assessment procedures, which are currently not in place, although pupils are encouraged to evaluate the quality of their own work. Displays in Years 1 and 2 are of good quality and reflect the above average standards. In Years 3 to 6, they are not always as effectively presented to reflect the good quality of work, particularly in Year 6. The subject contributes well to pupils' cultural and spiritual development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection and judgements are supported by evidence from photographs of completed work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator. The evidence shows that pupils' work is below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make insufficient progress through the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have underachieved. This is because a whole school scheme of work that builds up pupils' skills and knowledge progressively has only just been introduced. There had also previously been a shortage of resources for pupils to develop their skills and understanding across a range of materials and tools. There had been a decline in both provision and standards since the previous inspections but considerable improvement has been made to the curriculum and resources over the last year.

107. Since the schools amalgamated, a new curriculum co-ordinator has developed good detailed long, medium and short-term plans that support teachers in planning for their classes and improve their own knowledge and expertise, as well as those of their pupils. The school has adopted a very well thought out scheme of work that gives very good guidance to teachers in planning for the progressive development of skills and knowledge. Planning shows that there is an appropriate range of projects planned over the year, although in Year 6, these are less in number than is usually found because time for the subject is very limited. Pupils in Years 1 to 5 are now building up good skills and understanding, as they undertake the full process of designing and making their products but, because of a previous lack of experience, standards in Years 2 and 6 are not high enough. Pupils in Year 2 have only just begun their first full design and technology project and do not have any previous design and making

skills to draw on. The observation of a Year 3 lesson and an examination of pupils' work in Years 3 to 5, show a good range of study. Pupils investigate their topic thoroughly, such as when Year 3 pupils closely examine and test hydraulic mechanisms. They then go on to achieve good standards in their designs and products, including such items as working light-houses, moving monster toys and 'Steady Hands' games, which are later used to raise money at a charity event. Pupils evaluate their products and suggest how they might be improved. This is not built on sufficiently in Year 6, where pupils only study the subject at the end of the year, a year after their previous experience. Expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough and they work at too low a level. For example, pupils making a prototype of a face for a puppet in one Year 6 class drew a simple labelled design, with a list of resources. They then used scissors and glue sticks to apply fabrics, wool and papers. Many failed to follow their original design and about a quarter did not even have it in front of them. These pupils recalled their more advanced designs from Year 5 and talked about how they built their products, such as musical instruments, tested them and made amendments to them where necessary. They were enthusiastic about the subject and said that they would like to do more.

108. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching or learning in Years 1 and 2, because no lessons could be observed and insufficient evidence is available of previous work. Teaching in Years 3 to 5 is now satisfactory overall and sometimes good, but over time, pupils have made insufficient progress because of past difficulties. Teaching was good in the Year 3 lesson observed and pupils made rapid progress in understanding how hydraulic mechanisms can be used to make toys move. However, there is insufficient evidence to comment on the quality of teaching in Year 6 because of a lack of work completed and the fact that only a small part of a lesson could be seen. In the section of the lesson that was observed, pupils were not well organised and their learning was unsatisfactory because they did not build on their previous skills sufficiently. Teachers plan some good opportunities to link work to other subjects, particularly science. For example, pupils in Year 5 build alarms and working lighthouses, linked to their work in electricity. Some use is made of computers in designing products but too little use is made of older pupils' numeracy skills in the design and making processes.

109. The leadership of the subject is now good. The new scheme of work is proving to be effective in improving teachers' expertise and pupils' progress and resources are being built up appropriately to ensure that all aspects can be fully taught. However, there is no whole school assessment system in place and the subject is not well managed, in that the co-ordinator has no overview of the quality of teaching and learning, or of standards across the whole school. Overall improvement since the previous inspections has been unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Standards of work are average for pupils' ages in Year 2 and Year 6 and have been maintained since the previous inspections. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 when they do geography at a different time from other class members and are taught by a teaching assistant with little support from their class teacher.

111. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in the development of mapping skills. By Year 2 pupils show good skills in drawing maps of their classroom, the school, their journey to school and in the creation of imaginary maps. Many pupils understand the idea of a plan view. They begin to include keys to explain the map symbols. They gain sound knowledge of other localities such as holiday resorts in Great Britain and begin to describe the physical and human features of places beyond the immediate locality.

112. In Year 6 pupils investigate natural disasters. They make good progress in the development of investigative skills as they use a full range of resources and techniques, including the use of the Internet. These pupils exhibit very good co-operative and collaborative skills in their small groups. They quickly agree which pupil completes which task as they create information posters. They confidently present this information during the plenary session. They have sound knowledge of the rivers of the world and the course of a river from source to mouth. They understand features of different settlements and can compare the geographical features of Keswick with those of Liverpool. Fieldwork is undertaken and this helps to reinforce pupils' learning about the local area and places further afield.

113. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Their planning includes the careful use of worksheets to support the lower attaining pupils. Mathematical data handling skills are included in some lessons where pupils examine records of rainfall in different countries. These activities need to be extended. There is good linkage between geography and history, for example in Year 2 where pupils study the theme of 'seasides'. The use of a large book and skilful questioning by the teacher led to pupils acquiring new knowledge. However, the impact of this good start to the lesson, which captured pupils' interest and concentration, was inhibited when it went on for too long and pupils became restless. A good lesson in Year 6 enabled pupils to learn about natural disasters and why the weather makes the news headlines. Pupils worked well together in researching information and compiled fact sheets about disasters, such as earthquakes in Mexico. There is some use of ICT to support pupils' learning, but this is not as effective or extensive as it could be.

114. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched by the activities of the 'ECO Club' and the planning of fieldwork within the local environment and to other regions of England.

HISTORY

115. Standards of work are average in Year 2 and Year 6 and similar to those found at the time of the previous inspections. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 where the teaching is good, and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6, where pupils have insufficient opportunities to reach their full potential through research work using a range of resources including computers. Those pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in all year groups.

116. By the end of Year 2 pupils have developed a clear understanding of the passage of time. This is helped through their study of topics such as homes, kitchens and toys, comparing these items with those of a hundred years ago. Their sense of history deepens through their studies of the changes in family life. The older pupils learn about past events such as The Gunpowder Plot and The Great Fire of London. This gives them deeper insights into life in the past.

117. Pupils build on their early knowledge and skills satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 3 learn about Roman invaders and how their period of occupation has influenced our present day society. The oldest pupils also make good progress as they learn about Britain in the 1930s, what it was like to be an evacuee in World War Two and momentous events such as The Jarrow March.

118. Many older pupils gain good insights into history by compiling biographies of the lives of their parents and grandparents. These are often finished to a good standard, containing artefacts such as rent and ration books and family portraits to illustrate their writing.

119. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and is good in Years 1 and 2. The scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 indicates that lessons are planned well to meet the needs

of the pupils. There are effective links between history and geography. Mathematical mapping techniques are used by pupils to identify the comparisons between modern toys and similarly designed toys played with a hundred years ago.

120. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of classroom resources, including pictures, reference books, artefacts and reproductions. These bring the subject to life. A good lesson in Year 3 resulted from the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject and thorough lesson planning. The teacher shared her knowledge with the class expertly and provided work to stimulate and challenge the pupils, which led to them making good gains in their knowledge of Roman banquets. In satisfactory lessons tasks are not planned at different levels of complexity to meet the learning needs of all pupils, especially the higher attainers. There are some opportunities for individual research but computers are not yet used sufficiently to identify and retrieve information. Many pupils throughout the school make good efforts to complete their work to a high standard. The lack of modern computers in classrooms in Years 4 to 6 impedes the development of pupils' research and enquiry skills and prevents them reaching their full potential.

121. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Recently resources have been audited and money allocated to ensure that additional resources are acquired. The collection of samples of pupils' work to show the school's standards is at an early stage, but is already presenting a good opportunity for the school to evaluate and celebrate its work.

122. A recent development has included the use of carefully chosen worksheets to support lower attaining pupils and this is beneficial for them. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Pupils' ICT skills are below average at the start of Year 1. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Standards of work are similar to those expected for their age by the time they are seven. This is because teaching and resources are good. A computer suite was installed last year and all classrooms have an up-to-date computer. Facilities are not as good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. A computer suite has recently been installed in the Junior school building but only a few classrooms have a modern computer and the system is not yet networked. Consequently, there are too few opportunities for pupils to consolidate the learning in the designated ICT lesson through follow-up work in the classroom. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching all aspects of the subject, which affects pupils' attainment. Overall standards of work, compared to expectations for pupils' age, are below average in Year 6. However, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in the modules of work that are currently being taught.

124. Scrutiny of work in Year 2 shows that the majority of pupils are confident to access the computer and carry out basic operational skills with little assistance from the teacher. They are aware that the computer provides the means of communicating and altering text. Pupils can use the keyboard satisfactorily and know how to print and save their work. Information and communication technology skills are used well to enhance work in other subjects, for example in English and mathematics. In one of the lessons observed individual pupils successfully modified a piece of text by inserting capital letters, full stops and spaces. Higher attaining pupils extended the work, and their learning, by continuing the story line in their own words. Other aspects of work in ICT satisfactorily include the use of graphics and following instructions in a given order.

125. The programme of study in Years 3 to 6 is new. In time, it will provide for the progressive development of skills in the different aspects of the ICT curriculum. Currently, pupils are working on selected modules based on the training that teachers have received to date. By the end of Year 6,

pupils are reasonably confident in using word-processing skills and in searching for information on the Internet. In other year groups, pupils satisfactorily enter information on spreadsheets, attach clip art to their work and use changes in font, colour, print size and display to make their work more interesting. Higher attaining pupils produce a range of graphs in mathematics to make their findings more self-explanatory. However, pupils' experience with monitoring devices to control physical conditions, and in modelling situations, is limited and in these aspects pupils' attainment is below the level expected by the age of eleven. Pupils have had very little systematic experience of ICT until very recently; this accounts for their below average attainment in Year 6.

126. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to other pupils. Teachers ensure that the text they work with is of an appropriate level for their understanding. Teaching assistants are usually on hand to provide support with the operational skills.

127. Pupils enjoy working on the computers. They treat the equipment with respect and willingly share their knowledge and experience with partners. They use their skills to obtain information for cross-curricular work but lack of up-to-date computers in classrooms in Years 3 to 6 limits access at the most opportune times. For example, in Year 6, pupils used their designated time in the ICT suite to interrogate a web site for information about weather and disasters. Most pupils found suitable information and printed it out for later use in the knowledge that they would not be able to do this in the actual geography lesson. Pupils use their ICT skills to support their learning in mathematics, for example, when entering information into a database, which is later presented in a graph or bar chart. There is some use of computers for research work in history and for producing graphic pictures in art and design, but this work is limited in Years 4 to 6.

128. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This is because improvement in provision for ICT, including resources and training for teachers, began earlier in Years 1 and 2. In these two year groups, pupils' ICT skills are developing progressively, whereas in later year groups attainment in different areas of study within the curriculum is inconsistent. Where teaching is good, for example in the Year 3 lesson on the use of fonts and colour to exemplify the meaning of words, teachers plan lessons carefully, ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to practise the relevant skills. In this particular lesson some interesting work was produced, accurately reflecting understanding of words such as big, grow, stairs and rainbow. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good where teachers are familiar with the work being taught but lack confidence about their expertise in other aspects of the National Curriculum, which inhibits the progress of higher attaining pupils. The subject co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues.

129. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for ICT since the previous inspections. However, most of this has occurred very recently and its effect has not worked through to pupils' attainment in Year 6. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The recent change in leadership has led to a co-ordinated approach throughout the school that is already benefiting all pupils and raising their attainment. There is still much work to be done to raise overall standards to a satisfactory level. The programme of study needs to be fully implemented throughout the school and ICT skills need to be embedded across the whole curriculum. At present, the number of computers is insufficient to meet pupils' needs, particularly for those who do not have computers at home.

MUSIC

130. Overall standards are average in Year 2 and rise to above average in Year 6. They are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspections. In singing, standards are higher and are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This is because all pupils receive good quality teaching in singing from an enthusiastic subject specialist. The pupils enjoy music, particularly singing,

join in with enthusiasm and are proud of their achievements. These standards represent satisfactory progress since the previous inspections of the separate schools. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants and this enables them to be fully included in composing music and performing. Pupils who show talent in music are well catered for in lessons, such as when playing instruments to accompany the singing. There is a strong tradition of music in the school and pupils have many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and performances, often joining with other schools for major productions which enhance their skills and personal development. The standards achieved by Year 6 reflect the detailed curricular planning for Years 3 to 6, which provides good support for teachers who are not subject specialists.

131. By the end of Year 2, pupils have built up an extensive repertoire of songs and sing unaccompanied, making good attempts at singing in tune. During an infant assembly led by a Year 1 class the pupils led the hymn singing themselves demonstrating clear diction and an awareness of others. When accompanied, they sing in tune and are beginning to show good voice control for their age. The weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 and 2, identified in the previous inspection report for the infant school, have been remedied. The school 'buys in' support from the local authority's music service, which provides helpful guidance and demonstration lessons. This has been effective in raising the confidence of the staff and in increasing their subject knowledge. As a consequence, the pupils now have more opportunities to add their own accompaniments to poems and songs, making well-considered choices of instruments to create the desired effect. This was evident when Year 2 pupils were creating an accompaniment for the poem 'There are Big Waves'. They selected the ocean drum for the big waves and bells for the little waves. They record their music and are beginning to evaluate their performances, listening carefully and making sensible suggestions for improvement, for example when suggesting the music to represent the big waves needed to be louder.

132. From the beginning of Year 3, pupils begin to read notation and all pupils have opportunities to play chime bars in lessons to accompany their singing. They begin to understand the use of chord accompaniments. All lessons consist of a period of time for listening, for singing and for making music. The variety of activities retains pupils' interest and concentration and they work hard to succeed in most lessons. By Year 5, pupils successfully create their own compositions to represent the story of 'Theseus and the Minotaur' and perform to a good standard. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 show their increasing ability to retain their part in songs with up to four parts and, by Year 6, do so with ease. Their diction is very clear and use of musical elements such as pitch, dynamics and duration is good. Overall voice control is very good. Pupils listen carefully to music and offer their views on pieces they hear, for example 'London Symphony' by Vaughan Williams.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but it will take a little longer for the improvements in teaching in Years 1 and 2 to become evident in standards by the age of seven. There are strengths in the management of pupils, particularly when all are practising their compositions, with effective means of gaining the attention of pupils without raising voices. The resources are also used well, including the good number of electronic keyboards, to enable all pupils to be involved in music making in most lessons. This helps them to develop understanding of how to create feelings and moods through music. Teachers assess pupils as they work in small groups and know those who need extra support. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of breathing and posture when singing, evident in an excellent hymn practice. The good teaching is also evident in pupils' singing in assemblies, which is spiritually uplifting.

134. The curriculum is effectively enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These are well attended by both girls and boys. The choir of over 60 pupils is eagerly awaiting the opportunity to perform as part of the Welcome Ceremony for the Commonwealth Games. The joint productions give

many pupils opportunities to take part in live performances in major venues such as Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall. Pupils who receive instrumental music tuition, which is of good quality, also join in school performances and lessons and so improve their performance skills.

135. The subject is well led and managed. The teaching is closely monitored and evaluated leading to a termly progress report being produced. The co-ordinator has already identified the need for a detailed scheme of work to support teachers in Years 1 and 2 and is currently working on this. Year 6 pupils reported that music was the best aspect of the school and talked about their experiences with pride. The subject contributes well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils throughout the school. A very good performance of Bumblesnouts', an environmental musical, gave the audience some important messages. The provision in music is a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Overall standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and have improved since the previous inspections. Pupils throughout the school achieve well, including those with special educational needs or who are potentially talented in sport, due to the good teaching and pupils' attitudes and efforts. No gymnastic lessons were observed during the inspection but pupils were observed developing, athletic, dance and games skills. Pupils undertake swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4 and by the time they leave the school most are able to swim twenty-five metres unaided. Many of these pupils achieve higher awards in survival techniques. They swim competitively in regular galas against other schools.

137. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. All lessons were planned well to a good standard, but one playground lesson was adversely affected by the gusts of wind that continually blew down the equipment and affected the pace of the lesson. The management of the pupils was at least good and most lessons moved forward with good pace which ensured that the pupils' heart rates remained high following the initial challenging warm up activities.

138. Pupils enjoy the lessons and behave well in them. They take part enthusiastically, co-operate well in pairs or in groups and follow instructions promptly. In dance lessons in Year 2 pupils are challenged through the good use of music so that they perform movements well, using body and hands to vary their shape, size, mood and direction as they successfully interpret the events and the emotions of 'The Sleeping Beauty'. The teacher and teaching assistant enthusiastically encourage the pupils with the teacher making very good use of the tape recorder to stop and replay the music to help the pupils improve their dance routines. This enthusiasm is also shown by Year 5 teachers who organise group games with their classes to teach the key skills of cricket. These lessons are resourced to a very good level and effective demonstrations help pupils to improve their bowling action and reinforce the correct way to grip the bat. A good athletics lesson in Year 4 enabled pupils to develop their skills in a range of events. The teacher's very secure subject knowledge and management of the pupils led to the equipment being set out quickly and the time for practising skills maximised, although some over exemplification of the activities slowed the pace slightly at this point. The pupils worked hard, putting every effort into the activities and improvement in their skills was evident. Pupils in Year 6 understand the need for physical activity and for rules and show good catching, throwing and ball retrieval skills during a game of cricket.

139. The two co-ordinators for the subject have produced a comprehensive action plan to further enrich the provision. The subject is well led with the current provision being evaluated. The curriculum is fully enriched by a wide range of sports clubs, adventurous activities, training programmes and competitive teams. Pupils are being taught to assess their own performances through the introduction of school standards awards. Games and sports coaches are invited into the school to

work with the pupils and to help staff gain greater confidence and develop techniques. The school takes part in a full range of local and national sports activities where talented pupils can flourish.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. Religious education is to be inspected as part of the Section 23 Denominational inspection and will be reported on separately.