

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Huyton

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104480

Headteacher: Mr A Heaton

Reporting inspector: Mr B Tyrer  
23101

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 246380

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 – 11  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| School address:              | Hillside Road<br>Huyton<br>Knowsley<br>Merseyside |
| Postcode:                    | L36 8BL   |
| Telephone number:            | (0151) 477 8360                                   |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                                |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Rev Fr M J Lee                                    |
| Date of previous inspection: | January 1998                                      |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |               |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 23101        | Mr B Tyrer    | Registered inspector | Art and design<br>Music   | The school's results and pupils' achievements<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?  |
| 15181        | Mrs M Hackney | Lay inspector        |   | Pupils' attitudes, values, and personal development<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 5862         | Mrs S Heaney  | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology<br>Design and technology<br>Special educational needs |  |
| 6282         | Mrs P Raja    | Team inspector       | Science<br>Physical education<br>Foundation Stage   |  |
| 7399         | Mr P Roberts  | Team inspector       | English<br>Geography<br>History   | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the Longview ward of Knowsley and the school draws most of its pupils from this and other neighbouring wards. There are 271 pupils on roll of whom 120 are boys and 136 are girls. There is a nursery that has 52 children who attend part time. All pupils are white and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Similarly the proportion of pupils identified as having special needs and those who have a statement of special needs is above the national average. Pupils have a range of special needs but in the main these relate to pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those who have emotional or behavioural problems. Socio-economic data shows that many pupils come from families that are disadvantaged and the attainment of children on entry to the Nursery is well below average. The school is a partner in an Education Action Zone (EAZ).

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

This school has good levels of effectiveness and is providing good value for money. Pupils of all ages and abilities are making good progress and are achieving well and the school has just received an achievement award from the DfES for the third consecutive year. Inspection shows that teaching is good in all phases and that standards for pupils in Year 6 are in line with expectations in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent and it is this that is at the heart of the school's success. The governing body is making a good contribution to the effective running of the school. The school is careful to see that pupils of all abilities are catered for. Those pupils who have special educational needs and those who are identified as gifted and talented are well provided for. The school has effective policies to promote equal opportunities and racial equality. Girls and boys achieve equally well regardless of gender.

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

- Pupils achieve well and standards for pupils in Year 6 are in line with expectation in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and relationships are excellent.
- The school is offering a good curriculum within which the provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and excellent provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent.

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

- The attainment of pupils in Year 6 in writing, and information and communication technology and also that of pupils in Year 2 in science.
- Attendance which, whilst improving and close to the national average, remains below the national average.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1998 since when it has made a good improvement. Teaching, the curriculum, assessment and leadership and management have all improved. Other previously good features have been maintained. The key issues raised in the previous inspection report have been effectively addressed although there is a need to continue the improvement made in standards in some subjects. The school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve because the whole school pulls

together well under a very strong headteacher and because of its commitment to self-evaluation.

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 2000          | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |
| English         | D             | D    | D    | A               |
| mathematics     | D             | B    | D    | A               |
| science         | C             | B    | C    | A               |

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

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes and pupils throughout the rest of the school achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with levels of achievement that are well below what is expected. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage - as they do through the rest of the school - but the majority will not reach the expected levels in the curriculum in all but their physical development by the time they enter Year 1. The attainment of pupils aged 11 in National Curriculum tests in 2002 was below average in English and mathematics and was average in science. When compared with similar schools this performance was well above average for English, mathematics and science. Over the years the performance of pupils in Year 6 has improved at a greater rate than that seen nationally. Inspection shows that the attainment of the current cohort of pupils in Year 6 is in line with expectations in English, mathematics and science although it is noted that the quality of writing is below expectations. Pupils aged seven achieved standards that were below average in writing and mathematics in National Curriculum tests in 2002. Their performance was average in reading. When compared with similar schools the reading was in the top five per cent and results for writing and mathematics were above average. Teacher assessment of science showed attainment that was very low for pupils reaching the expected level. Pupils in Year 2 are currently achieving levels in reading writing and mathematics that are in line with expectations and whilst standards have improved in science they remain below expectations. The differences in standards between the results of national tests and those found during the inspection are attributable to the difference in the cohorts and the continuation of improvement to teaching. Standards in other subjects of the curriculum meet expectations with the exception of information and communication technology for pupils in Year 6. The attainment of pupils in religious education is the subject of another report. The school has set reasonable targets for pupils taking National Curriculum tests in 2003.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes, are enthusiastic about school and work hard.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Very good for all pupils wherever they are in school.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils are good at taking responsibility and the relationships they form are excellent.  |
| Attendance                             | Unsatisfactory. Attendance has improved greatly since the time of the last inspection and whilst it continues to improve because of the good strategies for its improvement it remains just below average at present. |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. The provision for the development of communication, language and literacy skills and mathematics for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The teaching of basic skills is good as is the teaching of English and mathematics and science. All pupils are effectively included and their needs met because of the good planning and teaching seen across all phases. This ensures continuity in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding for pupils of all ages. Teachers manage and know their pupils very well and relationships are excellent. Pupils respond very well, enjoy their lessons and work hard as a result.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good. It has improved since the time of the last inspection and now meets all requirements.   |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Excellent. Those with different levels of need, those with statements and those who are gifted and talented are all well provided for and make good progress as a result. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Another improvement since the last inspection – cultural provision is good whilst the provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good.      |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very good. Assessment procedures have improved and are now very good.   |

The school is very well thought of by parents and the school has very good links with them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Excellent. The headteacher's vision and leadership combined with the excellent commitment of all staff result in a school with an exceptional ethos and deservedly recognised achievement. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Good. The governors are instrumental in determining the priorities for the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses well and are meeting their statutory requirements.               |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Very good. The school has very effective systems in place to ensure effective monitoring and effective use of information gathered as a result.  |



|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. The school uses its finances effectively and benefits from well thought out provision of staff. It also enjoys the benefits of its partnership with outside agencies such as the Education Action Zone (EAZ). |
|--------------------------------|--|

The school is very well staffed and the accommodation and resources are good although in areas such as information and communication technology they are better than that. The school is always careful to apply the principles of best value when seeking to purchase goods or services.

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

| <b>What pleases parents most</b>   | <b>What parents would like to see improved</b>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children like school.</li> <li>• That their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• That behaviour is good.</li> <li>• That the school has high expectations.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul> |

The response in the parents' questionnaire and at the meeting was exceptionally favourable. In only one of the 12 questions asked was the favourable response less than 90 per cent. The issues selected above in what pleases parents most all recorded unanimous approval. The inspection team agrees with and endorses the favourable views that parents have of the school. Fifteen per cent of parents were not happy with the school's extra curricular activity and a further 14 per cent said they did not know. The inspection team judges the school's extra curricular provision to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of children on entry to the Nursery is well below what might be expected but because of good teaching these children make good progress and achieve well. However, many will not reach the expected standards in the Foundation Stage curriculum in all but their physical development by the time they enter Year 1.
  
2. Children quickly grow in confidence as they become accustomed to their daily routines and learn to take turns. They respond well to the expectation that they will say 'please' and 'thank-you' but by the end of their time in the Reception class are not always capable of showing concentration for an appropriate amount of time. They achieve well in the basic skills of literacy. They become interested in books and learn nursery rhymes and poems which they can then recite. Some can read simple texts independently and most can recognize and write their own names. Progress in mathematics is good. In the nursery, children count in practical situations, for example when they lay the table at snack time. In the Reception class most can add and subtract with numbers to ten and higher attainers can count to 20 and beyond. There are good opportunities to strengthen and develop concepts around shape and space as well as mass and volume. Alongside this they are successfully beginning to develop the language of mathematics. Provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world enables them to experience magical moments such as the emergence of a butterfly from its pupae. The youngest children learn about ideas such as floating and sinking whilst older ones are becoming aware of the Christian faith and are beginning to develop an understanding of the concept of right and wrong. Children are generally on track to reach the expected standards in their physical development. They quickly learn to be aware of the space around them and are gaining more and more control when using small objects or in making delicate movements. Children make good progress in developing their creative skills. They can use the computer in the Nursery to make pictures and are beginning to mix colours. In music they sing and play instruments many of which they can name. Role play is also used to support development in other areas of the curriculum as well as enabling children to express themselves through their play.
  
3. The results for National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven in 2002 showed that:
  - standards in reading were average;
  - standards in reading were very high (in the top five per cent ) in comparison with similar schools;
  - standards in writing and mathematics were below average;
  - standards in writing and mathematics were above average when compared with similar schools;
  - standards in science were very low at the expected level in teacher assessments; and
  - these results were well below in comparison with similar schools;

It is difficult to see a trend over time for reading but for writing and mathematics the improving trend is broadly in line with the national picture.

4. The attainment of pupils aged 11 in National Curriculum tests showed that:

- attainment in English and mathematics was below average;
  - attainment in English and mathematics was well above average in comparison with similar schools;
  - attainment in science was average and was well above average in comparison with similar schools;
  - based on standards established at age seven, these pupils had made an above average improvement in all three subjects; and
  - the improving trend over time in all three subjects is better than that seen nationally.
5. The school has set challenging yet realistic targets for pupils taking National Curriculum tests in 2003.
  6. Inspection shows that pupils aged seven are meeting expectations in reading, writing and mathematics but are below expectations in science. Pupils aged 11 are meeting expectations in English, mathematics and science although the writing element in English is below expectation. Pupils are achieving well.
  7. The improving standards seen across the school are due to the fact that teaching has improved and to the now consistently good teaching which is meeting the needs of all pupils including the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who are identified as gifted or talented. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
  8. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening. Pupils in Year 1 speak and read clearly and with confidence before a full school assembly to which parents are also invited. In Year 2 they are able to express their opinions about their favourite subjects. Older pupils in Year 6 are good at listening and during Circle Time show that they are capable of expressing themselves coherently. They are good at using language to empathise with others or to explain, for example how they participate in and value the inter-schools youth parliament. By the age of seven most pupils read simple texts with accuracy and higher attaining pupils are able to explain what has been going on in the story. Older pupils read a wider range of material and are able to use books effectively in finding information. They read with fluency. Higher attaining pupils are able to interpret the actions and feelings of characters in their reading of fiction. At the age of seven pupils are using full stops and capital letters accurately in demarcating their sentences. Neat writing is used for imaginative or descriptive purposes. Pupils aged 11 write for a good range of purposes including narratives, letters and poetry. Redrafting is used to good effect but spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax remain below the expected level.
  9. Pupils in Year 2 use mathematical vocabulary effectively and are able to add and subtract numbers to 20 accurately. They can give simple definitions in description of 2D and 3D shapes. In assembling and displaying data they make good use of the computer. In Year 6 pupils are able to describe the particular strategy they have selected for solving a problem and why they chose it. They are aware of the reasonableness of their answers. In science younger pupils in Year 2 are able to construct simple battery-powered circuits and explain why some work and others do not. In Year 6 they plan tests knowing that they have to be fair and do so in such a way as to introduce variable elements. They have covered a range of topics including diet and the function of the major organs of the body.
  10. Attainment for the rest of the curriculum is as expected with the exception of information and communication technology for pupils aged 11 where standards are below expectations. Attainment in religious education is the subject of another report.
  11. Boys and girls are learning at the same rate. Pupils with differing abilities usually all make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs learn well as do those who are provided for as gifted and talented. This is due to the fact that lessons are planned so as to include extra support for pupils where necessary.

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

12. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and children who are under five, have very good attitudes. They are happy, enthusiastic and keen to be involved in all activities. This makes a very strong contribution to their personal progress and achievements and is a significant strength of the school. The school is a very calm, pleasant and orderly environment where pupils are caring and supportive of each other. In all classes, pupils show a distinct pride in their school. Parents are unanimous in their view that pupils like school, behave well and know what is expected of them. In the majority of lessons pupils concentrate well on their work and eagerly respond to questions and challenging tasks. They listen well to their teachers. It is a tribute to the school that from the Reception class onwards pupils, including those with learning and behavioural difficulties, learn to listen carefully and to contribute appropriately and politely. In all classes pupils work very well together in pairs and in groups and they share resources sensibly and co-operatively. When given the opportunity pupils work well independently as was seen in a Year 5 numeracy lesson when pupils worked extremely well on calculating tables using the technique of doubling and halving. Pupils are very friendly and keen to talk to visitors whom they treat with interest and courtesy. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes settle quickly into the very well organised routines where they feel content and secure.
13. Behaviour is very good and is often excellent in all areas of the school, and this has been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy the school's very positive system of reward and celebration of their success. The opportunity to win merit marks and certificates for good work, attendance and behaviour is valued. Pupils respond very well to the school's caring Catholic ethos and the very good adult role models from whom they gain a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. At lunchtime pupils behave in a very orderly manner as they sit at tables in the hall to eat packed lunches and cooked meals. They play together very harmoniously in the playground and there was no evidence of bullying or harassment seen at the time of the inspection. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen and they are confident that any problems would be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. There have been no exclusions during the past year.
14. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. In all classes pupils of different ages and abilities have a happy relationship with their teachers and support assistants and this contributes very positively to their self-esteem and achievements. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities and their classmates are considerate and helpful to ensure that everyone is included. Throughout the school pupils are respectful of the school's Catholic beliefs and values and they are spontaneous in their applause for the success of others. The excellent relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and all adults in the school make a very strong contribution to pupils' academic and personal progress.
15. Pupils' personal development is good and is linked closely to high expectations and learning within a very secure environment. In all classes pupils have the opportunity to take special responsibility for a variety of tasks around the school including acting as classroom monitors, lunchtime assistants and helping and performing in assemblies. However, insufficient opportunity is provided for pupils to develop good independent research skills and to take regular responsibility for their own learning. Although there is no formal school council, in every class pupils contribute well during 'Circle Time' when they discuss a variety of topics including ideas for improving the life of the school.
16. Although the school works hard to raise the level of attendance this remains below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Attendance at 93.8 per cent has improved during this current academic year but unauthorised absence at 0.6 per cent is slightly above the national average. A significant number of pupils take holidays during term time. Most pupils are punctual and eager to come to school. A small group of pupils are regularly late. Registration and lessons start on time and there is an efficient and well-organised start to the day. This has a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes and on their achievement and progress.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good. It is good for pupils in the Foundation Stage, for those in Years 1 and 2 and for those in Years 3 to 6. Nearly three quarters of lessons were good or better with over a quarter being very good or excellent. Just over a quarter was satisfactory and one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Some very good teaching was seen in all phases. This represents a good improvement in teaching, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, since the time of the last inspection. Improvement has been seen in the way teachers provide challenge for higher attaining pupils and in teachers' knowledge in subjects such as information and communication technology and science. The improvement is due to the strong lead given by the headteacher and the high levels of motivation and commitment by the staff. The result is that pupils of all abilities and aptitudes are achieving well.
18. There are many strengths to teaching which far outweigh the areas for improvement noted in a few lessons. Where lessons could be improved attention could be paid to, for example, ensuring that a brisk pace is maintained, that parts of lessons are not overlong or that equipment and resources are tested prior to the commencement of the lesson.
19. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and the strategies for so doing are well embedded. Teachers are good at teaching basic skills which is particularly important given pupils' well below average levels of attainment seen on entry to the school. Their very high expectations can be seen in the careful planning that takes place and in the way that rigorous assessment information is used in that process. As a result pupils of all abilities find that their needs are met. Teachers are generally very effective in the way they choose to teach something. They also work very well with classroom assistants who in turn make a very good contribution to the learning of pupils - be they individuals or in groups. Good use is made of homework.
20. The calm and dedicated way in which teachers and all staff care for their pupils is the most striking feature. Account is clearly taken of pupils' personal backgrounds and circumstances but this is never an excuse nor is it ever allowed to diminish the determination and belief that their pupils can succeed. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel so secure that they are confidently able to discuss their fears and aspirations. An example of this was seen when two Year 6 groups discussed the impact on them of national tests and school inspection. Particularly impressive in these sessions was the fact that pupils showed high levels of maturity, empathy for one another and responsibility in as much as they wanted to do well not only for themselves but for their teachers and their school.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in lessons by teachers and skilled classroom assistants who help them to learn what their classmates are learning. Classroom assistants use methods that match the learning needs of individual pupils. Sometimes the pupil is supported in class, sometimes the pupil works with a small group of other pupils in another area of the school and on occasion may work with peers in a larger group when particular attention is given to learning aspects of literacy or numeracy. Classroom assistants regularly provide pupils with homework and check their progress in reading. They encourage parents to support their pupils with homework and reading, gaining a good response from at least 60 per cent of families. Classroom assistants effectively monitor pupils' progress, keeping good records of their achievements. As a consequence of the care that is given to pupils with special educational needs all are able to learn successfully from the curriculum that is available to other pupils.
22. Because teachers' expectations are made clear and because the ethos of the school is so strong the pupils respond as willing and eager participants in the learning process. They show enthusiasm and maturity and take pleasure in their evident success and that of others. They are making good progress and achieving well in lessons that are typically relaxed, business like and often not without good humour.

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

## PUPILS?

23. The curricular and other opportunities that are offered to pupils are good. The curriculum offers a good range of rich, varied and worthwhile learning opportunities for all of the pupils and fully reflects the school's aims and values. The weekly allocation of teaching time is well above the minimum recommended levels in both Years 1 to 2 and Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 to 6, both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are well established and the curriculum conforms fully to statutory requirements. The experiences that it provides are a major factor in moulding both the positive attitudes of pupils and their notable enjoyment of learning. All of the National Curriculum subjects for primary schools are taught and a recent addition has been the introduction of Spanish in Year 6. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and allows for a smooth transition into the work planned for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum has improved since the time of the last inspection in that extra-curricular provision which was described as 'limited' is now good. The information and communication technology programme now meets with the requirements of the National Curriculum and there has been improvement to the way investigative science is taught.
24. The school has effective strategies for the teaching of both literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. In addition to the National Literacy Strategy, literacy skills are supported particularly in history, geography and religious education and to a lesser extent in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT). In each of these subjects, speaking and listening feature prominently as well as reading and writing. A written policy for literacy across the curriculum however has not yet been devised and not all of the foundation subjects have a statement in their policies about literacy. Whilst the National Numeracy Strategy is the main vehicle for teaching numeric skills, graphs, charts and tables as well as practical measurement, estimation and the interpretation of data are built into schemes of work for the teaching of geography, science, design and technology and ICT.
25. There is a good and a varied programme of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils. Sports provision includes football, athletics, netball and cross-country. Pupils are given the opportunity to learn to play one of four musical instruments: flute, recorder, clarinet and keyboard. With regard to Citizenship, Year 4 pupils have attended a ten week, in-school course run by the local education authority which has focused on issues such as the environment (designing a park), litter, vandalism, 'stranger danger' and road safety. A Homework and Revision Club that meets once a week has been set up to help pupils revise English, maths or science in the computer suite.
26. Arrangements to ensure that pupils have equality of access and opportunity are excellent. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those who are gifted and talented are extremely well catered for in every activity that the school provides. Severely disabled pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need have equal access to the entire curriculum and the school ensures that they are able to take part in out-of-school visits. Girls as well as boys are members of football teams.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Course planning is based on the framework in the National Curriculum handbook for primary teachers and is designed to help pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that are required for the exercise of personal and social responsibility. The programme that is taught helps pupils to develop safer, healthy lifestyles, to cultivate good relationships respecting differences between people and to play active roles as citizens. The health education topics in Reception and in Years 1, 3 and 6 contain drug awareness elements: those that are taught in Year 2 are about relationships and Years 5 and 6 cover sex and relationships.
28. The school has forged excellent links with its local community. Three former employees at the school and a former headteacher support SEN pupils once a week on a voluntary basis. In order to be able to give better support to their children, a group of parents has attended a family literacy class for ten weeks and another group has volunteered to do road safety under the 'Kerbcraft'

scheme. Meetings have taken place to improve road safety in the neighbourhood of the school, attended by the head teacher, parent and governors' representatives and the LEA Road Safety Officer. School nurses teach children in the Nursery and Reception about healthy eating habits and dental health guidance is given to Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Under the 'New Deal for Communities' scheme, money has been identified to rebuild an outdoor store and for the employment of additional classroom assistants: the next planned project under this scheme is a mobile library that will visit the school once a week.

29. The school enjoys good relationships with partner institutions. Included within an Education Action Zone, the school works closely with four other primaries and one secondary school. At the monthly meetings that have taken place, a wide range of initiatives and developments has been launched, supported by a high level of funding. The school has very well developed links with three secondary schools as regards the transfer of pupils and secondary school teachers have given art lessons at the school. During the inspection pupils received the first of six weekly lessons from one of the high school's Spanish teachers. The school has also been linked with a Beacon school in the development of a project on Shakespeare. Teachers and pupils have visited the Beacon school for joint activities and the outcome has been the presentation of an extract from 'The Tempest' in the school hall for pupils and parents. The school has also been very well supported by 'Merseygrid' which has supplied extensive training and expertise in ICT.
30. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Very good provision is made for the spiritual development of pupils, with the headteacher taking a clear and committed leading role. The strongly held Catholic beliefs and the whole ethos of the school encourage pupils of all abilities to reflect on a set of values, principles and beliefs on which to base their everyday lives. Pupils' contributions are valued and recognised and this effectively raises their self-esteem and confidence. This results in a community where there is great respect for all individuals through excellent relationships and consequently pupils are motivated to learn. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the world around them and to appreciate the beauty of nature. In the Reception class children saw a caterpillar hatch into a butterfly and were full of wonder and excitement as the butterfly flew away. During assemblies pupils reflect on aspects of their own lives and their relationships with others linked closely to Christian beliefs. Good provision is made through the curriculum in such areas as art, music, poetry and history for pupils to experience a sense of wonder and to learn to appreciate and enjoy.
31. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is a reflection of the school's excellent ethos. Each class has a clear set of simple rules which pupils have helped to write and they understand that living by these rules will help to make the school a happy place for everyone. Teaching and support staff are very good role models for the children and have consistently high expectations of good behaviour which most pupils try hard to live up to. From an early age pupils are made aware of the difference between right and wrong and most have a clear understanding of how their actions affect the well-being and happiness of others. Through stories, themes in assemblies, Circle Time and within the curriculum, pupils regularly consider particular moral issues concerned with fairness, justice and truth and their effect on society. Through the strong programme of personal, social and health education good provision is made for sex education and drugs awareness linked closely to Christian beliefs.
32. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Starting from the Nursery, pupils throughout the school learn to co-operate and to support each other very well during lessons and other activities. A very good example was seen in the Nursery when children enjoyed their snack time sitting at tables in small groups whilst passing bread, fruit and drinks very politely to each other. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to make a good contribution towards school life and take an active role in ensuring that the school functions as an orderly environment. The school helps them to be confident in performing during class assemblies, often before a large audience of pupils and parents. In all classes pupils take part in well-organised Circle Time where most are keen to share their feelings with others. Relationships between adults and pupils are mutually very respectful which provide very good role models to support social development and interaction. Examples of this were seen in the playground and whilst pupils were eating together

at lunchtime. Pupils work very well together in pairs and in groups during many lessons and they share resources very sensibly and co-operatively.

33. Overall the provision for pupils' cultural development is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Opportunities are provided within the curriculum for pupils to gain an insight into their own culture through a range of music, stories, paintings and artefacts. In all classes pupils go out on a number of visits to places of educational and cultural interest. These include, amongst others, Wigan Pier, theatre and the Planetarium in Years 5/6, Chester in Years 3/4 and the Liverpool Museum and Walker Art Gallery in Years 1 and 2. Children in the Reception and Nursery classes take part in a Teddy Bears Picnic and visit Liverpool Museum and Croxteth Park. The provision to promote pupils' understanding and awareness of a multicultural society has improved with the introduction of the 'Here I am' scheme. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures during RE, music, art and geography lessons and during literacy lessons they read stories from different countries of the world. Pupils develop a clear understanding through a variety of multicultural displays of books, posters and photographs which are prominent around the school. The main festivals of different religions are celebrated through display. However, no opportunity is provided to enrich pupils' experience and awareness through visits to places of worship used by other faiths. Themed meal days are organised each term and have included American and Italian days with a Chinese day to be held later this term.
34. Throughout the school particular attention is given to the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of pupils with special educational needs. All staff offer good role models for these areas of learning and the whole atmosphere of the school encourages pupils to respect one another. The school's curriculum includes lessons that help pupils to become personally and socially mature. Specialists from the Behaviour Support Team in the local authority often teach these lessons and pupils respond positively. Those pupils with emotional and behavioural problems benefit particularly from these elements of the curriculum. The school's provision for the development of these aspects of interpersonal behaviour contributes to the establishment of an environment that is conducive to effective learning for all pupils.

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

35. Very good provision is made for pupils' support and welfare, maintaining what was seen at the last inspection. The school provides a very safe and caring environment in which to learn. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for in school and that any problems are effectively and promptly resolved. Teachers and other staff know pupils and their families well and they are very alert to their individual, physical and emotional needs. This helps pupils to learn and has a very positive effect on their attitude and behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and this enables them to take full advantage of all the educational opportunities the school provides. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified when they start school and in Year 1 pupils' attainments are systematically screened to decide how to support those needing further help, particularly for their learning in literacy and numeracy. Throughout their time in school the progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored, using effective assessments and records and these records are reviewed regularly in order to decide how best to take pupils' learning forward. As a result all pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Detailed plans are drawn up to guide the teaching and learning of each of the pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. These individual education plans are prepared through consultation between the co-ordinator for special educational needs, the class teacher, a classroom assistant and the child's parents. They are then used as a basis from which to prepare suitable lessons for pupils.
36. The induction procedures as children enter the Nursery class and Reception class are very well established and this ensures that parents understand how the school is organised and helps children to settle quickly into school routines. Pupils in Year 6 and their parents are very well supported to ensure a smooth transition into secondary education.



37. The school has improved assessment procedures - identified as a key issue in the previous inspection. It now has very effective procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils and for monitoring and supporting their academic progress.
38. There is a written policy for assessment that ensures that all teachers are fully aware of its essential purposes. There are three elements to the assessment procedures that are used. Short-term assessments are carried out each week and are recorded in teachers' planning books which are monitored by the headteacher. These are used to inform curricular planning on a weekly basis and may indicate the need for consolidation in particular subjects either for a whole class or for particular groups of pupils. Medium-term assessments are recorded in the observational diaries that all teachers keep. These record the progress that each pupil makes over a half term in the key elements of each of the core subjects and also the progress that is made in each of the foundation subjects on a yearly basis. They provide an evidence base that may be used to target specific curricular objectives, particularly in the core subjects, to review the work and progress of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and to inform the writing of yearly reports to parents. The individual pupil tracking records, which are passed from one teacher to the next as pupils move through the school, are also used to inform planning and to monitor the progress particularly of pupils with SEN and those who are gifted and talented.
39. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 take optional tests in the core subjects towards the end of the academic year. These inform about expected National Curriculum levels and help to identify any underachievement. To help teachers determine these levels in English, portfolios of levelled work have been assembled but these are not yet available for the other core subjects. Recent developments in assessment include the introduction of a scheme called the School Continuous Improvement Programme. This allows every pupil to be allocated a National Curriculum level in each foundation subject except for music and physical education and for which all staff have had relevant training and the encouragement of Year 6 pupils to set their own targets for improvement. The school also makes effective use of other nationally available banks of tests.
40. Teachers make very good use of ongoing assessment in their lessons, particularly at the start and in the plenary, to help pupils' recall prior learning and to monitor the progress that they make from one lesson to the next. The marking of pupils' work is meticulous: although not always the case in science, it indicates errors and inadequacies and sets targets for improvement as well as giving due praise and encouragement for outstanding work and effort. Pupils look forward very much to being commended for their endeavours in their assemblies.
41. The Health and Safety policy is well implemented. The site is well monitored by the headteacher and the site manager and a formal risk assessment is completed annually. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that any safety issues are reported and promptly followed up. Pupils are very well supervised during lessons and in the playground and good attention is paid to their safety throughout the day. Electrical equipment and PE resources are checked regularly and regular fire drills ensure that the building can be evacuated quickly and safely. The provision for first aid is good with a number of qualified first aiders on site. All accidents are well recorded and parents are contacted promptly where necessary. The provision for sex education and drugs awareness has improved since the last inspection and the school now has a clear policy and appropriate guidelines.
42. Child Protection procedures are very good and all concerns are well monitored and recorded. The headteacher is the named designated person with responsibility and has attended a range of recent training courses. He is also the designated child protection officer for the parish. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are made fully aware of the school's procedures through the headteacher's strong commitment to this area of pupils' welfare. All pupils have access to outside support agencies. Good up-to-date personal and medical records are kept for all pupils and these are used well to support pupils' individual needs.
43. Good procedures are followed to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are completed accurately and consistently and because the data is recorded electronically information about patterns of attendance is readily available. Since the last inspection the school has improved its

procedures to ensure that registers are closed promptly in the morning and that all lateness is well recorded. The school is well supported by the education welfare officer and unauthorised absence is followed up quickly on a first day call basis.

44. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and are followed consistently by all staff throughout the school. The very positive and valued system of reward and celebration for good work and behaviour includes the award of merits, certificates, letters home and the gold award. The manner in which pupils, including those with special needs, behave and the absence of harassment reflects the school's high expectations linked closely to very good procedures. The anti-bullying policy is displayed and provides pupils with clear strategies for coping with inappropriate behaviour. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' educational and personal development are very good. All staff know pupils very well and so can monitor their personal achievements well.

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

45. The school has a good partnership with parents, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. It works hard to welcome them and to encourage them to play an active role in supporting their children's learning. Parents are very satisfied and proud of the school. They are unanimous that they feel welcome and are very comfortable to ask questions and to discuss problems. Parents are regularly invited to special events such as concerts, class assemblies, Masses and sports days. During the inspection a large group of parents attended the Year 1 assembly presentation when the headteacher was extremely welcoming and genuinely valued their presence. Many parents attend Sacramental Preparation Programmes led by the headteacher, which results in them knowing each other well. A significant strength is the support and co-operation that parents show towards the school's policy for pupils to wear school uniform. Parents value the fact that teachers and support staff are readily available to speak to them and that the headteacher takes a strong leading role in providing regular pastoral support for them and their families.
46. Although many parents provide valuable help at home by listening to reading and assisting with homework topics, there are others who find it difficult to support the work of the school. The school has created an attractive dedicated parents' room and is currently running a very successful family literacy group which is managed by the Foundation Stage coordinator and attended by a significant number of parents of pupils in the Reception class. Parents speak highly of the knowledge and skills they are learning and this additional help at home is already having a favourable effect on children's progress. A number of parent volunteers are readily available to help when pupils are taken out on trips, and through a pioneering scheme a group of parents have been formally trained to do roadside safety crossing with children in Year 1. Many of the teaching assistants started off as parent helpers in classrooms.
47. The quality of information for parents is good. Parents are satisfied with the amount of information they receive about their children's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well informed. A teaching assistant who is a parent and part of the local community works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and has special responsibility for ensuring that parents are fully involved and that they understand individual education plans and receive regular updates on progress. Although it is not the practice to send out regular school newsletters, the headteacher provides parents with information about changes in organisation and specific events as they arise. Parents receive a homework timetable at the start of each year. Prior to children's induction into the Nursery and Reception class parents attend a meeting and receive a 'starting school pack'. Insufficient information is provided for parents about the curriculum and what pupils are learning and the school has recognised this as an area for development. All pupils have home/school reading record books and parents are encouraged to use these as a communication between home and school. Formal consultation evenings are held twice a year and are usually well attended.
48. Reports to parents are satisfactory and cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage. In some classes inconsistencies in style and content result in the quality of

the reports providing insufficiently clear information about progress. Insufficient attention is paid to setting targets in the reports to ensure that parents know what pupils need to do to improve. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet the statutory requirements and provide a good amount of helpful information about organisation and the curriculum.

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

49. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent and it is because of this that the school has many strengths which enable the pupils to achieve well. The headteacher's vision is understood and supported by all staff and the governing body. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection in almost every aspect whilst previously high standards have also been maintained. The school is reflective and is engaged in a rigorous and effective self-review process and so is able to identify with accuracy those areas that it wishes to improve. There is an excellent commitment to the realisation of the school's aims and this makes it a dynamic and inclusive body that is able to recognise and provide for the whole range of pupils' needs. The school's Catholicity adds an extra dimension to the excellent ethos of the school. A haven of calm and tranquillity in an area of high social deprivation, the school enables pupils to experience security and success not only in their academic development but also in their personal development as well. During the inspection the school received its third consecutive national achievement award.
  
50. Leadership and management are so effective because delegation empowers staff and enables them to take responsibility. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher who makes her own significant contribution in areas such as special educational needs and in developing and managing the school's systems for assessment. Subject coordinators and senior staff monitor the progress of teaching and the curriculum very well and give detailed reports including the identification for areas of development to the governing body. All staff, including those with non-teaching responsibilities, understand clearly what is expected of them and are happy and confident in making their own contribution to the smooth running of the school.
  
51. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs are excellent. The governor for special educational needs is employed as a classroom assistant in the school. She has a good understanding of pupils' needs and makes a positive contribution to the work of the school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs maintains accurate records of pupils' attainments and progress. She ensures all pupils are provided with appropriate support, taking advice from specialist agencies when necessary, and arranges regular meetings to review and revise the plans for individual pupils' learning. Additionally, she ensures that teachers and classroom assistants have confidence when teaching pupils with special educational needs through her support and by arranging suitable training opportunities for colleagues. She also manages a register of those pupils who are judged to be gifted and talented in Year 2, using strategies similar to those described for pupils with special educational needs. The care given to supporting pupils with special educational needs, as well as that given to able pupils, mirrors the quality of support that teachers offer to all pupils. The school, then, can be said to be truly inclusive.
  
52. The school's improvement planning is of a high standard and the process by which it is drawn up takes account of, amongst other things, the outcomes of staff appraisal. In allocating funds to the plan care is always taken to ensure that the principles of best value are adhered to. School improvement planning is better now than at the time of the last inspection when its prioritisation was in need of improvement.

53. Much of the school's success is due to the support of the governing body which is making a good contribution to the management of the school. Governors are well informed about its running and are instrumental in deciding its direction. Governors bring a good range of experience to individual committees and to the full governing body itself. They are fulfilling their statutory duties well and are effective in fixing and overseeing the school's budget. Because many governors actually work in the school or are connected with the church there is a very high level of understanding with respect to individual pupils' circumstances and family backgrounds as well as to how they are faring in school.
54. The school has developed excellent links with partner institutions so that pupils have benefited greatly from, for example, a very fruitful partnership with the Education Action Zone (EAZ). Sadly the termination of this innovative scheme and partnership will set the school the challenge of filling the gap in the excellent provision being made, for example, to gifted and talented pupils, by the closure of the EAZ. The school has links with several training institutions and high schools and offers those placed there very good opportunities to develop their particular skills.
55. Use of technology such as the optical marking system for registers is an example of how the school embraces and uses to advantage new and developing technologies. The equipping of two well-used interactive white boards in classrooms is another indication of the school's commitment to improvement via the use of technology.
56. The school is very well staffed with a generous number of teachers and classroom assistants and this has many beneficial effects not least being that, as a result, all teachers are given time away from their classes during the school week in order to undertake their administrative tasks. The school is well resourced and the building is well suited to meeting the needs of the curriculum.

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

57. In order to raise standards further the headteacher and governing body should:
  - (i) Continue to implement and monitor the provisions in the school development plan for the improvement of writing and information and communication technology for pupils aged 11 and similarly so in science for pupils aged seven.  
*(paragraphs 6, 10, 71, 84, 109, 111)*
  - (ii) Whilst seeking new and innovative further measures, continue to improve attendance by use of the school's already good procedures.  
*(paragraphs 16, 43)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

|    |
|----|
| 62 |
|----|

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

|    |
|----|
| 34 |
|----|

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection***

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 4         | 13        | 27   | 17           | 1              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 7         | 21        | 44   | 27           | 2              | 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***

| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>                                    | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 26      | 245     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0       | 166     |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

| <b>Special educational needs</b>                                    | Nursery | YR-Y6 |
|---|---------|-------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 1       | 8     |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 9       | 88    |

| <b>English as an additional language</b>                | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0            |

| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 11           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 7            |

## **Attendance**

### **Authorised absence**

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 5.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

### **Unauthorised absence**

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0.6 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2002 | 12   | 15    | 27    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 10      | 10      | 10          |
|   | Girls    | 13      | 14      | 14          |
|   | Total    | 23      | 24      | 24          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 85 (63) | 89 (78) | 89 (89)     |
|   | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 10      | 10          | 9       |
|   | Girls    | 14      | 14          | 9       |
|   | Total    | 24      | 24          | 18      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 89 (74) | 89 (89)     | 67 (81) |
|   | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89)     | 89 (89) |

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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2002 | 24   | 22    | 46    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 18      | 21          | 24       |
|   | Girls    | 18      | 15          | 22       |
|   | Total    | 36      | 36          | 46       |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 78 (80) | 78 (83)     | 100 (95) |
|   | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71)     | 86 (87)  |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 18      | 21          | 24       |
|   | Girls    | 20      | 18          | 22       |
|   | Total    | 38      | 39          | 46       |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 83 (80) | 85 (83)     | 100 (95) |
|   | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74)     | 82 (82)  |

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 220                  | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – Irish                                       | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Chinese   | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

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

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 12.5 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 19.6 |
| Average class size                       | 27.2 |

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 14  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 288 |

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 26 |
| Total number of education support staff  | 1  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    | 35 |

**Financial information**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Financial year                             | 2001/02 |
|  | £       |
| Total income                               | 685,413 |
| Total expenditure                          | 632,636 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2,529   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 35,332  |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 34,270  |



|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 13 |
|--------------------------------|----|

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 0.4 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 0.4 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 271 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 85  |

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 79             | 20            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 84             | 16            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 64             | 36            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 53             | 40            | 4                | 4                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.  | 78             | 20            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 65             | 27            | 5                | 1                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 79             | 20            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 89             | 11            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 60             | 34            | 1                | 1                 | 4          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 75             | 21            | 0                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 75             | 24            | 0                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 41             | 31            | 11               | 4                 | 14         |

## **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**

58. The quality of provision made in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Nursery when they are three years of age on a part-time basis and move to the Reception class when they are four years old. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. Teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection helping children to achieve well. Progress overall from this low base is good for all children, including those with special educational needs. By the end of the Reception Year attainment shows good improvement but despite good teaching most children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and creative development. The majority is on course to reach the goals in physical development. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world improves considerably during this time, but there are still some gaps by the end of the Reception Year.
59. Teaching is good and provides a wide range of imaginative practical activities that engage children's interest and build well upon their previous learning. Adults have very good relationships with the children and manage their behaviour with a consistent approach. Learning is directed well but on occasions, adults take too long in explanations and do not manage time efficiently to ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace. Activities are assessed on an ongoing basis and good records are maintained that help staff plan effectively for the next steps in learning. Support staff work very effectively with both teachers and make very good contribution to children's learning. Children with special educational needs are very well integrated in the Nursery and the Reception class. They are well supported and their individual needs are met well, consequently they make good progress.
60. The curriculum is good across the areas of learning and reflects high expectations for the children. Very good use is made of homework, which contributes well to pupils' learning whilst strengthening links with parents. Good induction procedures are well established. Parents are kept well informed through letters each half term.

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

61. Adults promote children's personal, social and emotional development effectively through the good teaching. A number of children enter the school with immature skills in this area. Most learn the daily routines such as self-registration and tidying up at the end of sessions in the Nursery and the Reception class and begin to feel confident in choosing activities and in relating to others. They develop growing independence and can look after their personal needs such as undressing and dressing for physical education lessons. Staff raise children's self-esteem by praising their efforts and achievements. They value what children have to say, listen with interest and foster respect amongst them. Children become progressively confident in taking turns. Behaviour is good and they respond well to staff and other children. Children are taught social skills directly. For example, they are expected to say 'please' and 'thank you' and take turns in setting the table and passing the food around at snack times. By the end of the Reception Year, children are more confident, are well behaved, form good relationships and grow in maturity but still need support to concentrate and persevere with their learning for longer periods. Although they make good progress, they are unlikely to reach the expected standards.

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

62. Children achieve well in the basic skills of literacy as a result of the good teaching they receive. Children's language skills are poorly developed when they start Nursery and despite the progress

children make, most are still below the expected standard, but a significant minority is on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Adults use discussion, questioning and explanations well to generate interesting situations for developing oral skills. Children are encouraged to listen to stories and recite rhymes and poems. Circle Time also encourages children to talk about their own experiences. Children are developing an interest in books. The teaching of reading by letter sounds is systematic and children make good progress. Most recognise their own names and read familiar words with growing accuracy. A significant minority is capable of reading simple texts independently. Many write their names independently with increasing accuracy in shape and form. Children are given opportunities to write narratives such as rewriting 'Mr Gumpy's Outing' and a few children write unaided. The majority of children, including those with special educational needs manage with support, to produce writing patterns, write their names using upper and lower case letters and copy sentences written by teachers.

### **Mathematical development**

63. The good teaching with a practical approach contributes effectively to children achieving well. Children, including those with special educational needs make good progress in their mathematical development but most are unlikely to reach the early learning goals. In the Nursery children play number games and count in practical situations such as when laying the table for a group of children at snack time, counting milk cartons and the number of children present at registration. In the Reception class most children add and subtract with numbers up to ten. Higher attainers can count to 20 and beyond accurately. Good creative use is made of a range of resources to develop mathematical skills, including sand and water to experience weighing and measuring with non-standard units. Children enjoy playing number games. They recognise primary colours and some two-dimensional shapes and experience use of three-dimensional shapes in making junk models. Class routines are used well for providing opportunities to sort and match classroom materials, objects and small equipment. Most children are beginning to use simple mathematical language such as big and tall but this aspect is generally underdeveloped.

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

64. A good range of activities both inside the classrooms and outside is provided. It lays good foundation for future science, religious education, history, geography and information technology related learning. This was particularly well evidenced when the Reception children experienced awe and wonder at observing caterpillars hatch into butterflies and in subsequently watching one of the butterflies fly away. They learnt that newly hatched butterflies have moist wings and cannot fly until the wings are dry. The opportunity was also taken to observe the symmetry in patterns and colour of the wings. They develop spiritual awareness of creation of new life and say a prayer thanking the lord for the butterfly. Whilst nursery children experience the concept of sinking and floating using similar objects to those in the story 'Mr Gumpy's Outing' they show a lack of confidence in answering questions. They look for adult support and seek their approval before answering. Children are beginning to use the computer with growing independence and can access programs using simple operations accurately. Children are beginning to develop awareness through stories of right and wrong and knowledge of Christianity but have few opportunities to understand people's belief in different religions. Whilst teaching and progress are good most children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals.

### **Physical development**

65. Teaching is good overall and children make good progress in their physical development with a majority of children reaching the required standard by the end of the Reception Year. In the school hall, children demonstrate good co-ordination and control and travel confidently in different directions. They run and jump showing regard for safety, space and others. They jump and land with firm control. The regular opportunities for outdoor play in the Nursery and Reception class help children to develop their physical skills and the large wheeled bikes and trikes are manoeuvred and reversed in parking spaces with considerable skill. The many practical activities that the teaching provides like manipulating play dough and making collages, allows children to

practise and develop fine motor skills.

## **Creative development**

66. Children's attainment in creative development is below expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Most children including those with special educational needs make good progress. Nursery children use the computer program with some support to create pictures using at least three colours. They express their ideas about 'Mr Gumpy's Outing' pictorially and draw his house. They make Mr Gumpy's portrait using different shades by mixing colours. They begin to recognise simple sound patterns and sing simple songs from memory. They learn names of common musical instruments such as cymbals and glockenspiel and experiment with creating low and high sounds. Construction kits also enable children to model and build with the large outdoor kits enabling children to make simple constructions such as a racing track. Role-play is used effectively providing a range of opportunities for imaginative play.

## **ENGLISH**

67. Standards are rising in English for pupils at the ages of both seven and 11. In the National Curriculum tests of reading for seven-year-olds in 2002, standards were broadly in line with the national average. In the tests for writing, standards were below the national average in 2002 where they had been well below from 1999 to 2001. In the national tests of English for 11 year olds in 2002 standards were below the national average but were well above the average for similar schools. These results denote a marked improvement since the previous inspection when progress between the ages of seven and 11 was considered to be unsatisfactory in reading, writing and speaking and listening. They further denote a high level of achievement. However, the school recognises that standards in writing of pupils at the age of 11 need further improvement and that there is also at this age a marked underachievement of higher attaining pupils.
68. Inspection shows that standards overall in English for pupils aged seven and 11 are in line with expectations. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below the standard expected with regard to the development of literacy skills. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Work seen and lessons observed during the inspection indicate a rising level of attainment throughout the school in every aspect of literacy. The National Literacy Strategy is now effectively in place and all teachers are confident in its organisation and usage. An extra hour is allocated each week for extended writing and there is a planned progression for the development of speaking and listening skills. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and teachers always try to include pupils at all attainment levels in every activity.
69. Pupils make good progress in both speaking and listening and standards meet expectations for pupils aged seven and 11. They listen well both during assemblies and in lessons and have a good attention span. Teachers make a conspicuous attempt to promote speaking and listening skills in lessons across the curriculum. Some pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are beginning to use complex sentence structures both in their speaking and in their writing. Pupils communicate well with each other as well as with their teachers and this helps them to make a good level of progress in the group work sessions of lessons. A very small number of pupils fail to listen with due attention to teachers and classroom assistants and consequently their advance in speaking is limited.
70. The concentration on reading skills since the previous inspection has been successful. By the age of seven standards meet expectations, most pupils read simple texts accurately although those of below average attainment have difficulty with some verbs in the past tense. Higher attaining pupils can recount stories that they have recently read in some detail although they are not certain of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. All pupils regularly take home books to read. The reading standard of pupils at the age of 11 is average: their reading embraces a wider range of material including newspapers, periodicals and library books (both fiction and non-fiction) in addition to their school books. Pupils of average and higher attainment use the

contents and index pages of non-fiction books competently for locating information. One pupil who was interviewed about her reading showed a marked degree of empathy when recounting how the main character in a book that she had been reading was obliged to leave her native country. All pupils record their reading in diaries, to which parents add comments and this is an important factor in the progress that they make.

71. The standard of writing of pupils at the age of seven is average. At this age, pupils are beginning to make a proper use of capital letters and full stops in the sentences that they write. Their letter formation is accurate and their writing is neat and straight. Higher attaining pupils occasionally use commas and undertake some simple comprehension work; imaginative as well as descriptive writing is to be found in their notebooks. At the age of 11, the standard of writing is below the national expectation. There is a good range of writing in pupils' books including narratives, letters, biographies, discursive pieces, poems, response to literature and comprehension exercises. The hour of extended writing that is provided each week for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 is helping develop some of the higher order writing skills. Pupils make profitable use of their redrafting books in which they edit and improve their writing on different subjects across the curriculum. However, the standard of writing of the majority of pupils, with regard to spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax remains unsatisfactory.
72. The quality of teaching is good. It was good or better in nine of the 11 lessons seen during the inspection and very good in three of them. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be good or better in only two-fifths of lessons. All teachers have a secure subject knowledge which enables them to teach competently all the aspects of literacy. In their skilful questioning, they challenge and extend thinking and recall and always try to encourage the full participation of pupils at differing levels of prior attainment. Lesson planning is meticulous and fully conforms to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers mark pupils' work with considerable care and attention, indicating clearly areas for improvement as well as giving due praise and encouragement for good work and effort. Pupils with SEN benefit considerably, in their oral work as in their writing, from the close support and guidance that both teachers and classroom assistants afford them in lessons. Teachers of older pupils are working very hard to raise the standard of writing to a satisfactory level.
73. As a result of the good teaching that they receive, pupils regularly extend their knowledge and skills and develop their ideas and understanding. They work at a good pace and sustain concentration throughout lessons, including those in which the content is more difficult to grasp. They are aware both of their achievements and of what they need to do for further improvement. Their very good level of response is a crucial factor in the progress that they make.
74. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The English co-ordinator is concerned to raise standards at every level and has ensured that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used effectively in lessons with every year group. She monitors the quality of teaching via classroom observations as well a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Schemes for assessment are very thorough and lead to informed target setting for all pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with SEN. Learning resources are a considerable strength and include over 100 'Big Books' for the use of teachers with younger pupils.
75. With regard to the key issues related to literacy that were raised in the previous inspection report, the opportunities for pupils to respond to the texts that they read have been increased. As a consequence of the special training that they have been given, all teachers are now confident in their knowledge base and skill levels for the teaching of writing. Pupils of higher attainment produce more pieces of extended writing in their notebooks although there is room for some improvement in this regard where pupils of average attainment in Year 5 and Year 6 are concerned. More attention has been given to the development of pupils' research skills although they still do not take every opportunity in lessons to discover for themselves the meanings and spellings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

## MATHEMATICS

76. The standards achieved by pupils at the ages of seven and 11 are in line with national expectations and pupils make good progress. This is because they are taught well by teachers who have good teaching skills and a good understanding of the subject. Pupils work hard, respect their teachers and are keen to succeed with their work. They have a positive attitude towards mathematics. All teachers work from a clearly designed plan for the teaching of mathematics. The attainment of all pupils is very well documented and staff use these detailed records to ensure effective teaching and to monitor pupils' progress. Teachers prepare their lessons very carefully so that the individual learning needs of pupils are met and skilled classroom assistants provide excellent support for those who have special educational needs so that they, too, make good progress.
77. The National Curriculum tests in 2002 show that attainment was below the national average for pupils aged seven and 11 but, when these results are compared with those from schools in similar contexts, the attainment of seven year olds was above, and the attainment of 11 year old pupils well above average. Over the last five years the trend for attainment is upward for both seven and 11 year old pupils. This improving trend exceeds that seen nationally. Furthermore, considering that pupils have very low levels of attainment when they start school, they make good progress in mathematics.
78. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection. The previous inspection report in 1998 judged pupils' attainment to be satisfactory for the majority of pupils aged seven and 11, but many were achieving below national expectations and only a small number were seen to have moved beyond this level. The results in the 2002 national tests show that the percentage of seven-year-olds achieving higher levels is now in line and is now above national expectations for pupils at the age of 11. This is because of the well-formed curriculum, good teaching, and targeted support for pupils with special educational needs, together with the provision of challenge for pupils capable of higher attainment. This trend toward improvement in standards should continue because teachers are using regular assessments of pupils' attainment to plan the curriculum and to plan their lessons. All assessments and teaching are directly related to the objectives of the National Curriculum for mathematics and teachers are using the National Numeracy Strategy effectively.
79. Most pupils in Year 6 can use and explain their own strategies for solving problems, giving clear and systematic written accounts of their methods. They use effective methods for written and mental calculations across the four operations and know how to check the reasonableness of their answers. Pupils can identify and draw 3D and 2D shapes and more able pupils understand that the angle sum of a triangle is 180 degrees and that the sum of angles at a point is 360 degrees but seem less secure when dealing with reflective symmetry. Most pupils are able to collect data efficiently and can present information in the form of charts and graphs using pencil and paper, as well as electronic formats. Most pupils in Year 2 use mathematical vocabulary well when explaining the ways in which they are tackling simple addition and subtraction problems. They can give an oral explanation of their methods and show increasing confidence when recording the addition and subtraction of two digit numbers. They can sequence numbers to 100 and the more able pupils are competent when adding and subtracting with numbers up to 20. Most of these pupils use mathematical terms accurately when describing 2D and 3D shapes and the more able have confidence when describing their properties in terms of the number of sides and corners. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy assembling data as pictograms, can re-form the presentation of this information as block graphs using the computer and the more able pupils can explain what the resultant graph means, particularly in terms of 'more' and 'less'.
80. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good throughout the school with some very good and outstanding teaching being noted. This shows an improvement since 1998 because the teaching of older pupils has improved. Teachers hold high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour so pupils work hard and concentrate. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and use good strategies when demonstrating, explaining and questioning. Pupils are taught to use mathematical vocabulary and their teachers, who use this vocabulary fluently, encourage pupils to

use the words they have been taught when explaining their own work and most are able to do so with confidence. All teachers make good use of the computer suite to enhance their teaching of mathematics and are competent in selecting and using software to aid pupils' learning in class. The teachers of older pupils also use interactive whiteboards effectively in class. Lessons are well paced and challenging, drawing from precise teaching objectives, which are shared with pupils so they know what they are doing and enjoy their work. Teachers make good use of the final part of their lessons to check what pupils have learnt and to reinforce what has been taught. They give pupils a very positive view of the subject and have a good relationship, built on mutual respect, with their teachers. As a result pupils in Years 5 and 6 say that mathematics is their favourite subject and that they are keen to learn more.

81. All teachers use assessment information to design the learning tasks that are set for pupils. These tasks are carefully formed to match the full range of abilities amongst pupils in class. Those pupils capable of higher achievement are now challenged in their mathematical thinking and problem solving, whilst those with special educational needs are often given more practical tasks, frequently using real objects, to aid their learning. These pupils also receive high quality support from classroom assistants and they make good progress.
82. The school's curriculum provides pupils with the experiences expected by the programmes of study in the mathematics National Curriculum. It benefits from the use of the National Numeracy Strategy and from the hard work that teachers have put into the raising of standards through their ongoing assessments and planning. As a result the curriculum is now clearly focused on outcomes that are appropriately set for each year group and each ability group in class. Teachers and classroom assistants monitor pupils' attainments through regular marking and observations. Marking frequently identifies pupils' attainments and teachers encourage a positive response from pupils whose written work is generally neat and well presented. Staff keep detailed records of their observations and assessments and review them each half term in order to decide how best to prompt further progress. They do not yet give individual pupils a written note of what they should do next in order to improve their understanding and skill in mathematics.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader for mathematics has a good understanding of the standards and quality of mathematics teaching and learning across the school. She monitors resources, teachers' plans and pupils' attainments, has scrutinised pupils' workbooks and has had opportunity to observe colleagues' lessons. As a consequence she has been able to identify relevant priorities for the development of the subject. Because of her hard work and the support she receives from the senior management team, particularly in the form of release time, the subject leader is in a good position to continue to improve the curriculum and the standards achieved in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

84. Standards achieved by pupils are broadly in line with expectations by the end of Year 6 but below expectations by the end of Year 2. This represents improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. At the end of Year 2 standards have declined. This is because one third of pupils currently in Year 2 have special educational needs. At the end of Year 6, standards have risen sharply. In the 2002 test results, pupils achieved average standards when compared to all schools and well above average when compared to similar schools. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show that pupils achieved in the lowest five per cent when compared to all schools and well below average when compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level for seven- year- olds was well above average when compared to similar schools.
85. By the end of Year 2, pupils generally achieve soundly from the good start in the Foundation Stage. Progress is accelerated from Year 3 to the end of Year 6, particularly in Year 4 where pupils are provided with good breadth and depth of scientific study. Teachers have identified improvements in assessment as an area for further development with particular emphasis on developing key skills in investigative and experimental science progressively through the school as well as providing more challenging work for the higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils



with special educational needs often make good progress, with the help of teaching assistants and achieve results in line with their capabilities.

86. Pupils show the ability to work together on practical tasks with curiosity and interest. They are mostly well motivated and participate in discussions and investigative work with enthusiasm. Basic scientific vocabulary is developed in the infants. Year 2 pupils learn about different types of batteries and why batteries are used in a range of everyday items such as torches. They build simple circuits accurately and light two bulbs on a single circuit. By the end of Year 6 pupils acquire knowledge and understanding through scientific investigation. They plan simple investigations with good awareness of fair testing but need support in making observations and measurements with precision. The skills of hypothesising and of evaluating results are less well developed. Year 6 pupils are knowledgeable about a variety of subjects including healthy foods and functions of vital organs. Much of the recorded work is done on worksheets, which limits the opportunities for pupils to record their findings in different forms.
87. Teaching is good in infants and juniors. The development of using and applying skills, knowledge and understanding has been given a high priority since the last inspection. This good teaching strategy has contributed to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Good teaching is characterised by sound subject knowledge leading to lessons that capitalise on investigation and experimentation. For example, in one well taught Year 6 lesson on investigating the best liquid soap for blowing bubbles pupils were encouraged to note observations systematically. Pupils successfully drew conclusions and verified their results. Pupils displayed a good level of concentration and enjoyment. However, higher attaining pupils generally achieve similar results to the rest of the class and lack the challenge to explain their ideas at a deeper level. Lessons in Year 2 are well organised and work is well set for different groups of pupils.
88. Teaching throughout the school makes very good use of support staff who, effectively contribute to pupils' learning. Their skilful questioning techniques help to consolidate learning and to promote new ideas. Teachers in both infants and juniors provide fewer opportunities for pupils to articulate science concepts in their own words, to test and reinforce their understanding and practise scientific vocabulary purposefully. Moreover, there are few opportunities for pupils in general, to take responsibility for the organisation of their work or for collecting their own data, which constrains the development of independence in their learning. The marking of work generally amounts to praise and checks for accuracy with no targets for improvement. Best examples of evaluative comments that help pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding were seen in Year 4 pupils' work.
89. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has provided good assistance to all staff since the last inspection by, for example, helping with their medium-term plans and reviewing long term plans to ensure that the needs of all the pupils and particularly those in mixed age classes, are met adequately. Good monitoring procedures have been developed since the last inspection. Currently the school does not analyse pupils' performance sufficiently to set its agenda for development. The co-ordinator has drawn an action plan to build up a portfolio of assessed and moderated work to aid assessments. Pupils are not yet involved in the assessment of their own work and do not receive individual or group targets for improvement. The use of ICT is not fully developed, although pupils make good use of the Internet in their research of topics.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and 11 are as expected for pupils of those ages. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection when attainment for pupils aged 11 was judged to be below expectations. Two lessons were observed and judgements are based on those as well as interviews with pupils, the coordinator and a scrutiny of portfolios, sketch-books and display. Standards are as they are because the pupils have a good curriculum, teaching is effective and the subject is well led and managed by the coordinator.
91. Attitudes to art are very good. Pupils in Year 2 speak with enthusiasm about art and design and indicate that they have had a good range of experiences including textiles, printing, collage and

sculpting. Particularly impressive is the work they have produced with found objects in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. This is taken to a good level when pupils consider the qualities of rocks they are using as they look at pattern, balance, colour and feel. Pupils in Year 6 are equally enthusiastic about art and design. As would be expected they are able to demonstrate more refined skills and broader experience than those in Year 2. They can demonstrate effectively the techniques of mark making and their observational drawing shows use of shade and perspective. They have looked at the work of recognised artists – some better known than others and can talk about artistic terms such as form and texture.

92. A positive aspect of the teaching that was observed was the quality and effective use of resources in a lesson where pupils in a Year 4 class tackled the task of representing a journey well. A scrutiny of sketch-books shows that their use varies in effectiveness from class to class. Not enough opportunity is taken to use the sketch-book as a diary on trips and visits which are not primarily focusing on art and design.
93. The subject is well led and managed by a very committed teacher. She has drawn attention through her report to the governing body of the need to look at the amount of time the subject is allocated. The plans for the development of the subject are appropriate and will give the subject a higher profile. Art is well used in support of other areas of the curriculum and makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils. Because of teachers' good knowledge of their pupils and the subsequent support they are able to deploy all pupils make the same level of progress.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. This report is based on one lesson observation, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and the subject leader. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils at the age of seven in Year 2 and aged 11 in Year 6. Displays of pupils' work and their workbooks show that they are provided with a curriculum that offers scope for them to develop the knowledge and skills expected by the National Curriculum for design and technology. They engage with a range of methods for fixing materials, use a range of materials and tools and engage with the design process when planning and evaluating their models or artefacts.
95. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 speak with enthusiasm about the projects they have been involved with, use technical vocabulary when talking about the deconstruction of products and the use of mechanisms such as gears, axles and wheels. They were also keen to explain how to use glue guns and Stanley knives safely. These pupils recall making vehicles and slippers with pride and enthusiasm; they were delighted with their final products, but also concerned to ensure everyone understood how their products could be further improved.
96. Pupils' workbooks are well organized and pupils take care to present work neatly. These workbooks show that pupils gain an appropriate experience of the design process. However, pupils are currently not given enough scope to make their own informed decisions when selecting tools and materials. Older pupils should also benefit from further opportunities to chart the progress of their designs and to canvas the views of potential users of their artefacts, models or products.
97. Teaching and learning in this subject are good. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Teachers have very good class management skills. Materials and tools needed in particular lessons are well prepared in advance and lessons focus on taking forward pupils' knowledge and skills. At the end of lessons pupils' work is carefully stored. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants and those who find manual skills difficult enjoy a challenge. One such boy in Year 5, whilst sewing the lining to the sole of his slipper, questioned, with considerable humour and good will towards his classmates and teacher, 'if sewing was meant to be fun, why is it so painful?'. The subject offers considerable scope for the development of literacy and numeracy as well as promoting personal and social skills.

98. The curriculum for design and technology is well resourced and is well formed to provide pupils with experience of the design process, but is limited in terms of the scope it offers for pupils to make their own decisions about the use of tools and materials. The projects with which pupils engage ensure they work with a range of materials, including card, textiles and food technology, but there is limited use of rigid materials such as wood, plastics or metals. Opportunities to link pupils' understanding of science and control technology are not made explicit within the curriculum and are, therefore, not exploited through the teaching of design and technology.
99. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and has a particularly powerful approach to motivating colleagues to ensure the subject is not squeezed from a tight timetable. She takes boxes of exciting materials, together with 'help sheets' giving ideas for teaching, to her colleagues when each topic is about to begin. She monitors resources, teachers' plans and pupils' attainments, has scrutinised pupils' workbooks and has had opportunity to observe colleagues' lessons. She has identified the strengths and weakness of the subject. As a consequence she has been able to identify relevant priorities for the development of the subject. Because of her hard work and the support she receives from the senior management team, particularly in the form of release time, the subject leader is in a good position to continue to improve the curriculum and the standards achieved in design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain the standards expected for pupils at those ages. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when both the attainment and progress of pupils at the age of 11 were considered to be unsatisfactory. From a very low starting point, this represents consistently good learning and progress. At the age of seven, pupils are aware of places both within and beyond their own locality. They are beginning to understand that places have differing human and physical features and they can represent these satisfactorily on a map. At the age of 11, pupils have gained more extensive mapping skills which they use effectively to produce maps in their notebooks of the local area, the United Kingdom and Europe. They can make comparisons between different regions of the world in respect of climate and resources and they have used their numeric skills to draw bar graphs comparing populations.
101. Pupils achieve well throughout the school due to their very good attitudes to learning and the good standard of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in their work on the subject under the close guidance of teachers and classroom assistants. In Year 1, they study the school's environment and consider how it could be made safer. In Year 2, they undertake a project on the Isle of Struay and gain a good appreciation of the contrasts between their own lives and those of children who live on the island. In Years 3 and 4, they make a closer study of the environment, focusing on its advantages and disadvantages, particularly in respect of different forms of pollution. There is a prominent spiritual and a moral aspect to these studies. In Years 5 and 6, they gain an awareness of their local area in the context of Europe. As a result of their close study of rivers, they also expand their geographical vocabulary and gain a satisfactory understanding of terms such as estuary, delta and tributary.
102. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They are keen to learn, readily both answering and asking appropriate questions. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were especially keen to begin reading a letter that had been written to them from a girl living on the Isle of Struay. The youngest pupils maintain their concentration very well when geography lessons occur at the end of the school day.
103. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection when it was considered to be only satisfactory for pupils aged seven to 11. Teachers have a secure knowledge base and plan their lessons very well for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers manage pupils well, relations with pupils are positive and cordial and lessons are conducted at a good pace. The work in pupils' notebooks is regularly marked to a good standard and teachers reward pupils for their good work by displaying it on the walls of classrooms and corridors. High expectations are a prominent feature in some lessons when

teachers extend pupils' thinking about the subject via shrewd questioning.

104. The subject co-ordinator has been absent from the school for a long period of time due to illness. Consequently, important aspects of leadership and management have suffered certain neglect especially as regards the regular monitoring of the curriculum and the standard of teaching and the development of learning resources. The headteacher recognises that these are areas for improvement as well as the provision of a more extended policy for the subject.

## **HISTORY**

105. As was the case at the time of the last inspection, pupils attain standards that are in line with the national average at the ages of both seven and 11. Their achievements are good due to their very good attitudes to learning and the good standard of the teaching that they receive throughout the school.
106. In Year 1, pupils compare toys of children of the past with their own toys. They visit the Teddy Bear Museum and write brief accounts of their visit. In Year 2, they study Pepys' Diary, the Great Fire of London and the work of Florence Nightingale and also learn to construct simple timelines of their own lives. In Years 3 and 4, their acquaintance with chronology is extended when they draw a time chart showing the main landmarks in the development of the Roman Empire. In Years 5 and 6, they become more aware of similarity and difference in history as they study ancient Greece and contrast the insularity of the Spartans with the greater openness to trade and cultural influences of the Athenians. In the one history lesson that was seen during the inspection, which was a power point presentation, Year 5 pupils were introduced to the different forms of government that were used in the Greek city states: this enhanced their political awareness and made a contribution to Citizenship. In Year 6, pupils make good use of secondary sources in their study of the lives of Victorian children and they also look at a more recent period of history when they study aspects of the history of Britain since 1930.
107. Judgements on the response of pupils and on the quality of teaching are based very largely on a scrutiny of the work of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. This provides evidence of a very good level of response; pupils obviously enjoy the subject and sustain concentration very well in lessons since there are very few pieces of work left unfinished. Pupils of higher attainment in Year 6 take a considerable pride in their work as demonstrated by the excellent level of its presentation. Those of lower attainment rarely write at any length but they can represent the subject impressively through drawings, diagrams and illustrations. The notebooks of pupils in Years 5 and 6 show an increasing use of sources, both primary and secondary, by pupils in their work on the different study units and also demonstrate a secure command of subject on the part of teachers. The work of pupils gives a clear indication that the standard of teaching in every year is at least good.
108. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a comprehensive written policy which considers cross-curricular links and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and also has a statement on the contributions that the subject makes to the development of literacy skills. The co-ordinator monitors the standard of teaching via classroom observations in Years 1 and 2 and a scrutiny of the work of pupils in every year: the headteacher has observed the teaching of history in Years 3 to 6. There is a wide range of resources used in teaching, including worksheets, topic books, Big Books for use with the younger pupils, documents, resource packs, worksheets, photographs, videotapes and a number of web sites on history. It is recognized however that the acquisition of more artefacts would be beneficial.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. Standards in information and communication technology for seven-year-old pupils are satisfactory but for 11-year-olds they are below national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection in 1998 when standards were unsatisfactory for the younger pupils and were poor for pupils aged 11. This improvement has been achieved because the school is now implementing the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. It has invested in the setting up of a

computer suite, the installation of appropriate hardware and the purchase of relevant software and because of this teachers now have a good understanding of the subject and teach it well. Teachers, especially those in Years 5 and 6 are adept at using the interactive whiteboard and PowerPoint to enhance their teaching in class. As a consequence of these developments, pupils are now responding well and enjoy working on the computers. Standards are rising and should continue to do so because the curriculum for this subject is well formed to support pupils' achievement of nationally expected goals. Generally, pupils are confident users of the equipment and their learning in English and mathematics benefits particularly from the stock of programs that have been selected wisely for use across the school.

110. By the end of Year 2 pupils use the mouse and keyboard confidently. They understand the different consequences when logging off or closing down the computer in the computer suite. They can save, locate and open their own work from the hard drive. They can print their work successfully. For example pupils in Year 1 have been working on data collection and, when in the computer suite, they prepared and then printed a vertical histogram from a horizontal pictogram which they had previously prepared in class. Those pupils with special educational needs were well supported by classroom assistants and participated confidently in the lesson. Pupils capable of higher attainment were asked to prepare their block graphs to include labels for the axes and, with good support, were able to do so successfully. Towards the end of this lesson pupils showed increased confidence in using the words 'chart' and 'data', 'horizontal' and 'vertical' when answering the teacher's questions. Additionally, they were confident when explaining how the block graph showed which was Squirrel's favourite colour for his jumpers. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their use of information and communication technology.
111. By the end of Year 6 pupils can layer images and rotate and resize graphics to illustrate their writing. They can search for and use information from the Internet and can use spreadsheets. They have some experience of control technology but find this concept difficult. At regular intervals, these older pupils review the work they have done to note where they need additional practice or help, but show limited use of technical vocabulary. There is little evidence that these pupils compare electronic and non-electronic methods or consider the use of information and communication technology outside school. Most pupils take pride in their work, which they present, in well-managed files. Their work is regularly and constructively marked to show pupils what they have achieved with some advice about what they should do next in order to improve, but targets are not yet being set to encourage the progress of individual pupils.
112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and ranges from satisfactory to good. Pupils respond to their teaching with interest and concentration. They are co-operative, willing to listen and to learn. Teachers have good class management skills so no time is wasted when pupils move from their classrooms to the computer suite. Relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are good. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident when teaching information and communication technology and when using information and communication technology to support their teaching of other subjects in class. They are well supported by the computer technicians. In the best lessons teachers are able to give clear explanations of the knowledge and skills to be learnt and spend time helping pupils to acquire and use technical vocabulary so that they can communicate more effectively with one another and with their teachers. In good lessons teachers also offer well-designed learning tasks that prompt increased understanding and skill for pupils showing different levels of competence. Classroom assistants provide excellent support for pupils with special educational needs who then are able to participate enthusiastically and make good progress.
113. The school's curriculum for information and communication technology is now well formed to provide pupils with the experience necessary to develop the knowledge and understanding expected by the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The new curriculum has led to improving standards so that seven-year-old pupils are now achieving in line with national expectations. In due course, the school's curriculum for information technology should also have a positive impact on the standards achieved at the end of Year 6. Improvements in this subject have been well supported through the school's participation in the Education Action Zone initiative. This

involvement has enabled the school to acquire laptop computers, secure the services of a technician, as well as providing staff with a ready source of advice about information and communication technology and its teaching.

114. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is now very well resourced and good attention is given to the particular health and safety aspects of the subject. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and has identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She monitors resources, teacher's plans and pupil attainments, has scrutinised pupils' workbooks, and has had opportunity to observe colleagues' lessons. As a consequence she has been able to identify relevant priorities for the development of the subject and, because of her hard work and the support she receives from the senior management team, particularly in the form of release time. The subject leader is in a good position to continue to improve the curriculum and the standards achieved in information technology.

## **MUSIC**

115. Standards in music for pupils aged seven and 11 are at the expected level. This maintains the position found at the time of the last inspection. The subject is taught extensively by the coordinator who was seen teaching on three occasions. Judgements are based on these lesson observations, interviews with pupils aged seven and 11 and the co-ordinator and a scrutiny of policy, schemes of work, pupils' notes and display.
116. Pupils are enthusiastic about music. The youngest share and use instruments well and all pupils sing clearly and in tune when accompanied by either the guitar or the piano. They do this equally well in class or in assembly. Pupils in Year 2 'love music' and can name many songs that they know and which they are keen to demonstrate. They can name the percussion instruments they use and can explain terms such as pitch and tempo. Pupils in Year 6 are also very enthusiastic about music. They have enjoyed listening to classical and contemporary music and have talked about its evocative nature. They have made a record of their home listening and have used standard and non-standard notation. Pupils in Year 3 are given the opportunity to experience taster sessions on keyboards and recorders and pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn clarinet or flute. Some pupils also take advantage of the opportunity to join a singing club run by music advisors of the authority.
117. The co-ordinator is a very able musician who is not only in a good position to make the strong contribution to the teaching of music that he does but also to other aspects of school life such as in assembly. The coordinator is managing the subject well. There have been changes since the time of the last inspection that now see him almost solely responsible for teaching the subject across the school. This has the advantage of providing high levels of skill and continuity but which carry with it the problem of eroding the skills of the rest of the staff. As a roving music teacher the coordinator lacks the permanence of his own classroom and as a result music is under-represented in displays throughout the school. The coordinator also faces the problem of carrying all his belongings with him and this sometimes leaves him with little time to ensure that equipment and resources function as they should. This is particularly so in the case of the school's very good information and communication technology resources. The scheme of work is a good one and combined with the coordinator's expertise ensures that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all abilities and aptitudes fare equally well and make satisfactory progress. Boys and girls show the same rates of progress. Plans for the future development of the subject are sound.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

118. Standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection. No gymnastics lessons were seen. Swimming is given a high priority in juniors and pupils have opportunities for swimming in Years 3, 4 and 5. The school has a good policy and uses the national schemes of work to ensure the progressive development of skills.
119. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils showed appropriate control and interpreted their movements imaginatively, their limb extension and body position contributing to the quality of their movement. Year 2 pupils demonstrate growing skill in sending and receiving balls with their partners. They run energetically with good awareness of space, speed and direction. In the juniors, pupils make satisfactory progress as they take part in a wider range of activities. Many pupils show well-developed skill in ball control in team games. Year 5 pupils demonstrate a good range of tactics and foot control when playing team games. They enjoy the competitive element; for example when playing 'football rounders' they try to score a high number of rounders. Year 6 pupils develop and refine basic techniques in running over short distances. Pupils in both infants and juniors collaborate well in pairs and groups, develop team-building skills and respond positively to the challenges provided. The third year football club run by the site manager enables pupils of both sexes to develop skills to a good level.

120. Teaching overall is good in both infants and juniors. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, which is an improvement, since the last inspection identified some lack of teacher confidence in the two lessons seen. Teachers plan lessons well and explain objectives clearly. They make good use of demonstrations by pupils and adults to set high standards in performance. For example, a teacher demonstrated skilful ways of sending and receiving in the football rounders game. They make good use of warm up and cool down activities to develop pupils' understanding of how their bodies work during and after exercise. Pupils enjoy the games and athletics activities on the school fields. Teachers teach the safety aspects well. They provide ample opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance. However, in some lessons there is some lack of opportunity for pupils to discuss and evaluate each other's work and opportunities for the clear expression of ideas are not always taken. On occasions time is not used most effectively and groups of pupils spend long periods waiting for their turn.
121. Pupils show a high level of enthusiasm and very good attitudes to the subject. They demonstrate persistence in learning new skills. Extra-curricular activities add considerably to the quality of learning and a range of good experiences is available. Netball, football, cross country, athletics and tennis skills are extended through after school clubs and experienced visiting coaches. Pupils and teachers are proud of pupils' achievements in inter-school competitions at local and regional levels. These are entered into fairly, enthusiastically and with a very good rate of success. Some pupils who join these clubs, sporting activities and competitions reach exceptional levels of attainment. The school promotes equal opportunities very well and this is evident in boys and girls practising skills together.
122. There is satisfactory leadership of the subject overall. The physical education curriculum is well balanced across all the areas of activity. Some monitoring of the subject takes place. Planning is checked regularly by the headteacher each week, by the deputy headteacher each term and by the co-ordinator at the end of the year. Sound use is made of day-to-day assessment. The school is aware of the need to develop formal assessment practice further. Outdoor accommodation for physical education with hard and grassy areas is good. Teachers manage lessons in the small hall well.