

INSPECTION REPORT

GILMOUR JUNIOR SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104543

Headteacher: Mr P Gibbons

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 18th to 21st November 2002

Inspection number: 246383

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitehedge Road Liverpool
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K J Sloan
Date of previous inspection:	12th January 1998

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9928	Mr A Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23204	Mrs C Wojtak	Team inspector	English Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements
23081	Mrs C Waine	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3191	Mr J Curley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gilmour Junior School is a larger than average size school having 265 pupils on roll from 7 to 11 years of age. The area from which the school draws most of the pupils reflects a wide variety of social and economic circumstances but is generally similar to the national picture. However, there are pockets of deprivation and the school receives additional support because it is part of an Education Action Zone. Eighteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is broadly average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and no pupils need help because English is not their first spoken language. Currently, 56 pupils (21 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is in line with the national average. Most of these pupils are identified as having a specific learning difficulty. Four pupils have formal statements of need. Attainment on entry to the school has been lower than seen in most schools in the past but has risen in recent years and is now average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a thriving, happy school which provides all of its pupils with a good education. Pupils make good progress and reach standards that are above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Pupils are eager to learn because teaching is good and activities capture the pupils' interest. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good, purposeful leadership and are supported by a committed team of staff and governors who work well together to ensure the school has a clear direction for the future. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology are above average.
- Teaching is good and leads to pupils being very enthusiastic learners.
- The school is very well led and managed with a clear focus on providing for the needs of all pupils.
- Provides a stimulating range of experiences, enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and makes a significant contribution to the personal development of all pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected because not all aspects of the curriculum receive enough attention.
- The opportunities subject managers have to find out about standards and areas for development in the subjects they lead.
- Systems to check on pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in January 1998. Standards have improved in science and mathematics. The school has sustained the overall average standard in English although standards in writing have dropped and are now below average. The information and communication technology suite is now fully operational and standards are starting to rise. However, they remain below average because pupils have not had sufficient experiences of all aspects of the curriculum. Most of the concerns raised in the previous inspection have been resolved. Teaching has improved and teachers are much clearer about what they want pupils to learn in lessons. Governors now play a full and

active part in setting aims for the school and in evaluating its performance. Financial planning is closely linked to the school's plans for improvement. Priorities for development include all aspects of the school. The school has reviewed the roles of staff to check that their skills are being used effectively. Not all subject co-ordinators have the opportunity to monitor teaching and standards in their subjects and this remains an area for development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	D	E	E	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	C	C	D	D	average C below average D
Science	E	C	C	D	well below average E

The test results at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. Compared with similar schools, results were well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. These results were lower than in previous years because of the ability of this group of pupils. Many started the school with lower standards than those typically seen in the school and many made good progress. In English, few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and this held down overall standards. The overall trend in results has been below the national trend.

Current standards in Year 6 show an improvement in science and mathematics and standards are above average. Standards have risen because of the ability of the group and the additional sessions provided to boost pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school also makes better use of assessment and higher attaining pupils are now identified and fully challenged. Overall achievement is good. More pupils are working at levels higher than those expected for their age and this is raising the overall performance of the school. Standards in English match the level expected for their age in reading and speaking and listening. Standards are below average in writing. Taking into account that many pupils started school with low standards in literacy, their overall progress is good. However, in writing pupils are not sufficiently challenged and this leads to underachievement especially for the higher attaining pupils. Last year, the school did not reach the targets set because a small group of pupils failed to make the expected progress. The school is now reaping the benefit of their focus on higher attaining pupils. Consequently, even though this year's targets are challenging, far more pupils are expected to reach or exceed the level expected for their age. The current standard of work seen indicates the school is likely to come close to its targets.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive extra support and resources. Those pupils who have difficulties in maintaining concentration and good behaviour thrive in this caring atmosphere. Support is sensitive and unobtrusive and enables pupils to play a full part in all lessons.

Standards in information and communication technology are below the level expected for their age because pupils do not experience the full range of activities. Standards in swimming, dance, art and design and design and technology are above average. The many attractive displays show high standards

in art and the school has been awarded a nationally recognised Artsmark. Standards in all other subjects are wholly satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are justifiably proud of their school. They are very enthusiastic about their work and keen to learn. Older pupils are very eager to tell visitors about the exciting experiences that they have had while in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour is very good and often exemplary. The school is a happy and orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and with adults who teach and support them. They make very good use of the opportunities to take responsibility and show great respect for the feelings and values of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. It is in line with the national average and pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 quality of teaching and learning is good. The great majority of teaching is at least good and a small amount is excellent. No teaching seen was less than satisfactory. Good teaching is spread evenly across the school and examples of good teaching were observed in all subjects and all years. Learning is good and pupils make good progress in extending their knowledge, improving their skills and gaining in self-confidence during their time in school.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Literacy skills are taught effectively in Year 3 through an imaginative range of activities and pupils use these skills in their reading and writing. Older pupils are not always taught to edit their work with sufficient attention to spelling and punctuation. Numeracy skills are taught well and lessons are often exciting with quick questions that extend pupils' problem solving skills.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs are fully met. Teachers and support staff sustain their interest extremely well through structured work closely matched to the pupils' need. The needs of higher attaining pupils are met in mathematics and science but less so in writing.

Very good relationships and positive management lead to lessons taking place in an orderly atmosphere. Teachers show genuine concern for their pupils. This greatly enhances learning as pupils are confident in trying out new ideas because they know teachers value their efforts. Planning is good and teachers

organise lessons extremely well, making sure pupils are clear about the focus of their tasks. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in most subjects. Resources are used well and make lessons interesting. However, teachers are not making enough use of the available information and communication technology resources. Teachers mark work regularly but do not always inform pupils how to make their work better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Activities are stimulating and relevant to the needs and interest of the pupils. Not all aspects of information and communication technology receive enough attention. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are excellent and include many interesting visits as well as after school clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and support staff provide effective support. They are guided by detailed individual education plans, which set clear targets for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The school promotes spiritual development in all aspects of school life. Many opportunities enable pupils to identify their strengths and grow in self-esteem. Moral and social development is excellent and the school teaches pupils what is acceptable behaviour and how they can help each other. Pupils learn about life in a multi-cultural society as well as celebrating their own culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and effective and there is good attention given to pupils' health and safety. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good in English, mathematics and science but are not in place in other subjects and it is difficult for teachers to track pupils' progress.

Parents hold the school in high esteem and the school has a very close working partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership. They are dedicated to providing the pupils with an exciting range of experiences. They work together very well as a team and provide a clear direction for the school. Subject leaders do not always have enough opportunity to find out about standards in their subjects and advise their colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a high level of commitment to the school. They have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not include all of the required statutory information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates its work thoroughly by analysing results of national tests and comparing them with other schools. Effective use is made of this information and the school responds well to identified weaknesses.

The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used effectively to support the wide range of ability in each class. Personnel are deployed carefully. Money is spent prudently and specific grants are spent in the best interest of the pupils. Governors consult widely on any major purchases. The school gives good attention to the principles of best value.
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Accommodation is satisfactory. Money has been spent effectively in making it a comfortable learning environment. The number of staff in the school is good and all are experienced and qualified to teach this age range. Resources are satisfactory overall. Additional resources are needed to support the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The library is well stocked but is underused for independent research.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wide range of activities outside school. • Their children like school. • The school expects the children to do their best. • Good teaching leads to their children making good progress. • Behaviour is good and the school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of parents had concerns about homework. • A few parents would like to be better informed on their child's progress.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views. The provision of homework is judged to be satisfactory. The quality of information for parents on their child's progress is good. However, the targets in pupils' reports are not written clearly enough to enable parents to help their children to reach them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Results and analysis of national tests for eleven-year-olds

1. Pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. In mathematics and science results were below average when compared with similar schools and well below average in English. In English, few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and this held down the school's overall performance. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally similar to that expected for their age, although this was below average for the pupils who left school last year. Taking this into consideration the national test results in 2002 showed progress was satisfactory in English and good in mathematics and science.
2. The school's trend in test results at the end of Year 6 has been below the national trend in recent years. Pupils' writing has always lagged behind their reading and standards have remained below average in English over the last four years. Since 2000, standards in mathematics and science have remained about average but fell in English and mathematics in 2002. The school did not reach its target in 2002 because there were more pupils with special educational needs in this year group and a few did not make as much progress as the school had anticipated.
3. Overall, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Current standards and achievement in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science

4. Currently, overall standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils are reaching standards that are above average in mathematics and science, and average in English. More pupils are reaching above average levels and this has significantly raised the school's overall performance in mathematics and science. The school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2003. Improvement has been brought about by:
 - additional support sessions that have raised standards in numeracy and literacy;
 - a detailed analysis of test results and adjustments to the curriculum when a weakness is identified;
 - improved teaching in response to training in numeracy and literacy;
 - closer tracking of individual progress and more challenge for higher attaining pupils;
 - the differing ability and attitude to learning of the current Year 6 pupils.
5. Taking into consideration pupils' attainment when they started in Year 3 achievement is good in mathematics and science. The weakness in English is in writing and standards are below average. Considering pupils' literacy skills were lower than other subjects when they started in Year 3 overall achievement is good. However, higher attaining pupils are underachieving in writing because tasks do not always fully extend their writing skills in literacy lessons and other subjects.
6. Standards in Year 6 are average in speaking and better in listening. Pupils make good progress because teachers are sensitive to the need for them to listen, talk and refine their language. As they grow older, most pupils speak with confidence and choose their words carefully. Standards in reading are average in Year 6. The majority of pupils are fluent readers by the age of eleven. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of how authors of non-fiction books organise material to make it easier to read and know how to extract information. Standards in writing are below average in the Year 6 class. These pupils have not been provided with enough opportunities to write at length and are less confident when drafting and editing their work.

7. Standards are above average in mathematics because of the ongoing effect of the National Numeracy Strategy. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 are very confident handling number and enjoy the challenge of mathematics. Most pupils use a range of strategies to solve problems and know how to check their work for accuracy.

8. In science, pupils' investigative skills have improved throughout the school since the previous inspection. Pupils are confident analysing their evidence and many predict their results and then draw conclusions from their findings. They have a good understanding of the importance of fair testing.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are identified early and their progress is supported by well written individual education plans. These ensure that learning is broken down into small, achievable learning steps. When one target is achieved another is set so that pupils' learning builds effectively on their successes. Those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties also make good progress and thrive in the school's supportive and friendly community.

10. The positive effect of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is seen across the curriculum, for example in the content of written work related to history and geography. Pupils have links with a school in Nigeria and this enables them to practise their letter writing skills. Numeracy skills support learning in many subjects, for example, in geography when pupils calculate how much water an average household uses.

Current standards in other subjects

11. Standards are above the level expected for their age in art and design, design and technology, swimming and dance. These are subjects in which teaching confidently helps pupils to develop their skills in a structured and creative way. Pupils' achievement in these subjects is good. Pupils make sound progress in history, geography, music, physical education and religious education and pupils in Year 6 reach the level expected for their age. Although overall achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory standards fall below average because the school is not providing enough opportunities for pupils to learn how to use computers for modelling and control.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and learning. Their behaviour is very good and on occasions excellent. Relationships are very good and their personal qualities develop very well during their time at the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Attendance is close to the national average for junior schools.

13. The pupils are very proud to be at Gilmour junior school. They show a clear enthusiasm for learning and participating, both in the classroom and in school clubs – a point confirmed by parents. Lessons are characterised by alert faces, hands shooting up when questions are asked and an eagerness to get started when work is set. There is a very purposeful culture within the school, where pupils of all ages work hard and try their best. Skilled teaching has created an environment where pupils consider learning to be fun.

14. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Very high standards are achieved without teachers normally having to discipline pupils or remind them of the rules. There is calmness about the school that produces an atmosphere that is very conducive to learning. Movement around the school is very orderly. In assemblies, behaviour is often exemplary with pupils being very attentive, singing enthusiastically and showing clear respect during prayers. Dining is civilised with noise levels that generally allow easy conversation. Playtimes have a happy and very friendly feel and pupils play happily together. Pupils reported that they have no concerns regarding bullying or racism. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent times.

15. Relationships are very friendly both between pupils themselves and between pupils and the staff. When a group of Year 6 pupils were asked what they liked best about the school, they replied, *our friends and the teachers*. Doors are held open, pupils say, *please* and *thank you* naturally and are very polite. This is particularly noticeable when pupils are talking to the catering staff and when dealing with visitors. In lessons, pupils collaborate well when working in groups. In class discussions pupils listen to each other's views with respect.

16. Pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities the school provides to develop their personal qualities. They are enthusiastic when given responsibilities in helping to run the school whether as an individual class monitor or as a school prefect – a role given to every pupil for a term in Year 6. Pupils are closely involved in the way the school develops through the School Council. For example, pupils were instrumental in the decision to supply games and equipment for use in the playground. The Eco committee is working hard for the school to gain the top environment award. Pupils volunteer to pick litter, resulting in a very clean school playground. Charities are supported well. Homework is treated seriously. There is a very high level of participation in the wide range of school clubs on offer with many pupils being a member of more than one club. By Year 6, pupils are sensible and mature for their age and very interesting to talk to. However, their independent research skills are under developed due to insufficient use of the library and the Internet.

17. Overall the pupils' learning is benefiting greatly from their very positive attitudes and behaviour. They are a credit to the school and their parents.

18. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The number of unauthorised absences is very small and well below the national average. Punctuality is generally good. Registration is efficient, allowing the school day to start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching and learning are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and more very good and better teaching was observed. During the inspection 61 lessons were observed. In 46 per cent of these lessons teaching was good, it was very good in 23 per cent and excellent in 5 per cent. No teaching seen was less than satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in every year and is evenly spread throughout the school. Consistently good teaching in mathematics and science is the key factor for improvement in these subjects. The excellent teaching observed was in mathematics in Year 6 and in English and dance in Year 3.

20. The strengths in teaching and learning are:

- very good relationships and methods for managing pupils' behaviour so that they learn in calm classroom conditions;
- teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects so that they can offer effective advice to pupils as they learn;
- improved planning and clarity of what pupils are to learn;
- high expectations in science and mathematics where tasks challenge pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils, who learn at a fast rate in these lessons;
- variety of activities which make learning enjoyable and develop pupils' enthusiasm.

21. Areas for development in teaching and learning are:

- expectations in writing, history, geography and religious education;
- the quality and use of assessment in lessons;
- the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects

22. A positive feature in teaching is teachers' secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. This leads to effective questioning to clarify pupils' ideas and extend their learning. Only in information and

communication technology is there some lack of knowledge in teaching the modelling and control aspects of the curriculum.

23. Teaching is good in English although writing is not always taught as effectively as other aspects of the subjects because tasks are set that do not always extend pupils' writing skills. The basic skills of reading are taught well, especially in Year 3 when pupils benefit from additional staffing so that teaching groups are small. This enables the lower attaining pupils to make good progress because they thrive on the very practical approach to consolidating their knowledge of letters and sounds. This is enabling them to catch up with their peers in their reading and writing.

24. Teaching is good and often very good in mathematics. Teachers are very secure in their understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and lessons are brisk and exciting. Questions are used well when teachers ask pupils to explain how they arrived at their answers. As a result, pupils learn from each other. Numeracy skills are taught effectively. Introductions to lessons develop pupils' skills of mental calculations. These skills are promoted in other lessons, for example, in science when they test pulse rates before and after exercise.

25. Planning of lessons is good and has improved since the last inspection. Most lessons are well structured with an active introduction recapping previous work, followed by direct teaching before pupils work in small groups. In the best lessons teachers share with pupils what they will learn from the lesson. This was most effective in a Year 5 literacy lesson when the teacher used language that was understood by pupils so they knew they were learning *how authors paint a picture in the reader's head*. The lack of clear learning outcomes was a weakness in the previous inspection which has now been resolved.

26. In the best lessons the pace is brisk, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, whose needs are fully met. This was very evident in the lessons when teaching was excellent and led to a real eagerness to extend learning and disappointment as lessons finished. This has been the key factor in raising standards in the school as more pupils are achieving above average standards in mathematics and science. Weaknesses in lessons which are satisfactory often include tasks that fail to challenge pupils or the pace is slow. This was evident in lessons when tasks included too much colouring or copying of sentences so pupils did not make as much progress as they could. A review of pupils' books in history, geography and religious education showed this was often a weakness especially when all pupils completed the same task and higher attaining pupils did not extend their learning.

27. Teachers often use an exciting and varied range of teaching methods which capture pupils' interest. This has led to improvements in standards in design and technology and art and design as teachers provide stimulating experiences which greatly enhance learning. In the best history lesson observed pupils' enthusiasm was captured by the use of imaginative resources and the opportunity they had to dig in sand to find their own artefacts.

28. A positive feature in all lessons is the very warm relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils. There is often much shared humour and pupils are willing to try out new ideas and answer questions because they know their efforts are valued. In Year 6, the emphasis is on self-discipline and pupils grow in maturity in their final year in school.

29. Teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and is good because teachers are directed by their pupils' individual education plans. These are of good quality and include precise targets that identify the next stage of learning for these pupils. The school has trained and effectively deploys skilled learning support assistants who help individual or groups of pupils to achieve their targets. The school does not identify any pupils as especially gifted academically. However, the school caters very well for the needs of pupils talented in sport and music. The additional support these pupils receive has led to a few pupils becoming very accomplished in sport and music.

30. The classroom computers were not used as much as expected during the inspection. Teachers' plans do not usually show how they intend to use information and communication technology in the wider range

of subjects. When lessons are taught in the information and communication technology suite teaching is often good and pupils are growing in confidence especially with their word processing skills. A few teachers are more confident using information and communication technology as a tool for teaching in other subjects. For example, teaching was excellent in Year 3 and the pupils were spellbound when the teacher used information and communication technology very effectively to build on pupils' ideas to write a poem and changed the size and style of letters to enhance their writing.

31. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often include positive comments. However, these comments do not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Assessment has been used well in English and mathematics to set individual targets. These are not being as effective as they could be because they are sometimes too general and teachers are not referring to these frequently so pupils are forgetting them. The underdeveloped assessment systems in some subjects do not provide teachers with sufficient information about what pupils have succeeded in learning and what they need to learn next. Consequently, the match of work to the pupils' ability in these subjects is not as close as it could be.

32. Parents expressed concern about the amount of homework their children were given. Overall, this is satisfactory. It is effective in extending skills in reading as pupils have to write reviews about the books they read. In mathematics, work is set that links to what has been taught in lessons and occasionally research skills are extended as pupils have to seek out information on given topics.

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

33. The school provides an exciting range of opportunities for pupils which make learning enjoyable for pupils. The curriculum is broadly based and meets all of the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. A good balance between academic, physical and creative activities provides very well for the academic and personal development of all the pupils. The school is highly focused on ensuring that all pupils have access to a great variety of rich learning opportunities and its success has been recognised by the awarding of an Artsmark, Eco status and the Healthy Schools Award. A very good curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship provides pupils with regular opportunities to discuss a variety of issues and accept personal responsibility for issues that arise in their lives. An equal opportunities policy is consistently applied, with no significant difference in achievement because of gender, disability, race or culture.

34. The school places a very good emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and implements the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. Their introduction has supported an improvement in curriculum planning in all subjects since the last inspection. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

35. The school is keen for all pupils to learn to swim and standards are good. However, this, plus the focus on literacy and numeracy, leads to a reduction in the amount of time available for geography, history, music and religious education. Standards in these subjects match the level expected for pupils' ages but many pupils could achieve more if sufficient time was allowed for them to study topics in greater depth. In the time that is available, teachers concentrate effectively on an oral and practical approach to develop skills and understanding, but there is little time for pupils to use their literacy skills to record in depth what they know and understand. Information and communication technology is taught effectively in the computer suite but there are insufficient resources to support the teaching of some aspects of the subject. For example, the school does not have enough problem-solving software or resources for controlling or measuring events through computers, such as collecting weather information. Pupils are making more use of computers in the classroom than at the time of the previous inspection but this is still insufficiently developed. This means that pupils do not learn enough about the use of computers as an everyday day tool for learning, such as research and communication.

36. The school provides stimulating experiences for pupils with special educational needs. Careful planning and grouping children according to their ability in English and mathematics ensure that these

children receive relevant and challenging learning programmes. They are included in all activities and events organised by the school. These pupils are, for example, taught as part of the class in literacy lessons, taking a full part in the main part of the lesson before being withdrawn for small group activities with an experienced adult. They then return to the classroom for the conclusion. Additional teaching activities planned to meet their specific literacy and numeracy need are helping them to catch up with their peers.

37. The way the school enriches its curriculum is outstanding. This is very beneficial for pupils who are especially talented in music and art. The excellent range of lunchtime and after-school clubs is very well supported and much appreciated by pupils and parents. For example, there are various sporting and musical clubs, chess, French, science and art clubs as well as break and lunchtime fun and games club for pupils who, for various reasons, find it hard to cope in the playground. Pupils take part in an excellent range of trips. For example, they visit Aintree Racecourse, art galleries and football clubs, to support learning at first hand in many subjects. The range of opportunities for residential visits for pupils in all year groups is exceptional. Staff, parents and former pupils are to be highly commended for their work and the time they give voluntarily to the school's 'Kidswheels' project. This project contributes very effectively to the pupils' personal development by arranging visits during the school holidays for staff, parents and former pupils. A very wide range of expert visitors, such as poets, artists, musicians and dancers, inspire pupils with their work, particularly in the very successful Arts Week which is a popular feature of the school's calendar.

38. Provision for pupils' personal development is excellent and underpins the whole work of the school. It reflects the school's motto of *Working Together - Growing Together* and provides for a very happy and secure learning environment. It has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in spiritual, moral and social development, which are now all excellent.

39. The excellent provision for spiritual development promotes a strong sense of purpose within the school and encourages all pupils to value themselves and respect others. Pupils develop a strong awareness of their own self worth through celebration of their efforts and successes. Many effective displays of pupils' work celebrate pupils' achievements and inspire spirituality. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss personal moments in their own lives and how they have affected them. In an excellent assembly led by a Year 6 class, pupils talked of how the school has affected the way they live their lives and of the value of the many rich experiences they have had. They express great enthusiasm for their school and are proud to belong to its community.

40. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent and results in high standards of behaviour. A positive code of conduct is consistently and sensitively applied and pupils are well aware of school and class rules. Staff successfully encourage pupils to understand the consequences of their actions, to be honest and to consider the feelings of others. For example, in a whole school act of worship, the chaplain and staff from Liverpool Football Club inspired pupils to consider their attitudes towards racism and bullying. Anti-racism and anti-bullying posters around the school further reinforce this message. Pupils discuss moral issues in many subjects. For example, they consider pollution and conservation issues in geography and in religious education, consider whether it is fair that they have so much, when other have so little.

41. The provision for social development is excellent. Staff provide exemplary role models, consistently encouraging pupils to develop good social skills, which results in very good relationships. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities and work together co-operatively, and do so happily. The extensive programme of out-of-lesson activities is very well supported and provides valuable opportunities for the development of social skills. Pupils are encouraged to show responsibility to the wider community by contributing to a variety of charities, including Operation Christmas Child, when they send parcels to children in Eastern Europe. In religious education lessons in Year 3, pupils packed their parcels with love and care and reflected on how much they had, in comparison with those who would receive them. Pupils discuss their rights and responsibilities towards themselves, others and their school in citizenship lessons and are happy to take on these responsibilities. School and Eco Councils are very effective because pupils

discuss real issues and make decisions that affect school life. For example, the School Council funds an annual Enterprise Day. They give each class £10 for raw materials and classes design and make their products to this budget. They then advertise and sell their goods to other pupils. Last year, profits of £400 were returned to the School Council, who then spent it on playground equipment of pupils' choice.

42. Cultural development is very good and pupils are very well informed about their culture and that of others. Pupils study a wide range of art, local history, geography and music. These studies are enriched by visits to local art galleries, museums, and local churches. Expert visitors provide a strong contribution to cultural development. For example, pupils take part in workshops on dance and Islamic and African art, and produce work of good quality in response to this. The religious education curriculum provides for an insight into world faiths. Opportunities are provided to study the daily life and customs of faiths other than Christianity. For example, a Moslem parent visited school during Rammadan to talk to Year 3 pupils about her life and beliefs and pupils have visited an Islamic Centre. A high proportion of pupils learns to play musical instruments, which also contributes to their cultural development. There are links with pupils in other countries in Europe and Africa that develop pupils' understanding of customs and culture elsewhere.

43. The school has very good links with the community many of which have been fostered by the Education Action Zone. For instance pupils worked on a poetry project by visiting the Jaguar car plant and on a numeracy project at Aintree racecourse. The school has strong links with local churches such as St Mary's and the Bridge Chapel and representatives regularly take assemblies. Sport and personal development are encouraged very effectively by the school's involvement with local clubs.

44. The school has good links with its partner infant school and has plans to develop common policies. Links with the local secondary schools are good, for instance Year 6 pupils are involved in developing a community radio programme at a local comprehensive school and sixth formers from a church secondary school visited Gilmour as part of the arts week held last summer.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school cares for and looks after its pupils well. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective. There are sound procedures for promoting good attendance and pupils' personal development is supported well. These judgements are broadly similar to the previous inspection.

46. The school is a very friendly community where pupils are well known to the staff and are treated with consideration and respect. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have a high profile and a very good relationship with the pupils. Supervision is good at all times. Pupils are fully justified when they reported to the inspectors that they feel safe and secure in the school.

47. Procedures for child protection are very good. The person with responsibilities is fully trained and makes sure that all staff are familiar with current good practice in the subject. Procedures for health and safety are satisfactory. A new policy has just been introduced and all staff are familiar with the procedures. Safety is stressed in lessons when appropriate, there is a good level of first aid cover and accidents are correctly recorded.

48. Procedures for promoting and checking attendance are sound. Registers are well kept and certificates are issued for good attendance. However, procedures for checking absences are too slack. Registers are not formally inspected regularly enough and there is no clear programme for improving the attendance of pupils with a poor attendance record. The school relies too much on the council's education officer to deal with poor attendance. There is no procedure for recording the total amount of holiday a pupil has taken. The school does not operate a system of early contact with parents of pupils who are absent without reason.

49. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective but very low key. High standards are expected and achieved without the need for a strong regime. Pupils think the rules are fair although some described them as, *just common sense*. Typical class rules include *work quietly* and *ask before you borrow anything*. The overall effect is a calm and orderly school. Awards are given for good behaviour and pupils understand that inappropriate behaviour will result in an entry in the silver book – not a common event. Anti-social behaviour is dealt with very firmly. Pupils are left in no doubt that the school does not tolerate either bullying or racism and pupils say these are not a problem in their school. The school's attitudes to these issues are very well publicised through assemblies, drama and posters.

50. Procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are good. Staff know the pupils well. Awards are used very successfully to promote good social skills and these are celebrated at assemblies. Individual personal targets are used effectively to help pupils to know how to improve. Pupils' reports contain good quality sections on personal development, together with a note of any certificates awarded, ensuring parents are well informed on how their child is maturing.

51. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now satisfactory overall. The assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are good. Pupils are assessed each year by the national statutory tests in Year 6 and tests linked to the National Curriculum for eight, nine and ten year olds. Reading standards are also tested at regular intervals. In science, assessment is carried out at the end of each unit so that teachers have a clear understanding of the progress pupils are making. The results of these tests are recorded and passed between years so teachers can plan work to match pupils' prior attainment. However, procedures for assessing attainment in other subjects are not yet fully developed and this means teachers do not have detailed information of the progress pupils are making. It also makes it difficult for subject co-ordinators to have a clear picture of standards and areas for development in the subjects they lead. The school has identified the development of assessment as an area requiring attention.

52. Assessment information is used effectively to spot pupils who need help because of their special educational need. Procedures to assess the progress these pupils make are good. Individual education plans include accurate and relevant targets and close monitoring ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

53. The use of assessment to guide planning is good. The results of national tests are analysed question by question so that weaknesses in specific areas can be identified. Any problems are then remedied through modifying the planning. Several weaknesses were found in mathematics. For example, in the use of measurement, shape and the solving of word problems. A focus was therefore aimed at these three areas of the curriculum and standards have improved. In science, the teaching of electricity and the use of scientific language were weak but have now been remedied through planning. By using assessment results pupils are placed in ability groups in mathematics, booster groups to improve their performance and special groups to improve literacy skills. These strategies have made an important contribution to the improving standards in the school.

54. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory. The results of assessments are recorded on tracking sheets and these indicate the level at which the pupils are working and the target level to be aimed at in Year 6. This enables teachers to provide work more closely matched to pupils' ability and is raising the standards of all pupils. Pupils are given individual targets based on assessment and these are written in the pupils' target booklet each half term. However, many pupils do not have mental recall of their targets and therefore do not know what they have to do to achieve them. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not refer to individual targets to remind the pupils how they can improve their standards. Consequently, this system of target setting is not as effective as it could be.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents have a very high opinion of the school and are very supportive of the way it educates their children. One parent at the pre-inspection meeting described it as *an incredibly happy school*. The inspectors agree.

56. There was a good response to the inspection questionnaire with over 40 per cent of parents giving their views on the school. Parents particularly like the range of activities provided outside lessons, the way children are expected to work hard, the progress they make and the way their children become mature and responsible. They also commented very favourably on the behaviour, quality of teaching, approachability of staff and the way the school is led. Parents also said that their children like going to school. The inspection team agree with all these positive comments.

57. Some parents have concerns about homework. The inspection judged that the provision of homework is satisfactory.

58. The quality of information for parents is good overall. The prospectus is an informative and interesting document but a few items are omitted that are legally required. The governors' annual report is well written but has a significant number of items missing. This is unsatisfactory. Newsletters are regular and keep parents up to date with the life of the school. The half-termly letters outlining future work are of very good quality and allow parents to be involved very effectively in their children's learning. Parents can formally meet their child's teacher every term and this allows parents to be well informed on their child's progress and discuss any concerns. Pupils' reports are of good quality. They meet statutory requirements and give a clear indication of what the child can do and the progress made. The inclusion of the latest test results allows parents to check progress from one year to the next. Targets to encourage the child to improve are included but most are too general or vague. This is a missed opportunity to allow parents to be involved in helping their child to improve. The reports contain a well-written section of the pupil's personal qualities. The inspectors do not agree with the few parents who feel that the school does not keep them well informed on their child's progress.

59. The school is very successful at involving parents in the life of the school and their children's learning. Many parents attend school events ranging from the class assemblies to major performances. A large number of parents regularly help in the school, for instance, listening to children read and helping with computers. This help is well organised and is making a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. Parents regularly listen conscientiously to their children reading at home and this has a positive impact on the children's reading. Governors who are parents are fully involved in the way the school is developing. The Parents' Association is highly successful at arranging social and fund-raising events. Friends of Gilmour provide a good opportunity for ex-parents and the wider community to be involved in the school. Courses are regularly held for parents to allow them to be more effectively involved in their children's learning, for instance during the inspection a group of parents were in the midst of a nine-week course on numeracy.

60. Parents who have concerns about their children contact the school to seek advice and support. When a pupil is provided with an individual education plan parents are fully informed so that they know how to help their children at home. Parents are invited to the annual review for pupils with formal statements of special educational need and so are kept up-to-date with any changes in provision for their children.

61. Given the high regard the school is held by the parents and the extent to which parents are encouraged to be involved in the school and their children's learning, the inspectors judge the partnership to be very effective.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together very well and provide very effective leadership. They combine their individual skills to make a strong team determined to provide the best for the pupils. Together they have remained committed to providing a rich and imaginative range of

experiences as well as keeping a focus on raising standards in academic subjects. They have earned the respect of all involved with the school and parents consider the school is well led and managed.

63. The previous inspection identified a weakness in the use of staff and the school has reviewed these roles. Staff are now deployed effectively to subjects which generally match their experiences and interests. All staff have responsibility for the management of a subject or aspect of the school. The deputy headteacher leads by example and, as well as very effectively fulfilling his management role sets high professional standards in the school. His dedication to the school is clear in his long standing involvement with Kidswheels which has provided so many holidays for pupils and adults associated with the school. The leadership of English, mathematics and science is good because staff have had many opportunities to find out about standards in their subjects. The management of other subjects is satisfactory. Co-ordinators have successfully introduced new planning guidelines since the last inspection and these are leading to improved standards. However, due to the lack of assessment procedures and limited opportunity and time to find out what is happening in lessons, these managers are less clear about areas for development in their subjects. Consequently, action plans for these subjects do not focus sufficiently on how to raise standards. This was a concern in the previous inspection that has received due attention in English, mathematics and science but remains an aspect requiring attention in other subjects.

64. The management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has fully implemented the new Code of Practice.¹ Appropriate computer software has been introduced to help teachers, supported by the co-ordinator, to identify appropriate targets, strategies and resources in the pupils' individual educational plans. These are used effectively when planning tasks to meet the needs of these pupils. Teachers receive appropriate training to help them support these pupils and good links have been set up with a local special school. In previous years the school has provided education for pupils with physical disabilities and the school is adapted to meet a range of needs. This is further evidence of the school's commitment to providing education for pupils of all ability.

65. The contribution made by the governing body is good and has improved since the last inspection. Governors now play a full and active part in the management of the school. They are well informed about the school because they have links with every subject and often visit school to find out what is happening. Governors ensure all statutory duties are fulfilled although the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents have some omissions. They review policies and check that documentation is up-to-date. They are critical friends of the school and follow up concerns with requests for more information. They make informed suggestions because they have attended training or have expertise within a certain field. For example, governors recommended more opportunities for extended writing in the history planning guidelines.

66. The school is now giving more attention to monitoring its performance. Teaching is monitored by the headteacher. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have also observed teaching and this has led to improvement in teaching. The recent involvement in a national initiative to track pupils' progress from entry to the school to leaving has raised awareness of the importance of assessment and tracking of individual progress. This enabled the school to recognise that in 2002, although the results of national tests were low, many pupils had made good progress. A detailed analysis of national test results is carried out and weaknesses tackled and this has led to improvement especially in mathematics and science. Governors are involved in this analysis and have a clear understanding of the reasons behind the dip in test results in 2002. This is an improvement since the previous inspection which identified governors were not sufficiently involved in monitoring standards.

¹ Code of Practice- this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

67. The school's plan for improvement is drawn up following consultation with all staff in the school. This is good practice in ensuring all are involved in decision making in the school but leads to some lack of focus on standards and how they can be improved. The suggested headings do not include all aspects of the school and so self-evaluation of some aspects of the school is not carried out. This was a concern identified in the last inspection and has not been fully resolved. In practice, this planning process is effective because after the review the senior management team adds additional priorities. Consequently, the school's current priorities are clearly correct for the school. For example, raising standards and improving performance in national tests is the top of the current list of priorities. The school improvement plan is a well presented document with clear targets that can be measured to check on progress.

68. The overall management of the budget and monitoring of spending is good. The recommendations of the most recent audit have been implemented. The school administrative officer is very competent and monitors the budget carefully. Accurate information can be found quickly and this is shared with the headteacher and governors so they can keep a watchful eye on spending. Specific grants are spent correctly in the best interest of the pupils. The school makes good use of support from the Education Action Zone. This has enabled the school to employ a member of staff to organise activities at break and lunchtimes for more timid pupils who lack confidence on the playground. This has been effective in the past in supporting refugee pupils as they came to terms with their new life. Spending is linked to the school's improvement plan. The school is aware of the problems facing them with falling rolls and appreciates the consequences this will have on the school's budget. Financial reserves are higher than usually seen. This surplus was earmarked to repair the school's roof but the local authority eventually funded this. Since then the school has spent considerably on resources and further refurbishment and, after further planned spending, the carry forward figure will be within national recommendations. The principles of best value are applied in a good manner in major spending decisions. The analysis of assessment data has led to challenging targets and staff and governors searching for ways to improve. Governors are giving more attention to the effect spending has on standards. For example, the spending on additional staff so that pupils in Year 3 can be taught literacy and numeracy in small groups is leading to these pupils making better progress. Governors are aware that standards in information and communication technology are improving in the school because they have visited to see pupils working in the computer suite. The school consults with parents on a regular basis and parents consider they are fully consulted about any changes.

69. Procedures for performance management are in place. The school puts great emphasis on training for all adults involved in the school. This has been recognised nationally and the school has been awarded Investors in People status. The professional development of teachers and staff is matched to individual needs as well as to whole school priorities. For example, many members of staff have attended training on literacy and mathematics for the more able pupils.

70. The school works closely with local colleges in providing places for student teachers. This is closely monitored so that it is beneficial for the school and the students.

71. There is a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff. The careful planning between staff means that lessons run smoothly and pupils with special educational needs especially benefit from this support. The detailed staff handbook means that new staff are well informed about school practices.

72. Accommodation is good. The school benefits from ample space including two halls, a computer suite and large outdoor playing areas. Over recent years much has been done to improve the building and classrooms are now attractively carpeted and this leads to a comfortable learning environment. The school has an attractive library but this is not used effectively to extend independent learning.

73. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. There is a good range of high quality reading books. The number of computers is good and the school now has a suite especially designated to teaching information and communication technology. The school lacks resources to teach pupils the modelling and control aspects of the curriculum.

74. The school's aims are summed up as *Learning together, Growing together*. The school sees this as applying to everyone, not just the pupils, and this is evident in the real sense of community and team approach that welcomes pupils of all abilities. The overall strength in the leadership of the school means that the school's aims are fully reflected in the daily life of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve standards in writing by:
 - having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - improving the marking of work so that pupils know how to make their work better;
 - making pupils' individual targets clearer and reminding pupils of these so that they know how to improve;
 - improving pupils' skills of redrafting and editing their work;

Identified in school's improvement plan.

See paragraph numbers 2, 5, 6, 21, 23, 35, 54, 58, 76, 78, 79, 83, 85, 86, 143, 145.

- (2) improve standards in information and communication technology by:
 - improving resources and teachers' expertise so that all aspects of the subject receive sufficient attention;
 - making more use of information and communication technology in other subjects;

Identified in school's improvement plan.

See paragraph numbers 11, 21, 22, 30, 35, 73, 86, 91, 92, 100, 106, 116, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126, 127, 132, 145, 146.

- (3) provide subject co-ordinators with more opportunities and time to find out about standards and teaching in the subjects they lead;

See paragraph numbers 51, 63, 117, 121, 127, 132, 140, 146.

- (4) improve assessment procedures by implementing systems in the subjects where they are not in place.

See paragraph numbers 31, 51, 107, 112, 121, 127, 132, 140, 146.

In addition to the key issues above, the governors may wish to consider including the following minor issues in the action plan:

- investigate further ways of giving pupils better access to the library to extend their independent research;

See paragraph numbers 72, 82.

- implement systems for closer monitoring of attendance

See paragraph number 48.

- checking that the prospectus and governor' annual report to parents contain all the information that is legally required.

See paragraph numbers 58, 65.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

61

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

29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	14	28	16	0	0	0
Percentage	5	23	46	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	Na	265
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Na	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Na	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Na	56

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	45	48	93

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	38
	Girls	34	37	40
	Total	57	60	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (72)	65 (73)	84 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	31	36
	Girls	38	38	39
	Total	65	69	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (69)	74 (74)	81 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll
249
0
5
0
0

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	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	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	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: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	24.1

Education support staff: Y3– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	184

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	696940
Total expenditure	718149
Expenditure per pupil	2402
Balance brought forward from previous year	70446
Balance carried forward to next year	49237

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.5

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	265
Number of questionnaires returned	109

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	37	18	2	1
The teaching is good.	55	37	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	45	13	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	28	5	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	6	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	54	37	3	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	40	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	72	26	2	1	0

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

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

ENGLISH

76. Standards are average in Year 6, and are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. However, standards in writing have dropped because:

- expectations of writing are not sufficiently high especially for the higher attaining pupils;
- the marking of work does not focus clearly on telling pupils how to improve their writing;
- targets for individual pupils are often imprecise and are not referred to in lessons. As a result, pupils forget them and so they are not as effective as they could be.

77. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002, attainment was well below average and the school did not achieve its challenging target in English. These results were partly due to many of these pupils entering the school in Year 3 with a low standard of writing, a fifth of whom had special educational needs. The group also contained a group of boys who were difficult to motivate. Although standards have steadily increased over the three years following the last inspection, they have been consistently below average when compared with all schools and schools that are similar, with a smaller percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels at age 11 than is normally found.

78. Many of the older junior pupils entered school with below average reading and writing skills and this has affected their progress because:

- it has been more difficult to accelerate learning for pupils who have gaps in their early reading and writing skills;
- it has been difficult to raise pupils' expectations of their writing ability.

79. Current standards for these pupils show achievement in reading is good. Standards are higher than the recent test results because of the ability of the group of pupils and the on-going positive effect of the National Literacy Strategy especially in the well organised reading sessions. Overall achievement in writing is satisfactory, although overall standards are below average. This is because changes have not yet made sufficient impact on standards especially for the higher attaining pupils, who are underachieving. There are signs of improvement in Years 3 and 4 and pupils in these years are making good progress.

80. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are so well supported in lessons by teaching assistants and in small withdrawal groups. In these sessions the emphasis is on the pupils' specific needs and through repetition and consolidation pupils are improving their basic literacy skills. Activities are often practical and this makes learning enjoyable as well as beneficial.

81. By the age of 11, standards match expectations in speaking, and are higher than this in listening. Progress is good for most pupils because the good teaching values individual contributions, building confidence. Discussion skills develop well, particularly in extending pupils' technical vocabulary across the curriculum. Standards are above average in Year 3 and most pupils already express their ideas with confidence in well-formed sentences, using an appropriate range of vocabulary. Their responses reflect the good quality of their listening skills and the skills of the teachers' questioning, especially during literacy lessons. In Years 4 and 5, most pupils show evidence of an increasingly varied vocabulary and express their feelings fully and confidently. Not all pupils fully participate in discussions and some individuals who appear to be listening attentively have not grasped the key points during the first part of the lesson. This becomes apparent when they start their independent work. Most pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically offer their views and engage in good levels of conversation with adults, covering a wide range of topics. Higher attaining and average pupils are alert and full of opinions and ideas. The skills of lower attaining

pupils are more limited and several need more repetition of ideas, which is effectively covered in small group work.

82. Reading standards match expectations by the age of 11 and progress is good because of the high quality of the guided reading sessions when the teacher works with a small group to develop reading skills. These are consistently well organised, questions are pertinent and a good level of individual help is given to pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy these sessions and talk about some of the interesting texts they have read. By the age of 11, the best readers discuss their personal response to the text, sharing opinions and supporting them by finding evidence. Most pupils are fluent readers and read a wide range of texts. The reading journals log each pupil's unique, exciting journey through different authors and varying styles of writing. The homework tasks provide variety and stimulation and all pupils found these to be more interesting than writing their book reviews. Many of the girls enthused about the humour and insight in novels written by Jacqueline Wilson and also books like *Lord of the Rings* were popular. The love of reading is undoubtedly helped by the very good organisation and wide range of texts, which appeal to both genders, in the home reading boxes. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant in reading a new text but most have a sound knowledge of strategies to use and are gaining confidence and independence in their reading through the high profile given to reading and the good level of parental help. Although class libraries are regularly used by pupils for independent research, there are few opportunities for developing library skills because the school library is not easily accessible. The opportunities for using information and communication technology for research are limited at present.

83. Pupils' attainment in writing is below national expectations by the age of 11. Many pupils make satisfactory progress but higher attaining pupils are underachieving because the tasks set for pupils are not always high enough. This is depressing the overall standard of writing because fewer pupils are achieving the higher levels. There is evidence of improvement and many good examples of composing writing were seen during the inspection. Teachers are guiding pupils carefully through writing collaboratively and this is raising pupils' understanding of how to organise a text and write in an appropriate style. Many pupils' writing is well structured, interesting and shows flair in the way it is expressed. A good emphasis is placed on personal expression, sentence construction and the use of interesting phrases. Most pupils are joining-up their handwriting. In their extended writing, higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the structure and sequencing of events in a story. Their ideas are imaginative, varied and clear. However, there are weaknesses in spelling and in the correct use of grammar and punctuation and pupils are not transferring the skills taught in literacy lessons to their independent writing. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for redrafting and editing work. Consequently, although pupils do edit their work they are often unable to spot spelling and punctuation mistakes.

84. Literacy skills are promoted soundly across the curriculum. For example, in history pupils write about life in Victorian times and write formal letters to complain about conditions for the children.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. No teaching was less than satisfactory and in over two thirds of lessons observed it was good. All of the staff have worked hard to improve strategies for the teaching of literacy, such as placing a good emphasis on developing vocabulary through the use of the dictionary and the thesaurus. Teaching was excellent in a Year 3 shared writing activity that captured the imagination of the pupils when they created a shape poem together by focusing on building their own descriptive phrases. The teacher had high expectations of pupils and had prepared large card cut-outs of giraffes to stimulate creative thinking and to encourage lower attaining pupils to attempt the task. Words were flowing thick and fast as pupils found alternative words to inject life into their writing. This resulted in high quality work. In literacy lessons, teachers have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning although not all pupils work hard to complete their best work. Although the teaching of writing is improving in response to staff training it is not always as effective as it could be. For example, samples of pupils' writing show that work is not always marked. Comments are not usually linked to pupils' targets and do not consistently move pupils forward in their learning. Pupils interpret a comment such as, *well done* as meaning that they have achieved all that was expected of them. This is leading to under-achievement for some pupils

who are capable of higher quality work. Relationships are very good and pupils support each other well, giving help and encouragement to anyone who has a problem. Sometimes introductions are too long or uninspiring and teachers do not engage all pupils. Questioning is often used effectively to promote and assess pupils' understanding and additional advice offered when a weakness is identified. Teaching assistants are skilled at intervening and using their initiative in order to engage pupils who might have not understood. The value of the conclusion in re-emphasising points from the lesson is variable. In some lessons it is rather rushed because the introduction has taken too much time. However, in many lessons the conclusion is effective because teachers do take the time to make them fun and uplifting. A good illustration was seen in a Year 5 class where pupils were very keen to be involved and find the required word. Parents provide valuable support for their children with homework that aids the progress made at school.

86. Management of the subject is good. The school is in a good position to raise standards further. Good assessment procedures are in place that provide a clear picture of pupils' achievements. The practice of setting pupils individual targets that provide a focus on what they need to do to improve is beginning to develop but procedures are inconsistently applied. Monitoring of standards has identified areas for improvement. For example, grammar in writing has been identified and suitable training organised although as yet this is not showing a significant effect on standards. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. At present classes do not tend to use the suite during literacy lessons and there is limited evidence of pupils' planning, writing and editing a sustained piece of work using computers.

MATHEMATICS

87. At the end of Year 6 standards are above average and similar to those reported at the previous inspection. This is an improvement on the standards reported in national tests over the past few years. Following the last inspection there was a marked dip in test results, which largely reflected lower standards on entry to Year 3. The results of most recent national tests were well below both the national average and the average for similar schools. The school worked hard to raise the achievement of pupils and documented evidence shows that pupils made good progress through the school from their low starting point, although some could have achieved more. Achievement is now good and improvements have been brought about by:

- the effective introduction and on-going implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
- improved expertise of teachers;
- improved attitudes of pupils, who are very enthusiastic about mathematics;
- the very thorough analysis of test results, question by question, to identify any weaknesses and improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching;
- improved use of assessment information to check that pupils are making sufficient progress;
- the additional support for lower attaining pupils, in extra classes and by teaching in smaller groups.

88. Pupils make consistently good progress through Years 3 to 6 and most are attaining the level expected in Year 6 and over a third are now exceeding this level. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of number and apply their knowledge well in calculations, including fractions, percentages, decimals and negative numbers. They know their tables very well and have very quick recall of mathematical facts, which they apply well in answering challenging questions during lessons. The school identified a weakness in pupils' skills in measurement and in solving word problems. Consequently, the curriculum has been altered so that pupils now have good understanding of measurements and are beginning to apply their understanding of number in problem solving. Pupils know and understand a good range of mathematical vocabulary and use it confidently in answering questions and explaining their answers. They have good opportunities to undertake challenging, independent investigations, which extend their thinking and understanding and are quick to spot patterns in number. For example, when investigating square numbers, Year 5 pupils quickly noticed an emerging pattern and used this to calculate their answers, instead of laboriously writing every part out. Pupils understand the need for accuracy in

measurement and use their equipment carefully. They check their answers with a calculator and spot if they have used it wrongly because they are good at estimating mentally. Higher attaining pupils are achieving well and a small group is working at a much higher level than expected for their age. For example, they mentally calculate algebraic formulae such as $y = x + x^3 - 2$, when x is a negative number. When working on estimating and measuring angles in triangles, these pupils also estimate and calculate the percentage error in their predictions.

89. Teachers promote numeracy effectively in other subjects and pupils use their skills well in real situations, such as by collecting and analysing data. For example, in science pupils calculate pulse rates before and after exercise and, in geography, pupils calculate correctly how much water a household uses and then present their information in the form of graphs.

90. Teaching and learning are good, overall, and often very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. No teaching observed was less than satisfactory. There are high expectations of pupils and work is very closely matched to their needs, so that all are suitably challenged. In each year group pupils are taught in three groups linked to their ability, which enables teachers to target particular groups of pupils effectively. Interesting lessons are conducted at a very brisk pace and inspire pupils to work hard. Lively mental sessions get lessons off to a flying start and teachers frequently make very good use of whiteboards in these sessions to help them assess pupils' understanding. The direct teaching of basic numeracy skills is good; teachers give very clear explanations of what pupils are to learn and to do and pupils listen very carefully and respond thoughtfully. Teachers use their assessment information well to set clear learning targets for each lesson and independent work for the different groups within their groups. Pupils are eager to complete their tasks and often excited about their learning. They concentrate deeply as they work and frequently collaborate closely with a partner, discussing their work enthusiastically. Pupils are kept well informed about how well they are succeeding and how they could improve through teachers' comments in lessons. Marking is less effective in supporting improvement, usually being limited to a tick or congratulatory comment, although some teachers write very helpful guidance. Support for pupils with special educational needs is effective in allowing them to take a full part in lessons, working on the same topic as other pupils at their own level. Work is carefully planned to meet their needs and they make good progress towards their personal targets. All pupils now have an individual target for improvement each half term, but these are not used as effectively as they might be. Pupils do not refer to them when working and teachers rarely comment on progress towards them in marking or in oral feedback.

91. Throughout the school, teachers organise and manage their classes very well. They question skilfully to make pupils think hard and challenge them to explain their reasoning. Very good relationships create a very positive learning environment and teachers value pupils' contributions, so that all are confident in offering their answers and explaining them to the class. Resources are mostly used well but computers in the classroom are often not incorporated into lessons when they could be.

92. The subject is well led and managed. Systems are in place to analyse assessment information and check that pupils are making sufficient progress throughout the school. These systems highlight groups of pupils for extra support and curriculum areas for further development. The new co-ordinator has not yet had much opportunity to check the quality of pupils' learning although this has happened previously and led to effective sharing of good practice. Resources are good but there is only a limited range of computer programs.

SCIENCE

93. Standards are above average in Year 6. Overall achievement is good especially for the pupils who are now reaching above average levels. Teachers plan work that matches the needs of all abilities and, as a result, pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

94. In the 2002 national tests for Year 6, pupils achieved average results when compared with all schools across the country. Attainment at the higher level was low in comparison with all schools. When compared with schools of similar intake, attainment was below average. These results were affected by a lower attaining group of pupils who were less motivated to extend their learning than the current Year 6 pupils. Considering the attainment of these pupils as they started in the school the great majority had made satisfactory progress.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and standards have risen because:

- the curriculum is better supported by detailed planning guidelines;
- teachers are involving pupils more in scientific investigations;
- good assessment procedures are in place at the end of every scientific topic;
- the quality of teaching is good overall and often it is very good.

95. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy the practical aspects of science. They have a good understanding of the processes of filtration, dissolving, evaporation and condensation and the force of magnetism. This was taught effectively through the simulation of a nineteenth century situation where an industrial plant had produced a large quantity of polluted water and had called in another firm to clean it up. The teacher, with the support of pupils, demonstrated the techniques and a member of the class played the role of a newspaper reporter to record the procedures. This led to a very clear understanding of pollution and procedures to tackle this problem. In another practical lesson, pupils collaborated well and discovered how crystals dissolved. They successfully identified how and where the water could be stirred and compared the size of crystals. However, pupils did not consider the effect of hot water on solubility rates. Very good use was made of planning sheets and pupils are confident in organising their own investigations. They observe very carefully and discuss what is happening, showing a deepening understanding of what is a fair test. Higher attaining pupils are confident drawing conclusions from their findings.

96. Standards in other aspects of the curriculum are also above average. Pupils use scientific vocabulary confidently when studying food chains and habitats. They appreciate the interdependence between animals. Pupils know how plants make food and understand the term photosynthesis. In their writing, pupils use their literacy skills, including bullet points and sub headings. Numeracy skills are also used effectively as pupils calculate and record their findings on a graph.

97. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Where teaching is good, lessons begin with exciting introductions that capture the pupils' imagination. Detailed planning ensures that pupils quickly develop a good understanding of scientific concepts. For example, in Year 6 pupils were effectively led on to investigate reversible and irreversible change and how the investigation they had completed was a fair test. However, in the next aspect of the lesson the teaching was less successful because the number of pupils in each group was too large for them to analyse the effect of adding greater quantities of an effervescent powder to specific amounts of water. As a result, opportunities to make close observations of the reactions taking place were lost. A very good lesson in Year 6 was introduced by very good use of an interactive white board to enable the teacher to revise the previous scientific knowledge quickly. The key learning points were based on previous learning and were planned effectively to extend it by challenging pupils to examine the rates of dissolving of salt in water. Careful questioning by the teacher helped pupils organise their thoughts and ideas and the organisation of the class into groups enabled pupils to follow up their own ideas. Other very good lessons were in Year 3 and Year 4 classes. Pupils quickly grasped the idea about magnetic attraction because lessons were well resourced enabling all children to carry out investigations into the strength of magnetic force and the reaction of various materials to it. Teachers have very good knowledge and support pupils effectively by questioning and suggestions.

98. Sometimes lessons are satisfactory because pupils are not encouraged to develop their own ideas or set up their own investigations. Teachers' explanations do not fully ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and questions are not framed sufficiently well to direct their thinking.

99. In all lessons observed during the inspection, teachers realise the importance of the use of scientific vocabulary and encourage pupils to use it in their discussions and when they write up their investigations.

Where the lessons are good or very good, teachers have appropriate expectations and plan for the full range of pupils' achievements. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to use mathematics to analyse their investigations to identify patterns and relationships and this is a weakness.

100. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has good knowledge of the standards of attainment in the subject and a good portfolio of pupils' work has been assembled to reflect the quality of the science curriculum. It has yet to be checked against the required National Curriculum levels. Information and communication technology is not fully incorporated into the science curriculum to provide a source of further information or to become a tool for data handling. This is recognised and further training has been identified to incorporate information and communication technology into the science curriculum and enable these skills to be practised.

101. A Year 6 science club meets regularly with the co-ordinator to achieve a national standard award. There is an excellent atmosphere where pupils work alongside the teacher to investigate more advanced scientific phenomena. During the inspection they were using chromatography techniques to distinguish and separate the colours that are put into the covering of sweets and this was very effectively extending their scientific knowledge.

ART AND DESIGN

102. In Year 6 standards are above the level expected and achievement is good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when it was reported that standards and progress were satisfactory.

There are several reasons for these high standards and they include:

- pupils experience a wide range of media and materials and art activities;
- there is much direct teaching of art skills;
- effective use of sketch books to practise skills;
- the richness of the curriculum recognised by the award of the nationally recognised Artsmark;
- pupils with special educational needs receive support in lessons and play a full part in lessons;
- teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of pupils' work.

103. Standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils work hard to improve their skills and are aware of the need to plan their pictures. In their sketchbooks, pupils practise shading using soft pencils. As a result, their still life drawings are of high quality. Pupils make initial sketches before starting on a full size painting. These skills were used very effectively when Year 6 pupils studied landscape artists at Sudley Hall Gallery. The pupils then made their own thumbnail sketches of the scenery around the gallery and later created beautiful watercolour landscape paintings. They made attractive frames out of plaster bandages and painted them gold. These framed landscapes made an attractive display outside their classroom. All elements of the curriculum receive attention and pupils experience three-dimensional art during the school's Art Week. Pupils make attractive shields out of cardboard and cover them with dark foil with Celtic decorations. Plaques are made out of clay embellished with Celtic designs. To celebrate Liverpool Culture and the World Clipper Race, the pupils in Year 6 combined with sixth formers from the local school. This greatly enriched the curriculum for these pupils and resulted in two amazing banners which the school has on display at the entrance to the school. These are painted in acrylic paint and show the two Liverpool Cathedrals linked by Hope Street and a collage of portraits of the pupils. These banners were displayed at the Albert Dock at the start of the race and will be taken back to celebrate the finish of this marathon race. The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. For example, pupils in Year 6 are familiar with the works of famous artists. For example in the school entrance hall is a large and beautiful painting in the style of Gustav Klimt which was created by a group of Year 6 pupils.

104. The high quality of art is evident throughout the school. For example, Year 5 pupils show close attention to items as they create a still life picture which includes a variety of coloured fruits, bottles, jugs

and a piece of cloth. They understand that shading can help to improve the shape of the fruit. Pupils in Year 3 who were looking at personal relationships painted some very sensitive pictures and had managed to capture feeling within their work. This work links to pupils' work in personal and social education and they show the importance of a special relationship with their mum, a friend or in one case a dog. This work supports their social development.

105. The school recognises the importance of art as a vehicle to increase self-esteem and values pupils' work that is very attractively displayed around the school. Much of the work was produced in the Art Week which is held each year in the summer. For example, pupils in Year 5 created the beautiful batik hangings for the school hall. The pupils are also introduced to the art of other cultures. For example, in Year 3 pupils have made some intriguing, attractively decorated thunderbirds out of cardboard similar to those used in the rituals of Canadian Indians. Other pupils made beautiful Muslim patterns when they were studying Islam. Art is used to support other subjects. For example, an archaeologist came to school and talked to Year 3 pupils who then made good quality pencil drawing of the artefacts.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was reported to be satisfactory. Teachers have an enthusiastic knowledge of art and teach skills directly which improves learning in the subject. Teachers use imaginative resources outside the school to support the subject. For example, pupils visited the Philharmonic Hall for an art workshop and made some fine party masks. Teachers have a warm relationship with their pupils and, as a result, they respond well and behaviour is good. Lessons are well organised with good resources so that learning runs smoothly and pupils enjoy their work. Teachers have high expectations and in the lessons they evaluate the work produced along with the pupils. Good use is made of support staff to help the less able pupils. Teachers make good links with other subjects. Information and communication technology is not used frequently enough to support the subject.

107. Management of the subject is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There are comprehensive planning guidelines to help teachers build on pupils' previous skills. The subject manager monitors the planning and examines the work produced. However, there are no formal assessment and recording procedures to give a detailed picture of pupils' achievements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Attainment in Year 6 is above average and achievement is good. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection when standards and progress were satisfactory. The reason for these good standards is that the pupils are taught effective methods for both designing and making objects.

109. Pupils in Year 6, design models of motor vehicles and fairground rides. They use a good quality design sheet to plan their work before making it. After investigating vehicles and fairground rides, pupils record their specification for the model, make a list of materials and tools required and draw plans with several elevations. Before making the model, pupils practise sawing wood safely and accurately by using a bench hook. They evaluate their work in the making process and, to improve the strength of the structure, they fix cardboard triangles to the corners to make it more rigid. As the models progress pupils modify their designs as unforeseen problems arise. Some pupils add control to their vehicle and, in one case, they devised an hydraulic mechanism to steer it. To drive the model, pupils attach an electric motor with a gearbox in order to reduce the speed. They also incorporate a rotary switch so that the vehicle can go backwards as well forwards. As a result, pupils have produced a first class vehicle that serves the purpose for which it was designed and in which the workmanship was good. Staff check all are fully included in lessons. This enables pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils to make good progress. For example, in one lesson the teacher ensured that a lower attaining pupil was given help when sawing and drilling. As a result, self-esteem was raised and progress was the same as for the other pupils.

110. In the other year groups design and technology is of a good standard so that good progress is made throughout the school. For example, Year 3 pupils make good quality picture frames after investigating how they are constructed and preparing a design sheet before making them. Similarly in Year 4, pupils made delightful pop up greetings cards which were well designed and made. The pupils experience a range of topics including food technology. The pupils in Year 5 invited their parents to come to school to help them to design and make sweet biscuits. Once again, the pupils investigated a variety of biscuits before devising a recipe from which to prepare and cook them. The biscuits were a delicious success.

111. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection where it was reported that teaching was satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and are confident in advising pupils as they work. Good attention is given to teaching practical skills and methods for designing and pupils are aware of the need to give thought to all aspects of model making. Teachers encourage pupils to collaborate with each other and provide time to discuss common design problems so that corporate solutions can be found. Teachers show pupils how to evaluate work of others in a sensible way and this contributes to their training in social skills. The planning and organisation of lessons is good. An adequate supply of good quality tools and materials is available so that the pupils do not become frustrated through lack of materials. Essential skills, like sawing accurately, are practised so that models can be successfully built. Teachers are well aware of the safety aspects involved in the subject and anticipate these by advising the pupils how to avoid dangerous practices. Basic skills are consolidated when the pupils are required to make accurate measurements and weigh ingredients accurately in food technology. Knowledge learnt in other subjects is also put into practice, for example the use of electric motors to drive models. Good use is made of support staff to help pupils with special educational needs and they are fully involved in lessons and make good progress. Teachers have a warm relationship with their pupils and they respond well. Consequently they work hard, concentrate well, give of their best and behaviour is good. The pupils are interested in the subject and enjoy it.

112. The management of the subject is good. Detailed planning guidelines mean teachers know what to teach and when. Teachers' planning is monitored by the subject manager who also examines the work produced to gain an understanding of how to improve the subject. There are no formal assessment procedures in place in order that pupils' progress can be plotted and planning effectively guided. Information and communication technology is not used frequently enough to support the subject. Design and technology makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development as they learn to work together and share their ideas.

GEOGRAPHY

113. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards in Year 6 are broadly average. Achievement for all pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs often receive adult support in lessons although on occasions need more help as the task is not matched to their ability. Their overall progress is satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

114. By the time they reach Year 6 the pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of topics. The limited amount of time allocated to the subject prevents pupils extending their knowledge to a greater depth. Pupils compare their own locality with Maeshafn in Wales. They identify similarities and difference at a basic level. For example, they identify their own locality as noisy because it is busier but they do not show a real understanding of the reasons for the differences. Pupils' geographical skills are developed effectively during the Year 6 visit to Colomendy. They can locate places on maps using six figure references. Geographical terminology is used correctly and pupils understand that contour lines are used on maps to link places of similar height. Many can use this information to draw an imaginary mountain from the given data. Pupils investigate weather patterns by collecting data using thermometers for the temperature and a cup anemometer to measure wind speed. Numeracy skills are applied well as pupils analyse their findings and recall the data on a graph.

115. The school has been awarded Eco status, which reflects the school's focus on protecting the environment. This has made the pupils throughout the school very aware of how people can cause damage to the environment.

116. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers follow detailed planning guidelines and include a range of activities which make learning interesting. The introductions to lessons are good. Teachers use questions effectively to revise previous learning. Teachers encourage the skills of analysis. For example, in Year 4 pupils were asked, *what does this map show us?* and the teacher built effectively on pupils' responses. In the conclusion teachers use geographical terminology and pupils use these words correctly in their discussions. In the work completed on the visit to Colomendy tasks were challenging and much new learning took place. This was less apparent in the lessons seen when tasks did not match pupils' ability. This led to higher attaining pupils copying sentences rather than extending their learning. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is satisfactory but this is not always shared effectively with the pupils and can lead to some confusion about the task to be completed. For example, when learning about the water cycle, pupils in Year 5 did not appreciate how the water from the sea became clouds and so did not really understand how the cycle was completed. Similarly, when learning about weather symbols, pupils completed sentences replacing the weather symbol with a word and this failed to capture the interest of the higher attaining pupils. Links with information and communication technology are evident, such as when a weather forecast was researched, but this requires further development.

117. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader is beginning to check on standards by reviewing samples of work but this is not providing a clear picture on standards or how skills are being taught in lessons. As at the time of the last inspection the school does not have formal procedures to assess pupils' progress in geography. As a result, it is difficult for the co-ordinator to identify strengths and areas for development in the subject.

HISTORY

118. Standards match those expected for pupils in Year 6. Achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory and standards remain the same as those identified in the previous inspection.

119. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure factual knowledge of a range of topics covered in Years 3 to 6. These include the traditions and beliefs of the Egyptians, Greeks and the Tudors. Pupils have a real understanding of life in Victorian times because of their visit to Quarry Bank Mill where they dressed up and carried out duties as apprentices in the mill. Pupils in Year 6 appreciate that it was a difficult time for many people and have extracted information from a newspaper article that explains the reasons for an outbreak of cholera in London. They have extended their factual knowledge of famous people linked to the developments in medicine and have learnt about Florence Nightingale, Joseph Lister and Alexander Fleming. Teachers make good use of artefacts in Year 3 and effective teaching develops pupils' understanding that historians find out about the past from a range of resources. A local Egyptology student provides expertise and resources for studies of the Ancient Egyptians. As a result, by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are aware that books, audio-visual materials and the Internet can provide information about the past. They are beginning to understand the difference between primary and secondary sources but are less sure that primary sources are more reliable. Year 6 pupils are starting to apply their knowledge and understand that the advent of the steam engine affected the lifestyle of many people. Higher attaining pupils show an empathy in their writing as they complain about the conditions of the workers at that time. A few pupils are less sure about the reasons for change from Victorian times to the present day.

120. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen teaching was often good because teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject which they share with the pupils. As a result, many pupils have a real interest about the past. The openings of lessons are the best part with stimulating discussion which leads to an interest to find out more. This was very effective in Year 3 when teaching

built effectively on a recent visit to a museum to find out about the Ancient Egyptians. Teaching was imaginative. For example, pupils were digging in sand to find artefacts and so gained a real understanding of the archaeologist's role in finding out about the past. Learning was effective in this lesson when pupils were supported in small groups. Tasks captured their interest and good support from classroom assistants enabled all pupils to extend their learning. Learning was less effective in Year 6 when tasks did not always challenge pupils and some started to lose interest. This lack of challenge was also evident in a review of pupils' books. Some worksheets used included too much colouring or simple tasks which restricted pupils' learning. Strengths in all of the lessons seen were very good relationships, careful planning and effective control. As a result, learning takes place in a happy atmosphere and pupils are willing to contribute their ideas because they know the teachers value their efforts.

121. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Teachers now make better use of the school's planning guidelines to ensure lessons build on prior attainment. However, the lack of assessment procedures remains an area requiring attention. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to see standards in lessons and so has limited knowledge of how historical skills are being taught. As a result the action plan for the subject does not identify how standards can be improved. Currently, the subject does not receive sufficient time for pupils to reach an in depth understanding of the topic they study. Teachers are starting to use information and communication technology effectively in lessons but there was limited evidence of pupils using information and communication technology to support their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Overall standards in Year 6 are below average because pupils do not have sufficient experience of all the aspects involved in information and communication technology. Overall achievement is satisfactory especially in word processing and data handling skills. However, there is underachievement in other aspects of the subject because the lack of opportunity and resources. The last report said that the attainment did not reach the national expectations and that progress was unsatisfactory. Overall improvement has been satisfactory in most areas of the curriculum. For example, the computer suite is now fully operational and pupils are gaining a sound basis in the skills of using computers.

123. Pupils in Year 6 are underachieving in the use of simulations programs where they can explore problems and make decisions. They do not use sensors like temperature probes that could be helpful in science to make accurate measurements. Control boxes, which could be used with models made in design and technology, are not used. At the moment there are no facilities for sending external e-mails. However, the pupils are developing satisfactory skills in other aspects of information and communication technology when they are taught in the computer suite for an hour each week. Year 6 pupils are competent in word processing skills and are able to log on and select the program they require. They cut items and move them to other parts of the text and add pictures to their work. Most pupils are able to use word art and add a decorative border to their work. There are occasions when pupils use these skills to produce good work in the classroom. For example, two girls produce a small newspaper with columns and illustrated it. One pupil prepared a presentation about his hobbies and showed it to the rest of the class using the white board. The pupils are able to access the Internet and download relevant material.

124. In Year 3, the pupils were working with tally charts and graphs. Two pupils produced a bar graph to show the colour of pupils' hair, a line graph to show the colour of pupils' eyes and a pie chart to record the pupils' favourite colour. However, overall these acquired data handling skills are not used frequently enough in the classroom to support subjects like mathematics and science. Observations show that other information and communication skills are not used frequently enough in the classroom to support other subjects.

125. Teachers ensure pupils of all abilities take a full part in lessons. Support staff offer good advice and encouragement and this is very beneficial for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and this is similar to that recorded at the last inspection. Teachers have improved their expertise due to the national training they have received. Teachers are more confident when using information and communication technology. Two classrooms have been equipped with interactive white boards and these are used well both by both teachers and pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were investigating triangles and the teacher used the board effectively to demonstrate some points and the pupils also used it to find out about shapes that include triangles. The teaching of skills in the computer suite is good and effective learning takes place. However, these skills are not used frequently enough in the classrooms to support other subjects. Organisation and planning of lessons in the computer suite are good and, as a result, unnecessary difficulties do not arise and lessons run smoothly. Good use is made of support staff to help with the less able pupils. The teachers have positive relationship with their pupils and, as a result, they co-operate well and behaviour is good. This makes an important contribution to the improving standards in the subject. Specific grants have been used correctly for training and this has contributed to the rising standards in the subject. The school has arranged additional technical support for the teachers through the Education Action Zone.

127. Overall, management of the subject is satisfactory with some good features under new leadership. This has led to the introduction of a comprehensive scheme of work which makes it clear to the teachers which aspects of the curriculum to teach. The school is making arrangements for the computers in the classroom to be linked to those in the suite so that it will be easier to use information and communication technology to support other subjects of the curriculum. The subject manager monitors the planning but there are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. An action plan includes the setting up of an effective assessment and recording system and includes a focus on the aspects of the curriculum which are not yet sufficiently developed.

128. The computer club makes a valuable contribution to the rising standards in the school. Good safety advice is given to the pupils on a regular basis to warn them about using the Internet safely by not giving out personal details and not opening unknown e-mails and web sites.

MUSIC

129. By the age of 11 pupils reach the standards expected for their age and these have remained broadly the same as the last inspection. Progress since the last inspection is sound. Achievement is satisfactory for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Standards in singing, playing, composing and performing are average. Standards in listening and musical notation are above average. The quality of singing in assembly is often good and pupils learn to sing challenging songs quickly and accurately. Singing is often enthusiastic and includes actions and a real feeling of belonging to a community is established.

130. Standards show that the level of confidence in singing varies considerably from class to class. In Year 6, for example, one class was able to sing a folk song, *Evacuee*, confidently while another class lacked the confidence to sing a partner song from the Second World War. The choir, which is open to all year groups, is working with a music specialist which is helping to raise standards and is a good example of how well the school is beginning to raise the profile of music in the school through performance. Knowledge and understanding that have been developed through listening and notation are good. Although some pupils in Year 4 struggle at times to remember the names of basic untuned instruments from other countries, they perform accompaniments with various instruments, learning about duration of notes with pieces created by them. As they practise, the classroom rings out with tambourines, shakers and triangles, all being played in a creative but controlled way. In Year 5, good understanding of rhythm is developed through clapping and singing. Individuals sing confidently and participate fully in songs. They respond imaginatively to music, correctly matching the mood of snatches of music to television programme themes, such as *The News*, *Gardening* and *Cartoons*. They develop a good understanding of time through clapping and chanting. Composing skills are developing soundly in Year 6. One class of pupils was able to play together with everyone remembering their parts, accompanying one pupil who was

playing the keyboard. Progress is slower for some pupils with moderate learning difficulties who need additional time to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Progress for pupils who have a particular musical talent is sound, but very good where pupils are involved in learning an instrument.

131. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best teaching combines the elements of fun with a good knowledge base that is used to gently lead the pupils naturally to develop their own musical knowledge. The focus is on exploration and enjoyment. Where there are shortcomings in teaching they arise from a lack of time allocated the subject and this does not always allow teachers to fully extend pupils' learning. On occasion, a lack of subject knowledge leads to missed opportunities to increase pupils' subject knowledge. For example, in Year 5 a small group played instruments while other watched rather than playing a more active part developing their composing skills. Management is good so pupils have opportunities to sing and play instruments in an orderly atmosphere.

132. The subject management is satisfactory, with some good features. Training on the use of keyboards has been carried out with all the staff and each classroom is well equipped with its own keyboard, compact disc player and set of musical instruments. With the exception of information and communications technology, which is identified in the school development plan as an area for further development, the school is well resourced. The co-ordinator has carried out an audit of areas for development and is enriching pupils' experiences by approaching a range of agencies to become involved in the teaching of the subject. Literacy and numeracy skills are soundly promoted through the emphasis placed on listening and evaluating, and the rhythm work that takes place. Strategies for checking and recording aspects of pupils' musical performance are limited and rely heavily on the information being remembered by the teaching staff.

133. A positive feature of the school is the 'Music at Gilmour' initiative which provides additional high quality opportunities within class time for pupils to deepen their musical skills, knowledge and understanding by playing an instrument of their choice. At present, fifty pupils (14 per cent) are involved and there are plans to extend this opportunity to all of the Year 3 pupils. The music co-ordinator encourages these pupils to share their talents with others, in assemblies and music lessons. This enhances the pupils' spiritual and social skills as they grow in self-confidence to perform in front of an audience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Standards in physical education in Year 6 are in line with those expected for this age. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and often supported sensitively by their peers and this enables them to make sound progress. Standards in swimming are above the national level because all pupils have a swimming lesson every week. Good standards are also achieved in dance. This reflects the findings of the previous report.

135. The high standards in swimming observed in the previous inspection continue to be achieved by the school. Almost all Year 6 pupils reach the national swimming standard of 25 metres. Many continue to develop their stroke and stamina to achieve personal survival, distance awards and success in competitive events. By Year 4, two thirds of the pupils are confident and competent swimmers. This is because of the good organisation at the local swimming pool where pupils are taught in small groups according to their current ability. The teachers and classroom support assistants, who work alongside the professional instructor, are knowledgeable and provide challenging exercises and clear directions to help improve pupils' performances in a safe environment.

136. In gymnastics, pupils apply themselves energetically and standards are satisfactory. In the lessons seen in Year 5, pupils find different balances and work well with partners to create bridges and stretch shapes. Other pupils incorporate their balance postures into short sequences including running and jumping. Teachers circulate well making suggestions for improvement. Many pupils are beginning to plan their work and analyse their own performances. They are less secure in identifying how their work can be improved. These findings are similar to those of the previous report.

137. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the lessons seen it was good in swimming and was excellent in dance. Energetic warm ups at the beginning of the gymnastics lessons increase pupils' heart rates in preparation for the central part of the lesson. However, the challenge presented by the apparatus does not always reflect the promise of the earlier part of the lesson. Pupils do not know which pieces of apparatus to assemble and the pace of the lesson slows because they have to wait for instructions rather than working quickly and independently to follow an established routine. In other lessons, too much time is taken up giving instructions or observing demonstrations. The organisation and provision of apparatus also restricts pupils' skill development, because there is insufficient range of equipment and not enough to cater for the number of pupils in the groups.

138. The quality of teaching observed in dance is excellent. The teacher's high expectations and enthusiasm infected the pupils who listened attentively to instructions and committed themselves wholeheartedly to the challenging tasks. Learning was excellent. The brief but very effective warm up was quickly followed by the introduction of 'jerking' and 'shaking' movements that were practised well by the class. The use of photographs and poems used by the teacher, helped pupils to gain insights into how machines worked. The very high level of teacher expertise guided pupils to work in pairs to practise their curling and stretching movements, then mirroring them, completing the shapes simultaneously then working the shapes as opposites. This made the pupils think and co-operate together. The excellent organisation and use of time ensured that they were given opportunities to analyse the progress of other classmates as the class prepared a routine based on 'Moving Machines' to be performed in an assembly later in the term.

139. Teachers give very willingly of their time to organise an excellent range of extra curricular activities. Many residential visits involve adventurous activities that enhance the pupils' self-confidence and their ability to work as part of a team. This provision enables them to learn new skills such as rock climbing, canoeing and abseiling. Other clubs support a full range of sporting activities. These serve to extend pupils' performances and give them opportunities to meet with pupils from other schools and compete against them. The school opens these clubs to all pupils.

140. The subject is soundly led. The planning guidelines provide good support for teachers and include all aspects of the subject. Currently, the school does not have systematic assessment policy to measure the progress that they make. Also the co-ordinator does not have opportunities to observe lessons. Consequently, the co-ordinator is unable to obtain an informed picture of current strengths and areas for development in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Standards in Year 6 meet the requirements set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, which is a similar picture to the reported by the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and benefit from the emphasis on discussion and practical work which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Progress is now more consistent as pupils move from year to year because the school has recently introduced a new curriculum. This provides for greater depth of study for older pupils when studying a topic they have covered in an earlier year group. Pupils make good progress in many lessons but overall progress and standards have not improved since the previous inspection because time for the subject is now very limited. Many pupils could make even better progress if they had more time to study their topics. For example, pupils study the subject for only half the school year and most lessons last less than an hour.

142. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils in Year 6 have sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They know a wide range of artefacts and symbols and understand their significance to Christians. For example, they know that candles are used to signify the light that Jesus brings to the world. They understand about Christian beliefs and know that these have an effect on life today. For example, they know that the Ten Commandments give a set of rules by which we live and that Christians

have a responsibility for helping others, as Jesus did. Pupils know a good range of stories from the Old and New Testaments and relate these to their own lives. For example, when studying the story of Noah and God's Promise, pupils make their own rainbow and write their own promise to the world to help make it a better place for all to live. Pupils understand the significance of Christian celebrations, such as Baptism, Christmas and Easter and their understanding is strengthened by visits to local places of worship of different Christian denominations.

143. Pupils learn about the beliefs, festivals and values of other faiths and know about the significance of artefacts for these faiths. For example, in Year 3, they learn about Islam and the significance of Rammadan and Eid and their understanding is deepened by the visit of a Moslem parent, who brings artefacts and talks about her beliefs. Learning is extended in art and pupils created beautiful Muslim patterns. Pupils visit a mosque and occasionally an Islamic exhibition at a local Islamic centre. They study the culture of other faiths, such as Islamic art, and creation stories of different faiths, such as Hinduism. However, pupils are not as well informed about the similarities and differences between faiths in Year 6, and they find it hard to recall their learning from previous years. This has been recognised and the new curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to revise their knowledge and understanding of the faiths they have previously studied and examine common themes and differences. What pupils know and understand is not often reflected well in their written work because of the shortage of lesson time.

144. Pupils' understanding of Christian values is strongly supported by closely linked studies in personal, social, health and citizenship education, which is taught for the other half of the year. Pupils develop greater understanding of their work on feelings, relationships and responsibilities to themselves and others in these lessons. Whole school acts of worship also extend pupils knowledge and understanding well of all faiths well and contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. A very well supported weekly lunchtime Scripture Union club also makes a very valuable contribution to learning, with over 50 pupils attending.

145. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It was often good and better in lessons observed during the inspection. The impact of the good teaching on pupils' learning is hampered by the shortage of time for lessons. Teachers place a strong emphasis on practical and oral work in the time available, which is effective in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils enjoy their work and develop very good attitudes and a respect for others' values and beliefs. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to record in their own words to consolidate their learning. Relationships are very good and pupils have confidence in sharing their own beliefs and values with the class. Very close links are made with pupils' personal development, which make a valuable contribution to spiritual, moral and social development. Teachers make very good use of resources in lessons but computers are not used sufficiently as a tool for research or recording work.

146. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, overall. The new curriculum has been carefully thought through to maximise the use of time and consolidate the link with personal development. Many good quality new resources have been purchased, although there is a shortage of computer programs. There are no assessment systems in place and the co-ordinator does not systematically check on standards and the quality of pupils' learning and therefore has no clear overview of how successfully the new curriculum is being taught. Many striking displays of posters, artefacts and pupils' work enhance the profile of religious education in the school.