

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104634

Headteacher: Mrs A. Radford

Reporting inspector: Mr F. Carruthers  
21285

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 December 2002

Inspection number: 246392

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mosspits Lane  
Fazakerley  
Liverpool

Postcode: L10 9LG

Telephone number: 0151 525 3545

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Fr. Paul Seddon

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21285	Mr F. Carruthers	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology, Modern foreign languages, Equal Opportunities, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19741	Mr T. Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25509	Mrs J. Clarke	Team inspector	English, Physical education,	How well are pupils taught?
31012	Mrs A. Welch	Team inspector	Mathematics, Music	
28686	Mrs E. Walker	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design, Design and technology	
23319	Mr V Leary	Team inspector	SCI Geography, History, Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This voluntary aided Catholic primary school has 326 pupils on roll aged three to 11, including 48 children who attend part time in the nursery; this is above the average size of primary schools nationally. The great majority of pupils are of white British origin and a few pupils are Indian, Asian, Chinese or from other ethnic minorities. Seven pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and the range of their first languages include Malay, Hindi and Spanish. There are above average levels of social deprivation among the families of pupils in school. For example, the proportion of families eligible for free school meals (29 per cent in the last school year) is above the average of schools nationally. Pupil mobility is about the same as in most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that found in most primary schools and their needs cover moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication problems, physical difficulties and autism. There are three pupils with statements of special educational need. The attainment of most of the children on entry to the nursery is well below the average expected for children at the age of three. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for seven months and the deputy headteacher for three months. Religious education and collective worship are the subject of a separate inspection.

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

After a period of change and uncertainty at senior management level last year, the school is now providing a good education for its pupils, who have very good attitudes to their work. The quality of teaching is good and reinvigorated leadership by the new headteacher is putting in place strategies for pupils to achieve well by the time they leave the school. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is above the average for primary schools but the school provides sound value for money.

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

- Dynamic leadership by the headteacher and senior management team is creating a vibrant learning environment for pupils and promoting good learning.
- Staff look after the pupils and manage their behaviour very well so that the pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- The school's provision for pupils' personal development, that is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.
- Pupils' attainment in art and design is well above average and in design and technology it is above average.
- The curriculum is enriched by good opportunities in subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education. Pupils in Year 5 are taught French and there is a very good range of activities outside lessons.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science could be higher.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and for those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language could be better.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 and has made good progress in resolving the three key issues arising from the report. Satisfactory progress has been made on raising standards in school, though there is more still to do. Teaching in Junior classes and teachers' planning have improved and the curriculum for design and technology and ICT now meets statutory requirements. Satisfactory progress has been made on improving procedures to check how much progress pupils are making. Management issues have been resolved well, so that governors are now monitoring the performance of the school and its finances well. Subject co-ordinators are more effective in their roles and levels of resources for learning are much improved. In addition, there have been major improvements in the school's internal accommodation, including a nursery class, computer suite, library, staff room and *Quiet Room*.

## 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	C	B	C	B	<i>Well above average</i> A
mathematics	D	C	E	E	<i>Above average</i> B
science	C	D	E	D	<i>Average</i> C
					<i>Below average</i> D
					<i>Well below average</i> E

Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated during the last three years and fell between 2001 and 2002. This is accounted for by a period of instability and change at senior management level as well as high teacher turnover during the last school year. In English, the school's performance was in line with the average for schools nationally and above the average of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. In both mathematics and science, too few pupils achieved the higher level, Level 5, and the overall results fell compared with the previous year. Consequently, results were well below the national average in both subjects. Over the last three years, the trend in test results has been below the national trend upward, and pupils' achievement was not as good as it might have been last year.

Evidence from the inspection shows that achievement in the current Year 6 is improving. In English, most pupils in Year 6 read fluently and make good progress in writing. Their work is neatly presented and contains interesting and varied vocabulary. Overall, standards of writing are average and a good minority are producing work of above average quality. In mathematics, pupils' ability to solve problems is improving. Standards of numeracy overall are below average across the school but getting close to average in the current Year 6. In science, pupils are becoming confident investigators, as a result of the better focus that teachers are putting on experimental work. The school sets ambitious targets for Year 6 pupils. The target in English, for 87 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level, is likely to be reached. The target in mathematics is for 79 per cent of pupils to achieve expected levels. Attainment in art and design is well above average and is a strength of the pupils'

achievement, and in design and technology it is above average. In geography, history, ICT, music and physical education, pupils' attainment is average.

At the end of Year 2, standards in test results in 2002 were below the national average in reading and mathematics and in line with standards in similar schools. In writing, standards matched the national average and were above the average of those in similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics and science. Children in the nursery and reception year make good progress. Many achieve the majority of the *Early Learning Goals* in all six areas of learning by the time they finish in the reception classes.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school, want to work and eagerly pursue all tasks given to them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have high levels of self-discipline and clearly know what is expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Most pupils are confident learners who are able to work well on their own and generally capable of researching information for themselves. Relationships are very strong amongst pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Well below the national norm last year. However, steps taken recently to raise levels of attendance mean they are rising and are currently almost in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence has also been significantly reduced and is now very low.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good and there are significant strengths in teachers' relationships with pupils and how well they manage them. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, and skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well because staff are making effective use of the two national strategies for these subjects. Staff also plan to develop these skills well through other subjects such as science, geography and history. There are several leading mathematics teachers now on the staff and there is good specialist teaching of music and French. Better planning and teachers' expertise in subjects such as ICT are helping to improve the quality of pupils' learning and to lift standards. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but there are too few classroom assistants to help them to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. There is no extra support for the very few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The great majority of pupils in



school concentrate well and take a full part in lessons. The pace of lessons is generally good and over time pupils work well independently as well as in groups.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Very good features include music, and French in Year 5. Links with the associated high school benefit the teaching of physical education. Personal, social and health education is strong and there is a very good range of activities outside lessons for pupils to enjoy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Strengths include the good quality of the pupils' individual education plans. However, there are too few classroom assistants to help them in Years 1 to 6.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall but there are no specific procedures and programmes of work to support those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are significant strengths in all aspects. They have an important impact on pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support for pupils' welfare and personal development is good. Procedures to check how well pupils are progressing in their studies is satisfactory and improving.

Links with parents are good. Parents report there have been much appreciated improvements in how the school forges partnerships with them. Information for parents about life in school and what is being taught is good.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and Foundation Stage co-ordinator are working very well as a team, providing the staff with a clear focus on school self-evaluation and improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and make a good contribution to the decision-making in school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is improving and is good overall. Senior staff and governors analyse data and compare their performance with schools nationally.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory. Senior staff and governors consult with relevant agencies and compare the effectiveness of services and

Aspect	Comment
resources	resources well.

There is a good number of teachers and as a result class sizes are generally favourable. However, there are too few classroom assistants in Years 1 to 6. The accommodation is spacious with a number of specialist rooms and it is well decorated and cared for. Levels of resources for learning are good overall.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very high level of support for all aspects of the work of the school was expressed by parents.</li> <li>• Parents are very appreciative of the developments introduced by the new headteacher in respect of the improvements to the learning environment, and links between home and school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents at the meeting with inspectors expressed the view that they would like to see better arrangements, for example at playtimes, to help pupils in Year 2 to adjust to joining the Junior section of the school.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully support the very positive views of parents. The school has plans to monitor and improve the transition from Infant to Junior classes.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated during the last three years and fell between 2001 and 2002. Pupils' achievement was not as good as it might have been last year. This is accounted for by a period of instability and change at senior management level as well as high teacher turnover during that year. This led, for example, to more than one change of teacher in one of the Year 6 classes and resulted in fewer pupils achieving the nationally expected level, Level 4, in the three subjects. Whereas the school achieved its target for 80 per cent of pupils to reach the expected level or better in English, results fell far short of the target for 85 per cent of pupils to do so in mathematics. Over the last three years, the trend in test results has been below the national trend upward.
2. There is clear evidence from the inspection, however, that this trend has been reversed and pupils' achievement in the current Year 6, for instance, is improving. This is the result of concerted efforts by the new senior management team to put in place strategies that promote better teaching and learning. Improved monitoring of teaching in English and mathematics by senior staff and advisors from the local education authority has pinpointed where there are weaknesses, and steps have been taken to eradicate them. An example is in mathematics, where classes throughout the school now have targets to improve specific elements of pupils' learning, such as solving calculations with missing numbers. The school has ambitious targets for pupils in the current Year 6. The target in English, for 87 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level, is likely to be reached and there are plans to provide high quality teaching in extra classes (called *Booster classes*) to help pupils achieve well in all three subjects next summer. The target in mathematics is for 79 per cent of pupils to achieve expected levels.
3. In English, most pupils in Year 6 read fluently and with a good degree of expression and understanding. Pupils make good progress in writing and their work is neatly presented and contains interesting and varied vocabulary. Overall, standards of writing are average and a good minority are producing work of above average quality. During the inspection, poetry was a focus and pupils used personification and rhyme well in their poems. Standards of literacy are average overall and teachers make good use of other subjects to help pupils to practise their skills of reading for information and writing for specific purposes. In mathematics, pupils' ability to solve problems is improving as a result of making this a target for teaching. Lessons of the National Numeracy Strategy have good purpose and are helping to make pupils more aware of their own strengths and areas to improve. It is evident from a sample of pupils' work this term, however, that above average pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and are working at the same level as the majority of the class. This aspect remains an area for improvement. Standards of numeracy overall are below average across the school but getting close to average in the current Year 6. In science, pupils in Year 6 are becoming confident investigators, as a result of the better focus that teachers are putting on experimental work. Pupils' understanding of topics such as physical processes is satisfactory and the pupils make the connections with everyday life when they study evaporation and condensation for example.

4. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The school is aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through its assessment and testing procedures in English and mathematics, and teachers plan appropriate work for these pupils. However, because of insufficient number of trained support staff in Years 1 to 6, many pupils with special educational needs receive inadequate support. In addition, during the term of the inspection, there was a vacancy to be filled and two further assistants were absent through illness. As a result, most of the pupils have not been achieving as well as they should. Their progress overall has been satisfactory rather than good. The school will need to address this shortcoming if it is to achieve its targets for English and mathematics in 2003.
5. The very few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress through contact with adults, other pupils and the language-rich environment of the classroom. One or two are making good progress. Here again, more trained support from both teachers and assistants would help the progress that these pupils make.
6. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 in art and design is well above average and is a strength of the pupils' achievement. Because of good and very good teaching, pupils learn to use sketchbooks in a purposeful manner, to pay close attention to the detail of their work and to improve their first efforts well. Attainment in design and technology is above average. In both of these subjects and in information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education, standards have improved since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' computer skills are developing well as a result of improved provision, access to hardware and software, and the better expertise of staff. In geography, history, ICT, music and physical education, pupils' attainment is average. Pupils in Year 5 achieve well in their weekly French lessons.
7. At the end of Year 2, standards in test results in 2002 were below the national average in reading and mathematics and in line with standards in similar schools. In writing, standards matched the national average and were above the average of those in similar schools. As with test results in Year 6 last summer, there was a decline in standards between 2001 and 2002. Girls performed better than boys in all three subjects. Senior staff have recognised this trend and have begun to take action to bolster the progress of boys by making achievement a key focus in class and in weekly achievement assemblies. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science last summer indicated standards were below the national average and in line with those in similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 2 is above average in art and design, and design and technology, and average in geography, history, ICT, music and physical education.
8. Children in the Foundation Stage, that is the nursery and reception year, make good progress. From being well below average overall on entry to the nursery, many achieve the majority of the *Early Learning Goals* in all six areas of learning by the time they finish in the reception classes. However, a large minority of children enter Year 1 with good speaking and listening skills but their reading and writing skills are not yet meeting the *Early Learning Goals*. The children's personal, social and emotional development improves very well in the nursery and this continues in the reception year.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved even more since the time of the last inspection, when they were good, and are now very good. Pupils enjoy school, want to

work and eagerly pursue all tasks given to them. They listen carefully when their teacher or other adults are speaking and always respond sensibly. Most take pride in their work. The attitudes and behaviour of children in the nursery and reception classes are also very good and they care for each other very well. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school. Most are attentive and follow instructions well. The majority are confident and show enthusiasm for learning. They work well together and support each other in their learning. During the week of the inspection, a pupil with a statement of special educational need was observed working well with other pupils. He was paired with higher-attaining pupils and they worked well co-operatively, which enhanced his research skills.

10. Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good both in and out of class. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, now have high levels of self-discipline and clearly know what is expected of them. Bullying is not a problem. No incidents were observed or reported during the inspection. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
11. Pupils' personal development has also much improved and is now very good. Most pupils are confident learners who are able to work well on their own and generally capable of researching information for themselves. They have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions upon others, and show due respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs. This was very evident in a Year 5 class assembly when all pupils made positive and thoughtful comments about the person sitting next to them. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes already show good levels of independence for their age, and are starting to develop good work habits. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and carry out duties given to them well. The school council is a particularly good example of this. It functions very effectively and provides good opportunities for pupils to show initiative.
12. Relationships are now very strong amongst pupils and between pupils and staff. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. The school has a relaxed and harmonious feel about it. Pupils are polite, courteous and work well together.
13. Levels of attendance have fallen steadily in recent years. The reported level for 2002 is well below the national norm. However, the school is well aware of this and is taking active steps to address the situation. Home-school links have been strengthened significantly and a wide range of suitable rewards have been introduced for pupils. As a result, attendance is rising and is currently almost in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence has also been significantly reduced and is now very low. This is because the new first-day contact scheme is operating effectively. Punctuality is generally good. Almost all pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

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

14. The quality of teaching is good overall. In three quarters of the lessons observed the quality of teaching was good or better. One in five lessons were very good or excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when 13 of the 98 lessons observed

were unsatisfactory. This improvement is the result of new leadership in the school, new members of staff joining the school, increased checking of teachers' planning and a drive to improve the quality of teaching. Recent improvements mean that pupils' achievements are improving and are currently good. The teachers have worked hard to improve their teaching and are by no means complacent, seeking further training and expertise to improve still more.

15. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The quality of teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, with some good lessons observed. The teacher was not originally trained to teach this age group and has had some training to support her. However, she recognises that she needs further training to achieve the high standards she aspires to. The teaching of class routines and the children's personal development is very good. In some lessons activities are not focused enough and the talents of the very good classroom assistant are not used effectively enough. Teaching in the reception classes is good overall because there is a clear focus and purpose to the children's learning. There were examples of excellent and very good teaching in one class. The teachers provide a wide variety of activities, which promote the children's listening and speaking skills well. In these classes the classroom assistants are well used and effective. Careful planning ensures that the relevant curriculum for these young children is taught.
16. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy in English lessons and numeracy in mathematics lesson is good. The teachers have been effective in introducing both of these national strategies. They have made good use of time during the school day to promote both reading and writing. The teachers are good at devising many interesting ways to engage the pupils and encourage them to learn well. For example, in one Year 3 literacy lesson the teacher used a scientific text to share with the pupils, which was effective in engaging the interests of all the pupils. The use of the computer suite for the pupils to use spreadsheets to work out mathematical problems extends and develops the work that the pupils learn in their numeracy lessons. In numeracy lessons the teachers ensure the pupils work at a brisk pace and with such enthusiasm and application that they complete their work accurately and quickly.
17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective in the way it supports learning in other subjects. For example, in science pupils in Year 1 made non-fiction books of day and night time animals in support of their scientific learning. In this way the pupils' activities were both purposeful and productive.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and is a balance of strengths and some weaknesses. Most teachers have an appropriate understanding of the needs of pupils who have individual difficulties, especially in English and mathematics. They take care to plan activities which take account of pupils' capabilities. This means that the pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides teachers with advice on assessment and resources when asked but her liaison with the teaching staff appears to be one of response to their questions, rather than one of instigating strategies and methods. There are too few classroom assistants in classes from Years 1 to 6 to support pupils with special educational needs. Sometimes they are inadequately briefed to meet the needs of pupils, other than those with statements. Provision for these pupils is well organised with well-focused planning and close liaison with external providers from the local education authority.
19. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive satisfactory support from the teaching staff but there are no specific procedures in place to support those pupils at

the early stages of learning the language. The very few pupils at the early stages make satisfactory progress as a result of their immersion in the language-rich environment of the school and contact with staff and other pupils, rather than through particular programmes of work or specialist help from teachers or support staff. Staff require training to raise their awareness of the needs of such learners so that they have every opportunity to make good progress.

20. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use the correct technical terms and appropriate subject-specific language to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This high focus on technical language is evident in all subjects. The school is also effective in using part-time teachers who have expert teaching skills in particular subjects. For example, a talented music teacher comes weekly to teach the pupils. The class teachers work alongside him and so their expertise and skills are developed further under his careful guidance. A French *assistante* comes to the school to teach French to pupils in Year 5, and junior pupils go to the local swimming baths where they have swimming lessons from a swimming specialist. A specialist physical education teacher comes from the local Sports College as part of an initiative to teach the pupils and help the teachers to develop their skills in teaching the subject. In this way the pupils have expert tuition in a large number of subjects, and this makes a very positive impact upon their learning. The teachers make good use of the computer suite and the interactive whiteboard and this adds a significant dimension to their work, enabling the pupils to develop their ICT skills well.
21. Teachers' planning is good. Teachers plan carefully and ensure that lessons build securely on what has gone before. They place a significant level of demand upon the pupils to ensure that they learn well. The teachers always share the learning objectives of the lesson with the pupils so that they are clear what it is they are learning and as a result pupils concentrate hard and progress well. Planning takes good account of all the levels of attainment in the classes, so that all are appropriately challenged. Displays of pupils' work always have the learning objectives attached so that the pupils are clear about the learning displayed.
22. Teachers' expectations of the pupils and their work are good. All staff have clear expectations that the pupils will listen carefully, behave well and work very hard. The pupils live up to these high expectations and the tremendous application shown by all the pupils is commendable. Teachers praise and encourage the pupils to do their best. As a consequence, the pupils are fully involved in lessons, they work at a good pace and complete a significant amount of work. Pupils and staff have a good relationship with one another and this adds significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel their input is valued and this helps them to achieve in many ways and aids their personal development.

23. Teachers organise their lessons appropriately. The pupils are encouraged to be independent in their work and often work in groups and take responsibility for organising their own learning. For example, in literacy lessons the teachers work with a group sharing the reading of a book, whilst the rest of the pupils in the class work independently. In some lessons the pupils evaluate each other's learning and consider how they might improve their work. This encourages the pupils to be reflective about their learning.
24. The management of the pupils throughout the school is very good, and in some cases it is excellent. The pupils work in a busy and interested manner. The management of pupils is consistently developed throughout the school with the very good behaviour being a reflection of the good relationships in school. Teachers work hard to engage, challenge and intrigue the pupils in their work. Time and resources are used effectively to keep all the pupils on task. Lessons move along at an appropriate pace and there is also time for the pupils to consolidate their work and think about the tasks the teachers have set. Resources are used well to support learning in the classrooms. Classroom assistants give valuable support in the nursery and reception classes. In the rest of the school there are insufficient assistants to aid the teachers in their work, especially in supporting group work in lessons.
25. The quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Teachers monitor the pupils' work well in the class giving support and advice, as needed. This is effective. They mark the pupils' work in a supportive and encouraging way. However, the pupils are not informed about what they need to do next to improve their work and they do not have individual targets set for them. Teachers use questioning well to gain insight into the pupils' levels of understanding and to develop their speaking skills. Homework is systematically set for the pupils, and it is completed, marked and returned to the pupils. Parents report that homework makes a positive impact upon the children's learning.

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

26. The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils, well planned and taught in an appropriate and interesting manner. It is effective in promoting pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and covers the full range of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Acts of collective worship meet requirements in full. In addition to the full primary curriculum, pupils in Year 5 have the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language, French.
27. The school has now addressed the issues raised in the last report relating to the curriculum, and policies for all subjects are in place. They have been reviewed in the light of national guidance and are being successfully implemented. There are curriculum *maps* for all subjects, which outline what is taught and how different subjects fit together, and they are reviewed by the co-ordinators and amended where appropriate after full consultation with all staff. As a result, links between subjects, such as ICT and mathematics, science and geography are strong. Good progress has been made in the putting into place schemes of work for design and technology and ICT, and these are helping to raise standards well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and are improving the teaching of these subjects. The time given to each subject is considered to be generally appropriate, providing a curriculum that is well balanced.
28. There is an appropriate curriculum planned for the children in Foundation Stage. The co-ordinator ensures that the planning reflects that there are different but related



objectives for learning so that children make progress through the areas of learning toward achieving the Early Learning Goals.

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils are identified as early as possible and appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs and write individual education plans. These are reviewed on a regular basis, of good quality and highly specific. For example, one pupil will learn to spell and read correctly the common spelling patterns for the letter blends: *air, or, er*, and progress will be reviewed each half-term. However, pupils are not personally involved in the composition of their own plans.
30. The school encourages all pupils to be fully involved in all aspects of school life and is committed to raising the achievements of all. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and to educational visits. Provision for the above average pupils, the gifted and the talented is satisfactory overall, though there are some examples of pupils not being challenged sufficiently well in lessons. This was evident from a sample of pupils' work in mathematics. At the time of the inspection, the new deputy headteacher was introducing a policy and plans that focus well on meeting the needs of these higher-attaining pupils. Those pupils with English as an additional language are also well involved in the life of the school, though there are shortcomings in provision for them and there has been little tracking of how well they are achieving.
31. Provision for extra-curricular activities is now very good. Activities at lunchtime and after school include netball, soccer, art, design and technology, cookery, computing, recorders and mathematics. They are very well attended and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. A few pupils receive instrument tuition. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to take part in a residential visit to an outdoor centre in Wales, although last year it did not take place because of staffing difficulties. However, this year's visit is scheduled to go ahead and, in addition, there are plans to organise a trip to France in 2004 to support the teaching of French.
32. Links with the church and local parish are developing well, and this has been the result of the approach adopted by the incoming headteacher. Good links have been maintained with the local community. Visitors to school and a wide programme of educational visits related to topics studied in class provide good first-hand experiences for pupils and support the curriculum well. Pupils continue to give good support for charity and have retained their links with senior citizens, the hospital and local hospice. These help to raise their awareness of the needs of others. Links with the coaching schemes of Liverpool and Everton football clubs help to develop pupils' sporting skills. Older pupils also have opportunities to gain a greater understanding of the world of work through the local business *COMPACT* initiative. Recently, for example, they have worked with a local newspaper to design and produce a paper of their own.
33. Strong links have been maintained with the associated high school, particularly through their outreach sports scheme, and more initiatives are planned. Transfer arrangements operate smoothly and ensure that all pupils in Year 6 are properly prepared for the next phase of education.
34. Provision for personal, health, social and citizenship education is good, and though the programme of study has not yet been completed, it is developing well. The personal, social and health elements of the course are taught across the curriculum through subjects, such as science, and also through assemblies. Each class has one lesson timetabled to spend in the *Quiet Room* and this helps the pupils to reflect on some of the issues that they study. Citizenship is taught in all classes through regular lessons.

It is done well and makes a strong contribution to pupils' understanding about issues such as personal safety and stranger danger. Sex and drugs education are properly incorporated in the curriculum and underpinned by suitable policies.

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection to become a very strong feature, central to the work of the school. Strong aspects of the provision for pupils' spiritual development lie in the way the adults celebrate pupils' achievements. In assemblies, the headteacher takes the lead in acknowledging the efforts and successes of pupils. Public praise and the issuing of certificates do much to raise pupils' self-esteem. Spiritual development is also promoted well through school and class worship. Teachers give pupils time to reflect on prayer and to explore their own ideas and feelings. The teacher in Year 6, by asking questions such as *How do we.....?* and *Why do we.....?* helped pupils to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. The school's *Quiet Room*, when used for collective worship, is particularly conducive to the development of spirituality. The school's mission statement strongly reflects Christian values and all teachers and adults share these aims and provide very good role models for pupils.
36. Pupils' moral development is promoted very well and is one of the things that most pleases parents. The school's code of conduct emphasises the care and respect that pupils are expected to show one another. Because expectations of good behaviour are very high, pupils are rarely in trouble. They enjoy receiving certificates or getting their name in the *Golden Book* as a reward for their efforts. One pupil in Year 6 commented, *It helps other children to be good, it sets an example for younger ones.* Moral issues, including bullying and racism, are discussed during assemblies and pupils come to a better understanding of the importance of being considerate of the views and beliefs of others.
37. Provision for social development is linked closely to how the school promotes moral development. Teachers are very good exemplars of courtesy and respect for others. They provide opportunities for pupils to work together and to talk things through as partners. The headteacher has quickly got to know all the pupils and encourages them to care for and help one another both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities, such as giving out materials in lessons and keeping classrooms tidy. Pupils in Year 6 share in the running of the school by organising class registers, getting the hall ready for assemblies and monitoring other pupils as they move around the school. Pupils who are playground *buddies* or members of the School Council take their responsibilities seriously. The school develops pupils' understanding of citizenship through fund raising for charities and links with the community such as distributing the harvest gifts and singing at the local hospital. Two pupils are chosen by the school to be *Citizen of the Year*.
38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. In art and design, English, French, geography, history and music, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values of different cultures, including those of ethnic minorities in Britain today. Visits to local museums, theatres and places of interest are built into the curriculum and pupils make a study of the history and geography of Fazakerley. Pupils look at the work of well-known artists and come to a better understanding of how art can reflect the culture and heritage of the artist. Close links with the church ensure that pupils develop a good knowledge of Catholic traditions and parish culture. However, pupils' knowledge of other faiths is more sketchy.

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

39. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' general welfare have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and all staff follow them closely. As a result, pupils are supervised carefully at all times. Arrangements for child protection remain secure. A member of staff has designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies and is properly trained to carry out the duties associated with this role. The school is also fully committed to promoting healthy living and has recently received an award for its participation in a national healthy schools programme.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development remain effective. Teachers know their pupils well, have very good relationships with them and respond positively to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs know they are very well cared for and valued and this has a positive impact on their learning. All staff promote high standards of behaviour successfully, and as a consequence the school is a calm and orderly establishment with a good climate for learning. However, the policy underpinning this area needs reviewing because it does not contain the full range of sanctions which may from time to time be necessary apply. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort and much emphasis is placed on celebrating achievement. This is particularly evident in the weekly *Good News Assembly*, which has a very prominent place in school life. The school also provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and to show initiative. The school council is a good example of this.
41. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have recently been a renewed focus for attention and are now very good. Registers are marked properly at the start of sessions. They are monitored thoroughly, although the necessary range of printouts from the computerised registration system are not produced. All unexplained absences are identified quickly and followed up promptly using the new first-day contact scheme. This is good practice and is helping to keep unauthorised absence very low. The school also well aware of the gradual decline in attendance over recent years and is now taking action to address this by strengthening links with parents and introducing a range of suitable rewards for pupils.
42. The school has satisfactory procedures for checking the progress pupils make and whether they are working at a good rate. Teachers use this information satisfactorily to guide and direct their lesson planning. There are good procedures in place to check pupils' learning in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Procedures are yet to be put in place for other subjects.
43. Information gathered from detailed examination of national test results is used effectively to target areas for the school to improve. For example, this has led to a whole-school drive to ensure that boys in particular are motivated to learn well. Good information is gained by tracking the pupils' progress in English and mathematics as they move from class to class. Teachers are beginning to use this information to help them to group the pupils in class and also plan their lessons. As a result, teachers ensure that the pupils' work is matched to their needs and they achieve overall in a satisfactory way. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. However, there is more to do to improve the way the teachers use the information to make sure that pupils know exactly what it is that they need to do to improve work further. At present the pupils do not have this important information. Pupils with special educational needs are not fully involved in their annual reviews and this is a point for improvement. In the reception classes the children are given their next steps for leaning through discussion with their teachers.

44. The pupils' academic performance is carefully checked by the assessment co-ordinator and she is able to identify pupils who are achieving satisfactorily and those who are not doing quite so well. This means that she can identify those pupils who need extra help with their work.

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

45. Parents express extremely strong support for the school and value highly the initiatives that the headteacher has put in place since her appointment. They feel the school is doing a good job in educating their children and are happy with the standards achieved. They feel confident approaching the school with concerns or queries. In responses to the questionnaire for parents, there were no concerns of any significance. Inspectors fully support these very positive views.
46. The school has successfully established a close partnership with its parents, particularly in its efforts to improve attendance, and is receiving good support from them generally. This is having a positive impact on attendance rates. Homework is now provided on a structured basis. Parents are happy with what is set and are pleased it is marked properly and suitably rewarded. Many are very keen for it to be completed well by their children. The school also puts on various courses and events to involve parents in other ways. The Family Numeracy project is a good example of this. It is well supported and makes a valuable contribution to their understanding of how mathematics is taught. Parents report it is helping them to assist their children when they are stuck on homework. Furthermore, parents are made very welcome in school and a few provide regular and reliable help with reading. The Parent and Teachers' Association remains active and continues to provide generous levels of support for the school.
47. Overall, the quality of pupils' annual reports remains high. They continue to provide a clear picture of their achievements, although the targets contained in them to help them do better could be a lot more specific. Parents are kept well informed about life generally in school and receive regular updates from teachers about the work covered in class. Those parents who were present at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection were particularly appreciative of the literature provided about mathematics. They felt it was of great benefit when helping with homework and would welcome more initiatives of this type. The prospectus and governors' annual report, however, are not so good. Neither meet statutory requirements. The prospectus lacks national comparative data for the National Curriculum test results, as well as details of attendance. The governors' annual report does not contain details about security, provision for disabled pupils, the election of parent governors and what the school has done to address issues raised by the previous inspection report. The school has satisfactory links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Liaison takes place on a regular basis both formally and on an informal basis. However, their involvement in target setting is limited. Parents are briefed rather than involved in the target setting process.

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

48. Leadership by the recently appointed headteacher is excellent and there is very good teamwork emerging with the establishment of a new senior management team. In a very short space of time the headteacher has made very significant improvements to the way staff approach their roles as subject co-ordinators and class teachers. She has completed many of the improvements to the school environment that she identified as important, both for lifting the morale of staff after a period of uncertainty and staff

change, and for giving the pupils a renewed sense of pride in their school. She has begun to forge strong links with parents, governors and the wider parish community, which are much valued by all. After an initial review of the provision that the school was offering when she was appointed, the headteacher has put in place systems to improve the quality of teaching, subject leadership, curriculum management and pupils' progress. Her school improvement plan has clear priorities on how standards are to rise in the short and longer term. She has led by example and there is now a very strong commitment on behalf of staff to take the school forward. Excellent teaching by the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and Foundation Stage co-ordinator enable them to be effective role models for staff. They are eager to share their expertise with them in order to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. Systems for checking the performance of teachers are in place and are closely linked with school-wide issues, for instance improving their expertise in teaching ICT.

49. Support from the governing body is good. There is good leadership from the chair of governors, who is in regular contact with school, and there are links forged between governors and individual classes throughout the school. The various committees set about their delegated tasks with a clear understanding of what they need to do. For instance, educational priorities are supported well through very efficient financial planning by senior staff, governors and administrative staff. Using the information from a recent audit of all resources, the school development plan identifies appropriate priorities benefiting all groups of pupils. It ensures that the school's resources are directed towards raising pupils' attainment across all year groups. Governors sitting on the finance committee monitor the school's budget regularly and there are procedures in place to ensure that money is spent wisely and with principles of best value firmly in mind. Day-to-day administration is very efficient and computers are used very effectively to secure the smooth running of the school.
50. Good progress has been made overall on the key issues arising from the last inspection. There is now improved leadership by subject co-ordinators, though some aspects are only recently in place, the monitoring of income and expenditure is better and levels of resourcing are now good. Teachers' planning is good and the curriculum for design and technology and ICT are much improved. Teaching in Junior classes is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection, though there are improvements still to be made to the provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those beginning to learn English as an additional language.
51. The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator, recently appointed to the post, manages and organises provision to a satisfactory standard. There is a policy and parents' handbook. She has half a day each week to discharge her responsibilities. This is used mainly for administrative purposes, which are many, and as a result there are few opportunities for her to be involved in the teaching and learning of pupils or the monitoring of how they are taught. There is a governor, recently appointed, with specific responsibility for provision.
52. The school is well staffed with teachers, and the staffing situation is now more settled following a period of relatively high turnover. Teachers are suitably qualified and provide a good balance of experience and expertise. Subject responsibilities are deployed appropriately amongst them and there is specialist teaching in French, music and physical education. However, except in the Foundation Stage, the school does not have enough classroom assistants, and during the inspection there was a vacancy and two of them were absent through illness. This problem was highlighted for action by the headteacher in her initial review of the school. The levels of support staff for pupils with

special educational needs are unsatisfactory, resulting in many pupils in Years 1 to 6 receiving inadequate support. However, the level of support for pupils with statements of special educational need is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage is also suitably staffed with support assistants. The quality of caretaking support is good, and this ensures the school runs smoothly.

53. Overall, there is ample accommodation to teach the planned curriculum, although some classrooms, particularly those occupied by Years 1 and 4, are only just adequate for the number of pupils in them. Nevertheless, the school benefits from a good range of other rooms, which are used effectively to support teaching activities. These include a large library, a computer suite, music room, art room, literacy room and a *Quiet Room*. Some of these facilities have been recently established since the appointment of the new headteacher. The building is well maintained and kept very clean. Its internal environment has been greatly improved, as a result of the attention given to it by the current headteacher, and provides a very pleasant place to learn in. Displays are attractively presented and do a lot to enhance the character of the school, but could now be developed further to include more examples of pupils' own work. Outside, the grounds are well tended and there are plans to improve part of them by the construction of an environmental garden. Playground surfaces are sound and the field is large enough for sport.
54. Resources to support pupils' learning are generally good, and are very good for ICT. The library is well stocked. Resources are well managed and used effectively in all areas of the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The school should

- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science \* by
- ❑ improving the level of challenge for above average pupils
  - ❑ maintaining the focus on improving the performance of boys, especially in infant classes
  - ❑ increasing the number of support staff to help pupils to achieve more, especially when they are working in groups
  - ❑ improving target setting for individual pupils.

*(Paragraphs 1 – 3, 7, 24, 25, 43, 86, 94, 95, 101, 106)*

- (2) Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs \* and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, by
- ❑ increasing the number of support staff trained to help pupils to achieve well
  - ❑ developing the roles of the co-ordinators for these aspects, for example in monitoring and evaluating the provision for pupils
  - ❑ raising the awareness of all staff to the needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language
  - ❑ involving pupils with special educational needs and their parents more in planning and reviewing work
  - ❑ checking the progress of pupils learning English as an additional language.

*(Paragraphs 4, 5, 18, 19, 29, 30, 43, 47, 51, 52, 82, 105, 127)*

In addition, governors should confirm that information in the school's *Prospectus* and *Annual Report to Parents* meets legal requirements.

*(Paragraph 47)*

\* These feature in the school's current improvement plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	13	42	20	0	0	0
Percentage	5	16	53	25	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.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	302
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	69

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	39

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5



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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	27	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	22
	Girls	24	25	26
	Total	43	45	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (95)	87 (95)	92 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	21
	Girls	24	22	24
	Total	42	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (95)	85 (88)	87 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	20	20	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	15
	Girls	19	11	17
	Total	33	23	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (90)	58 (86)	80 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	17	12	17
	Total	29	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (86)	63 (90)	75 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
287	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	26

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 – 2
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	748 550
Total expenditure	739 057
Expenditure per pupil	2384
Balance brought forward from previous year	70178
Balance carried forward to next year	79671

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

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	326
Number of questionnaires returned	103

### Percentage of responses in each category:

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good	67	30	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	59	32	7	0	2
The teaching is good	80	18	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	52	43	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	82	17	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents	64	30	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed	79	20	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	79	21	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	61	29	4	1	5

*NB: percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.*

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the meeting with inspectors expressed a high regard for the incoming headteacher and for what she has so far accomplished. They also said that they would like to see better arrangements, for example at playtimes, to help Year 2 pupils to adjust to joining the Junior section of the school.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. Children are usually admitted to the nursery on a part time basis from the age of three. Entry to the three reception classes is in the September prior to the child's fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, 51 children were taught part time in the nursery in two sessions. The nursery is staffed by a teacher and one nursery nurse and this is a lower staffing ratio than in the reception classes. The nursery at the time of the last inspection was in a temporary classroom but is now within the main school building in permanent accommodation but is still a little distant from the reception classes. This inhibits the Foundation Stage classes all working together. The curriculum for both the nursery and reception year is based firmly on the statutory *Early Learning Goals* in the six areas of learning and has been introduced since the previous inspection.
57. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is well below the expectations for three year-olds. The children make steady progress and the majority enter the reception classes below the average for their age group. They all make good progress during their reception year and many achieve the majority of the *Early Learning Goals*. However, a large minority of children enter Year 1 with good speaking and listening skills but their reading and writing skills not yet meeting the *Early Learning Goals*. Assessments are made at the beginning and end of the reception year and evidence indicates that the attainment levels of different year groups vary and this influences the overall levels of achievement of different groups of children in the Foundation Stage.
58. Links with parents are good and they are well involved in the day-to-day discussions about their children. A parent helper assists in the nursery but this is not a continuous or regular feature of all nursery sessions. The school recognises the need to involve parents and helpers and is keen to develop links in the future. Communication by newsletters is through the school and not specifically related to the nursery. The lower ratio of adult helpers to children in the nursery adversely affects how much progress the children make: they do not have enough opportunities to interact with an adult during their self-initiated play sessions.
59. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and the nursery teacher is well supported by a nursery nurse. Though levels of resourcing are good, the way they are used does not always extend the children's language or mathematical skills. For example, children's play is sometimes limited by the lack of new and different equipment with which to extend the children's vocabulary. There are very good routines in place to develop the children's social skills, and where the teacher and nursery nurse work in adult-initiated groups, children focus well, engage in the activity with interest and make progress. The teacher is at an early stage of developing the Foundation Stage curriculum and has training needs to help to develop the pace of the children's learning. The lack of opportunity to work with reception classes because of timetable and physical constraints limits the opportunities for staff to interact and support one another. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is good and is rarely less than this. There is quality in depth among the three teachers and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator is a very good practitioner.
60. Systems to check the children's progress are based on observations of the children's activities and are slowly being built up. They are at an early stage of development. They are based on the six areas of learning and linked to the *stepping stones* towards achieving the *Early Learning Goals*. However, they are not used sufficiently in the

nursery to plan activities around particular needs of children. Children who come to nursery with already identified special educational needs are supported well so that a specific focus can be put in place to assist them and the help of other agencies is sought. However, the identification of children who may have special educational needs has only recently been put in place in the nursery and is not yet developed fully to support children at these early stages.

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

61. Children make very good progress and this is the result of the good and very good teaching they receive. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage they have achieved the *Early Learning Goals* for this area.
62. From the time the children enter the nursery they quickly adapt to the carefully worked out routines. For instance they develop a sense of independence as they match their symbol to their name and record their attendance. The children in the nursery recognise the jingles and rhymes which structure their session and very easily move into the circle or tidy up their play area, carefully returning toys and equipment to their right places.
63. From the start, the children are encouraged to think about how and what they need to achieve in their own initiated play activity. Staff show good role models in the way they work together. They treat the children with respect and dignity, always paying attention and listening carefully to what children have to say. They are circumspect about time and place and children respond very well to the codes about when it is their turn to speak and when to listen to others. Children play well alongside each other in both reception classes and in the nursery and they share toys and equipment well. They take turns and recognise when they can play in certain popular areas. For example, in the sand tray they count 'no more than four' and wait their turn patiently. By the time children are in their reception year they play games and share activities with each other so making good progress in their emotional and social development.
64. Children's behaviour and attitudes are very good and they care for each other very well. Teachers ensure that routines are consistent through the Foundation Stage so that during sharing times, only the child holding the toy can speak. They have a clear understanding about right and wrong and the code is quickly learnt and respected. Children gain increasing confidence because of the range of activities in the learning areas in classrooms, quickly recognising that learning is fun and that there are new challenges in the well-organised classrooms at every session.

### **Communication Language and Literacy.**

65. When children enter the nursery, their communication, language and literacy skills are well below those expected for their age. Children quickly make progress and their speaking and listening skills make good progress in the nursery. The children still speak in single phrases to each other. However, they are developing their speech patterns into simple sentences, for example when they were discussing and re-telling the story of *The Bear Hunt*. The teacher provides a good role model and uses a puppet to develop structures so that children can listen and respond simply to stories, share news and develop a repertoire of songs and nursery rhymes.
66. Teachers in the reception classes plan their range of activities based on a theme, and use traditional tales to bring a sense of vitality and enthusiasm to lessons. They have a clear focus on the skills that children need to develop and the activities which will

support children's learning. The lessons are very well planned to keep children involved and enthusiastic about what they are going to learn. The children are enthralled, for example, at *Tommy's Magic Box* and eagerly wait for what he wants them to do. The teacher uses the stimulus to good effect during the lesson to provide a variety of different experiences to engage the children's attention. In one excellent lesson, the very good use of social times to extend the children's ideas and experiences through the puppet created a sense of urgency and so they listened enthralled to the teacher as she unfolded the story of *The Three Little Pigs*, using props to develop the story line. The audible sigh of disappointment as the story came to an end was only overtaken by the excitement at a range of interesting and challenging activities for them to achieve.

67. Children, by the time they enter the reception class, understand the difference between words and pictures and begin to add their own pictures to a text so they can create their version of a story and write a book. The children have an understanding about books, recognising the title page, author and illustrator. They use this technical vocabulary to explain their choice when selecting tapes to listen to and follow the text as they listen. They are developing knowledge of rhyming words and can recognise the sound at the beginning of a word. When the children are in the reception classes, they recognise their own name and can begin to form letters to write their names freely.
68. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well to develop the skills of reading and writing. They encourage children to begin to match sounds to letters as they share a *big book* and to use the pictures for clues to develop the story line. By the time they start in Year 1, a large minority of children are still working towards the *Early Learning Goals* in reading and writing. A number of more able children are very willing to share a book and read a simple text with confidence and understanding. They recognise the difference between a story and an information book, looking for a simple contents page to help them find the information they require.

### **Mathematical development**

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children reach the *Early Learning Goals* in mathematics. Progress is good. The range of activities in the nursery and the good use of number rhymes and jingles ensure that children's counting skills to 10 are well developed and they have the beginnings of a mathematical vocabulary.
70. Lessons in the reception class use aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy to develop children's mathematical knowledge. Teachers use real-life situations to develop problem-solving skills. For instance, the children had to think hard in a session when they were asked to solve a number puzzle before they could collect their milk from a certain shaped container. This good use of everyday situations extends the children's thinking processes and they happily match numbers to the lunch totals or decide whether there are too many cartons of milk for the class. They can confidently count to 20 both forwards and backwards. The good use of an oral session based on the story, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, gave children the confidence to tackle the number jigsaws and build number stories to 6.
71. Teachers carefully plan this aspect of the children's learning so that opportunities for games and discussion times are carefully used throughout the day to develop the children's concept of time. Days of the week, months and seasons feature regularly as part of the classroom organisation. The very well planned mathematical activities are clearly focussed so that less able children are well supported by classroom assistants and make good progress. The good use of number rhymes and the recognising of numbers in dice games extend children's mathematical learning well.



## Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. By the end of the Foundation Stage children achieve the *Early Learning Goals* in this area of learning. Children have good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers carefully plan this area of work and enhance the children's knowledge by the very good use of displays, which promote both questions and knowledge, because they feature regularly in daily lesson plans.
73. Children often have their learning enhanced by the way that the teachers link the range of activities to all the areas of learning. For instance, in the reception lesson observed, the story of *The Three little Pigs* was extended to include a sense of place through labels and simple maps, types of materials to build the pigs' houses, as well as making dough with which to model the pigs, colour mixing paint to create a bubble pattern painting and huffing and puffing to create the biggest bubbles in the world. The children had a good understanding of the different range of activities and could report back to the class how and why they had achieved success. The attention to detail in the teacher's planning enabled all the children to take pride in their achievements and so ensured that all children had made very good progress in this area of learning.
74. Children use maps and can recognise their country and the place they live as Liverpool. They recognise the difference between living and non-living things, and are very much aware of the need for care when using the home corner as a role play area. The use of visitors to extend and impact on children's awareness of danger is sensitively handled. The children have looked at themselves as babies and developed awareness appropriate for their age about past and present. Children in the nursery use the computer well and have some control of the mouse to play simple games. One child takes on the responsibility of closing the machine down properly going through the procedure to make sure it is closed properly. The reception classes make good use of the computer suite to develop their skills, using various programs connected to the area of learning they are developing.

## Physical development

75. The children make good progress in their physical development and achieve well the *Early Learning Goals* by the end of their reception year. There are opportunities for the children to make use of the physical resources in the school both internally and externally, though children in the nursery do not use the hall for any physical activity. Reception classes use this facility on a weekly basis in addition to regular sessions of outdoor play. The outdoor area is somewhat limited but children improvise and use a range of safe, recycled articles well. The school has invested in some larger wheeled toys for the nursery and there is a limited range for the older children in reception classes. However, whilst the provision is adequate and the school is addressing the resource implications, it does not extend the children's opportunities to develop fully the skills they need to enjoy physical activity. The hard space is limited but is enhanced by a range of painted games and shapes, which the children use well. The children enjoy taking part in vigorous exercise. They develop their language and physical skills into made-up games which are interesting and often linked to the classroom theme. Adults support the children carefully and encourage them to develop their own ideas and independence but ensure they are safe.
76. The fine motor skills needed by children are appropriately developed by many of the activities in other areas of learning, especially in reception classes. In the nursery, children manipulated scissors and other tools as they cut and stuck their wrapping

paper to make Christmas parcels. They were not supported in this activity, however, and consequently become frustrated because they could not achieve the task and were not able to manage the safety scissors successfully. Children carefully formed patterns from beads and threaded laces around decoration shapes. There is insufficient attempt in the nursery, however, to develop children's skills in patterns and mark-making. Children use crayons and pencils but do not always hold them correctly in order to develop the fine motor skill which writing requires.

### **Creative Development**

77. The good provision enables children to explore an extended range of creative experiences in the Foundation Stage. Children in the nursery are encouraged to sing at the end of each activity time to remind them to tidy up or move into another area. They enjoy listening to their own singing from tape recordings and comment on the style and whether they were singing appropriately.
78. Teachers use a variety of creative activities to extend the children's learning in this area of learning. The carefully prepared areas attract the children so that they organise their own activity. Staff help and support the children well so they can make their own sound effects, using a range of instruments to demonstrate the sounds around Goldilocks' house.
79. Children are stimulated with a wide range of materials. Teachers manage and suggest ideas so that children explore different textures of the paint, water play, model making, and colour mixing. During adult enhanced activities children are encouraged to discuss their efforts and describe what it does by the good use of well-focused questions and supportive comment. In the reception classes, the children use the creative opportunities to support their mathematical and language development.
80. Children take time and care with their work and when it is finished they are very proud of it and eager to share it with others. Teachers use these opportunities well to encourage all children, including those with special educational needs, to extend their speaking and listening skills so that all the children can share in their success. These are well-planned opportunities so that children make connections in their learning, as well as develop a wide range of creative skills. The majority of the children achieve the *Early Learning Goals* in this area by the time they leave the reception classes.

## ENGLISH

81. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6, the pupils achieved results similar to the national average. Results achieved by the school in tests have risen since the time of the last inspection. These average standards reflect the good levels of achievement seen currently throughout the school. However, achievement over a longer period of time has been satisfactory rather than good. This is a reflection of the period of change and instability, which has seen quite a high turnover of staff and changes at senior management level in the recent past. This instability has been very effectively addressed and as a result, teaching is now good and pupils are learning and achieving well. The current Years 2 and 6 have a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and this has an adverse impact upon statistical comparisons of these groups of pupils with those in schools nationally and in similar schools.
82. There are other contributory factors to the present good level of pupils' achievement. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to find ways of improving attainment, particularly that of boys. This has led to a review of the curriculum and an additional emphasis on aspects and topics that appeal to boys. Resources have been improved and the climate for learning is extremely positive with attractive displays and new library and computer facilities. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented. At present the school does not implement the recommended additional strategies that are available, because it has too few trained classroom assistants to help those pupils who learn more slowly and need extra help in lessons. The school has a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language and these pupils have appropriate support from their class teachers. There is, however, a need for staff to have further training in how to cater better for those at the early stages of learning the language.
83. Speaking and listening skills are developed through effective teaching and the opportunities that the teachers provide. The children enter the nursery with well below average speaking and listening skills. By the end of Year 6, skills are broadly average. A good minority of pupils have above average skills by the time they leave the school. Teachers encourage the pupils to answer questions and talk about their lessons and give their ideas. For example, in a Year 4 physical education lesson, pupils were encouraged to give their views on the games they had invented and what they thought worked well and not so well. In this way the pupils considered their views and gave each other good ideas about how they could improve their work.
84. Pupils in Year 2 read at the expected level and the above average pupils are doing well. There has been a recent injection of new reading books and they are to be slotted into the existing framework, providing an extensive range of good quality books. Pupils take home their books with a useful home-school diary, and a constructive dialogue is established between home and school for the benefit of pupils. In Year 2, the pupils talk confidently about their reading and use a range of strategies to help them. Teaching of reading skills is good and the pupils are shown the benefits of breaking up long words to help them read them better. Older pupils in Year 6 speak about their library lessons and about the good choice of books they have in the school. They know how to use the Dewey system in the library and talk about how they select their books. They speak about their favourite books and authors and compare the Harry Potter books with the films. They read fluently with good levels of expression and understanding.
85. Pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards in writing. They write for a range of audiences and purposes expressing their ideas and thoughts. They write instructions for making paper finger puppets; their handwriting is neat and they form their letters

well. Pupils are beginning to join their letters as they develop a cursive style of handwriting. Presentation of work and handwriting, which was an area for development in the last inspection, is now good with the pupils regularly practising their handwriting. Older pupils in Year 6 have been developing their ideas for poetry writing. They have written a number of different types of poems, for example *haikus* and *cinquains*, and talk persuasively about their preferences for poems that rhyme and have a clear beat. They use personification in their work and talk about which of the lines of their poems they are going to rhyme. Poetry writing is strong throughout the school. Writing shows good progress with vocabulary, increasing accuracy in punctuation and a clearly developed fluidity in handwriting. Pupils regularly use computers effectively to word-process their writing. A common feature of all samples of pupils' written work is that it is consistently neat, and good attention is given to its presentation. As a result, their work is not only attractive but also easy to read.

86. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have good levels of knowledge and understanding in the subject and teach the basic skills well. Good planning means that the pupils' work is well matched to their needs. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and manage pupils during lessons very well. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the pupils were so engaged by the excellent teaching that they listened exceptionally well to their teacher. As a result, the pupils made excellent progress as they wrote their instructions for making hot buttered toast. Homework supports learning well with pupils taking home written work, spellings and reading. The assessment and tracking system is beginning to help the teachers to check the progress that pupils make and to target specific help where it is needed. Teachers conscientiously mark the pupils' work in a supportive manner. However, they do not point to where the pupils need to improve to make further gains in their learning, nor do the pupils have individual targets to work towards. This means that although the pupils work hard and are praised for doing so, they have no clear picture about what they need to do next. The pupils' levels of concentration and attitudes to learning are very good. This is evident throughout the school and is seen in the way the pupils approach their work, learn their spellings during registration and practise their work at home.
87. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented by the school. Careful questioning by teachers in sessions of guided reading helps the pupils to develop their reading skills and understand the underlying themes of the stories. The needs of boys and girls are included and addressed equally. Subjects such as geography and history are used well to improve skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and there are good opportunities to learn skills of word processing in the computer suite. Pupils then present their work very well for displaying. Computers in classrooms are not always used to support group work in literacy lessons.
88. Subject leadership is good. The subject policy reflects the school's aims and values well. Pupils' progress is monitored well by the assessment co-ordinator. A database for tracking pupil progress over time is in place and is beginning to be used to help with planning and strategies for improvement. The range and condition of library books and reading scheme books are good. They are gradually being augmented and replaced where necessary. There is a clear identification of priorities for development and a strong will to ensure that action is taken to meet the school's targets for improvement. All staff share this commitment to improvement.
89. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. There is a good, well-balanced curriculum in place, which ensures that the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 in a position to continue making good progress on transfer to their next school.

## MATHEMATICS

90. Results in the 2002 national tests were below what would normally be expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and well below expectations for pupils at the end of Year 6. This fall in standards from the previous year is mainly due to a sustained period of disruption caused by many changes of staff. This in turn made checks on the quality of teaching and learning sporadic and ineffectual and led to inconsistencies in teachers' approach to teaching the subject. As a result, some pupils did not do as well as could be expected, relative to their capability.
91. Standards for pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 are below average. Both year groups have an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and this has an adverse impact on standards overall. However, because of improvements to subject provision, pupils are now achieving well, with those in Year 6 coming close to reaching national expectations. The school now benefits from the expertise of five leading mathematics teachers and consequently teaching is very good overall in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6 with very good teaching in one of the Year 5 classes.
92. Strong leadership by the co-ordinator has ensured that the school is consistent in its approach to teaching. Her rigorous monitoring of teaching has made all teachers aware of their strengths and what they need to do to improve their skills. Particularly good is the depth of analysis that identifies weaknesses in pupils' attainment in national tests and focuses planning for improvements. Gaps in pupils' achievements are being filled by whole-school targets, earmarked for two sessions each week, such as solving calculations with missing numbers. This is already paying dividends as pupils in Year 3 solve, for example,  $7 + 9 = (?) + 14$ , while pupils in Year 6 successfully work out  $(?) \text{ divided by } 100 = 3.42$ .
93. There are now many positive features about the teaching throughout the school. Teachers are good at involving pupils in discussions about their learning objectives for the day and this helps them to see a purpose to their work. Oral and mental sessions improve pupils' mental agility because they are often taken at a brisk pace, with teachers keeping pupils on their toes, either by changing the line of questioning or challenging them to beat the clock. All teachers place a strong emphasis on the development of mathematical language and this has a good impact on broadening the pupils' vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1, for example, used *plus* and *equals* as they added up the spots on a snake and pupils in Year 4 used *inverse* accurately during their calculations. Teachers use homework well to support pupils' learning either as a preparation for future lessons or to consolidate or extend current work.
94. A particularly strong feature of teaching lies in the way that teachers use their mathematical expertise to help pupils develop their own strategies to solve problems. In a Year 5 class, the teacher helped pupils to tackle problems presented in a narrative form by stressing the need to read each question carefully and to look for key words and numbers. Pupils in the other Year 5 class used their computer skills to calculate the cost of a visit to the theatre for several children and adults, by using spreadsheets. Pupils in Year 2 solved the problem of how to show the headteacher what each pupil's favourite lesson is by entering the information in a bar chart. A very good feature of this lesson was the way in which the teacher planned the work to match the attainment and abilities of all pupils. This meant that each pupil was challenged well and, because of the very good teaching, they all achieved success, either by simply drawing the chart or by working out, for example, how many pupils preferred art to English. This good practice, however, is not consistent across the school. At times, as evidenced by work in their books, all pupils in a class, are given the same work to complete.

Consequently, higher-attaining pupils simply complete more work, which may lack challenge, while less able pupils are unable to keep up, as for example in Year 5, when they struggled to convert improper fractions.

95. Pupils' very good attitudes to the subject are closely linked to the very good relationships they have with their teachers. The partnership between teacher and pupils generates a buzz of excitement about learning. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, which is always marked by their teacher. Although marking is generally positive, with helpful comments at times, it is inconsistent and often not sufficiently constructive to move pupils on. The school gets valuable information from the effective procedures now in place to check what pupils know and can do and uses it to set school and class targets to raise standards. This has not, however, been extended to include individual targets for pupils.
96. Teachers plan work to match the targets on individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs. They ensure that these pupils are included in all activities, whether completing examples on the board or sharing their work during discussions at the end of the lesson. However, there are too few classroom assistants available to sit with these pupils and give them the assistance they need during group activities.
97. A productive feature of all teaching is the way that teachers give pupils opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects. This is particularly evident in science, geography, history and ICT. Pupils in Year 5, for example, used ICT to plot bar graphs and pie charts to show changes in population patterns in Fazakerley between the 1851 and 1891 censuses.
98. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Thorough monitoring of teaching and learning, planning and pupils' work has enabled the co-ordinator to identify the strengths and weaknesses of provision and to take the necessary action to make improvements. There are sufficient resources which are used well to assist pupils' learning. A good plan of action is in place to keep the subject moving. The shared commitment to succeed, held by all teachers and the governing body, places the school in a good position to raise standards.

## **SCIENCE**

99. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is below average. The school's performance in 2002 teacher assessments was below the national average. Pupils achieved below the expected standards for their knowledge and understanding of life and living processes, materials and their properties, and physical processes in the programme of study. However, a significant number achieved the expected standard in experimental and investigative science. In the last inspection attainment was judged to be in line with the national average. Standards have risen slightly since then but not as much as could be expected and there is room for improvement. A majority of pupils in the current Year 2, where there is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are achieving the expected standard and a small number are doing better than this. Pupils are currently achieving well in all elements of their science work.
100. Standards of work in the current Year 6 are below average. In the 2002 National Curriculum test, results were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. However, test results have improved significantly since the last inspection. Inspection findings are that there is a trend of rising standards, despite the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, most pupils are making good progress. This is due to a number of reasons. First, the teachers are

experienced and skilled in using an investigative and experimental approach. Second, the pupils are taught relevant scientific terms. This helps their understanding of concepts and principles. Third, better use is being made of assessment information for grouping the pupils by their attainment.

101. In Years 1 and 2, pupils cover a good range of work across all aspects of the subject. They learn how scientists work, using first-hand experience, making predictions and observing scientific phenomena closely. Their work in this respect is close to the standards expected for their age. They record their work on worksheets, in their own words and by collecting information into tables to turn into graphs. Pupils who have good literacy skills attain at a level that is better than the expected standard. Other pupils, frequently those identified as having special educational needs, find recording their findings difficult, even with assistance, and this restricts their level of attainment. Pupils in a Year 1 class, in their work on light and dark, could identify those animals that are active at night and use the technical word *nocturnal* to classify these creatures. Pupils know the major organs in the human body and that a balanced diet is required to remain healthy. Analysis of previous work shows that Year 2 pupils can identify sources of light. They know the similarities and differences between babies and toddlers and are able to record their observations in different ways. They develop their speaking skills by talking about the activities and the objects they observe. However, turning the pupils' own ideas into questions that could be investigated is underdeveloped.
102. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory grounding in a range of scientific knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. Much of the work that pupils do is in the form of investigations. Some pupils have become confident investigators, organising and recording their work neatly and concisely and making well-judged predictions of their results. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards of recording were poor. When preparing to record their results of an experiment on *sound*, a higher-attaining group of Year 5 pupils discussed and analysed their observations in groups. They demonstrated maturity in their investigations by accepting that their predictions can be incorrect. Most pupils understand the concept of making a test fair by making one change in an experiment. For example, when investigating the effect of light on different materials the pupils were very clear about keeping other variables such as distance from the light source and quality of lighting the same. By the end of Year 6, they are developing an understanding of materials and are able to describe methods such as filtration for separating mixtures. Many pupils relate their learning to everyday life. For example, they know how evaporation and condensation take place in their homes.
103. Overall, pupils make good use of their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT when writing reports of experiments. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were investigating light and dark, they collaborated in pairs as authors and illustrators to produce high quality accounts of nocturnal animals in the form of a booklet. Pupils deploy their numeracy skills effectively, making appropriate measurements, for example, of length, weight and volume, and display them in graphical form using computer programs.
104. The quality of teaching is good overall and occasionally teaching is outstanding. The effect of this is to provide pupils with good quality of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary and explain tasks well. The teaching of investigative skills is now given a higher priority than in the past. This is helping pupils' learning well as they are looking for evidence when investigating and most pupils are tightly focussed on the tasks they are given. Teachers' planning is generally detailed

and shows clear and attainable objectives. The sharing of these objectives with pupils is a strong feature. Teachers' explanations are generally clear. The more effective teaching is characterised by work being well matched to pupils' needs and assessment information being used well. This was especially noticeable in two lessons in Years 1 and 5. These lessons incorporated a large degree of challenge with clear targets in terms of time and learning. For example, in the Year 5 lesson on *sound*, the teacher, having assessed that pupils had a secure understanding of pitch, challenged the pupils to sort a range of wind instruments into order of pitch, explaining the reasons for their decisions. This application of scientific knowledge motivated the pupils, reinforced their understanding and related their learning to everyday life.

105. Teachers make very effective use of teaching resources, as in a mixed Years 3 and 4 class where the teacher organised a wide range of investigatory activities to develop pupils' understanding of light. Pupils are interested in their work. They work hard and there is a buzz of excitement and interest in many of the practical sessions. When asked, pupils said, *Science is enjoyable as we like investigating and enjoy the practical work*. In all lessons seen, a striking feature was the way the pupils collaborate and support each other's learning. Opportunities for pupils to work more independently and suggest their own ideas for further exploration are a developing feature. In most classes there is a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and one or two pupils with English as an additional language. Their achievement is only satisfactory despite the overall good quality teaching. Their progress is often hampered by the lack of suitably trained classroom assistants to provide the appropriate support.
106. Resources are good and they are used very effectively. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The management and co-ordination of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator's role is focused mainly on work in Years 3 to 6 and therefore her knowledge of standards in the infant classes is less developed. There are timetabled plans to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms, and the co-ordinator monitors planning, displays and scrutinises pupils' books. Although assessment procedures are good, the information gathered is not always being used effectively to improve standards.



## ART AND DESIGN

107. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. The pupils work hard in lessons and achieve good results. Standards have risen since the time of the last inspection. It was possible to observe lessons during the inspection in junior but not infant classes. The examination of pupils' work, their sketch books and the large amount of work on display from all year groups indicates that the standard of pupils' work is very good. The quality of learning is good in infant classes, and teaching and learning in junior-aged classes are good overall. Two very good lessons were observed.
108. Pupils enter Year 1 having had a wide range of good experiences in exploring colour and texture. At the end of Year 2 pupils experiment with colour and use two or three skills together to achieve an interesting array of colour, pattern, form and texture. They handle tools very well and use a depth of colours in their painting. They are confident about their work and paint their self-portraits carefully with good attention to the detail. They use man-made materials and natural textures very effectively to provide colour and design to illustrate their journeys.
109. As pupils move through the school, they use sketch books in a purposeful manner because they use their previous sketches as a basis for future work. In Year 4 pupils used their observational skills to mix and colour match the skin tone of a Picasso picture. They were taught well how to use the paint to best effect, listening carefully as the teacher suggested alternative ideas before they tried them out. The majority of pupils were anxious to ensure they had a result worthy of their original drawing. They were clearly focused on the finished result but recognised how the process builds using different skills they have learnt. In Year 5 pupils were absorbed in using a group of bottles of different shape and materials to create a composition which they sketched well. The teacher's very good use of questions and challenge enabled them to improve their ideas. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, worked very well in the group and achieved good results. In a sketch they used good pencil techniques to highlight areas of shade and develop an understanding of the effect of natural light on the subject. The pupils used a digital camera to record their composition and recognised immediately how different lighting affects a composition. They explored the results and made very good suggestions using the information to improve their own sketch and achieve good result.
110. The school uses visits very well to develop pupils' sketching skills, for instance to Croxteth Park. The final results are excellent. Pupils have worked through a process of sketches, identifying and matching natural colours to their paint mixes. The skills they have learnt in previous lessons about perspective, using sketchbooks to record detail and the styles of painting of various artists, enable pupils to achieve a high standard and produce very good quality work.
111. The subject co-ordinator is committed to ensuring that the skills that pupils acquire are well taught and works with colleagues to build a resource base of ideas and techniques so that pupils are encouraged to work through a design so that their results are good. Work is well displayed and reflects the pupils' efforts. Pupils evaluate their work well and are confident in discussing the merits and defects in their work objectively. The pupils in the after-school art club were seen working with a variety of material including clay to create African masks and collages. They were encouraged by the teachers to experiment to find a texture and colour which reflect the result they want to achieve. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This represents a good improvement since the time of the last inspection. In all classes design and technology lessons alternate with art and design. It was possible to observe lessons in both infant and junior classes. These observations, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work, indicate that teaching is good overall and standards of work achieved by the pupils are above average. Pupils are making good progress through the school. The recently appointed co-ordinator has put in place a clear policy and a good scheme based on national guidelines which supports the teaching of the subject. The detail and the full extent of the design process are taught well.
113. Pupils in Year 2 use their initial designs very well to make their vehicles. They confidently explain the purposes of axles and how to improve the design so that the vehicle symbolises what it is they really want it to represent. The teacher supports their ideas and encourages them to discuss ideas and suggest changes to each other's design so they can modify their own design. Teachers throughout the school help pupils to consider the reasons and purpose for suggesting a design. Pupils in Year 3 share ideas well with each other and are confident in their suggestions when they explore why packaging is important and how they would market their ideas. They use their literacy skills well when writing their instructions. The teacher uses interesting material and challenging ideas to support the pupils who have special educational needs so that they achieve well. Pupils in Year 4, however, are not yet sufficiently practised in the skills of cutting and joining materials to make money containers which they have designed using a template. The teacher's expectations in this instance were too high. Pupils were confused and did not make good use of their materials. They experienced some disillusionment when they could not join the materials together.
114. Teachers focus well on recording the design process. They consider the progress and abilities of the pupils very well and have high expectations of their pupils. The lessons are interesting and challenge the pupils' ideas well. The recording of pupils' work is good but there are no assessment procedures in place to measure their achievements. The co-ordinator has an action plan to address this issue and measure pupils' skills. Previous work, using a variety of materials and stimuli, is good and used well to indicate the standards to which pupils can aspire. The art club incorporates some design and technology aspects. For instance, pupils from across the school constructed an American totem pole which used their designs. They used a variety of tools and different techniques to achieve high quality work, which suggests good use of a range of materials.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

115. Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average. Pupils make good progress overall in the development of geographical knowledge of peoples, places and environments. However, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is only satisfactory, as the support available in the school is currently insufficient to meet all their needs. In the last inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be above national expectations at the end of Year 2. The school has continued to give appropriate attention to geography, but because of the increased demands of other National Curriculum subjects and an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs, the school has not been able to maintain the standards noted in the last report.

116. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the school and the local area and as a result, pupils in Year 2 talk confidently about Fazakerley and know it is an area of Liverpool. They are familiar with the many features in and around the school. They talk about their visits to the seaside and about the differences between coastal resorts and their own locality. Pupils know they live in England. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of contrasting locations and cultures such as Africa, Australia and Norway. They know that for a holiday in Norway, at certain times of the year, they would need to take special clothing to protect them from very cold temperatures. By Year 6, pupils have learned how to use a range of maps confidently and to draw their own, including a key and scale. They have some knowledge of other communities, such as village life in India, and know that climate and geographical features affect lifestyle. As part of a residential visit, Year 6 pupils look at how the environment can be protected and improved. They demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of physical features. In their studies and a visit to the River Alt, most pupils are able to identify and sequence the components of a water cycle. They use appropriate vocabulary such as *source*, *flow*, *evaporation* and *condensation*. They are developing a working knowledge of how weather reports are presented in newspapers.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very good features and has improved since the last inspection. Strengths are better planning, the use made of field trips and appropriate resources to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of their environment. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy looking at items from the travels of *Barnaby Bear* and benefit from hearing about their teacher's experiences of travelling abroad. Lessons are carefully planned. For example, much time had been taken to collect resources and to prepare guidance sheets and questions for pupils in Year 2 for their topic on Kenya. In a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils the teacher made effective use of rubbish collected from around the school to sensitise pupils to the amount and range of litter. This resulted in good quality discussions on the types of litter, whether they can be broken down by bacteria or not and their effects on humans and animals. The majority of pupils increased their understanding of the harmful effects of rubbish on their environment and their writing shows a sense of concern. Use of computers for research is a developing skill but an improvement since the last inspection. Good use is made of the computer suite. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed confidence in using the Internet to investigate rivers. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in some geography lessons.
118. The co-ordinator is new to the post but is working effectively to raise the profile of the subject. She has widened the range of resources to include ICT software and good aerial photographs. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored the quality of teaching and learning but monitors displays and medium-term planning. However, other than lesson plans, the teachers have little to track the pupils' progress and attainment. Resources are satisfactory, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

## HISTORY

119. Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average. This sustains the judgement made in the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in the development of historical knowledge of people and places. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is also satisfactory. Pupils develop skills in carrying out historical enquiries both in and out of school. Higher-

attaining pupils have a good knowledge of historical facts; however, they are less skilled in comparing sources of information to explain differences of interpretation about things that happened in the past.

120. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to develop a sound knowledge of how things change over a period. They know about famous events such as the Gunpowder Plot through stories and pictures. They also learn about how life is different compared with the past by asking their parents how they came to school and which toys their grandparents played with. Following a visit from a blind person and watching a video recording about Louis Braille, many pupils in Year 2 were able to recount the main events in his life and showed a developing knowledge of his system of communication for the visually impaired. However, their knowledge and skill of placing events in chronological order is underdeveloped. By the end of Year 6, most pupils use their knowledge well to describe and begin to link characteristics of past periods and societies, for example, studying social conditions in Victorian times. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of the different ways of gathering evidence and distinguishing between fact and opinion. Most understand what is meant by primary sources of evidence. For example pupils in Year 6 know that archaeological discoveries are an important source of information. They know about life in Ancient Greece and that remains, drawings and artefacts provide clues about aspects of the past. Pupils gain an understanding of ways of life from visits to places of historical interest, such as Liverpool's Museum of Life, as well as from visiting specialists.
121. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Teachers make sure that the pupils understand what they were going to do. Resources are used well. For example, in a mixed Years 1 and 2 class where pupils compared and contrasted old and modern toys, the investigation was enhanced by the good use of a variety of toys. However, in some lessons the introductions are too long and pupils have insufficient time to use resources to develop their own historical enquiry skills. Teachers do not always emphasise sufficiently the sequencing of past events and link them to current times, resulting in limiting some pupils' knowledge of periods of time. A particular strength of some lessons is the quality of questioning, which encourages pupils to explore their ideas and share their opinions. Appropriate use is made of ICT to enhance pupils' research skills. However, some of the higher-attaining pupils find some of the activities too easy and require involvement in more challenging investigations. Links to other subjects are satisfactory and there are many opportunities to extend their literacy skills. For example, in a Year 4 class, pupils acting as journalists produced some good quality writing on the Vikings raiding monasteries, publishing their copy in eye-catching format using their word-processing skills well. Teachers' planning, however, does not always identify assessment opportunities or the needs of higher-attaining pupils and marking of pupils' work is of variable quality. Few teachers make comments to help pupils to develop further their historical skills and knowledge, a weakness identified in the last inspection.
122. Subject management is satisfactory. Although only recently appointed, the co-ordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be developed. There is a very good policy and action plan, as well as a revised scheme of work, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The use of assessment to guide planning is at a developmental stage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

123. There has been very good improvement in provision for this subject since the time of the last inspection, when it was a key issue for action. As a result of a good action

plan, the establishment of a well-resourced computer suite and improvements in teachers' skills, the curriculum that is taught provides good coverage of the National Curriculum. These improvements have led to good teaching and a rise in standards that most pupils achieve by the end of Years 2 and 6 from below average to average. Management of the subject is now very good and there is a further plan of action, which has already seen refinements to teachers' planning and to procedures to check on pupils' progress.

124. Pupils build on the good start they get in the nursery and reception year. Through good teaching both in the computer suite and in classrooms, pupils in Year 1 for instance learn about sources of information and how there are different ways of alerting the public to danger, through using symbols and colour and varying the letter size in public notices. They then use the computer to change the size, colour, shape and boldness of text to make their own signs. Pupils in Year 2 use an art package to create pictures and become adept at using the facilities available in the toolbar. They know how to draw and infill, and learn how to change from paintbrush to pencil, felt tip or spray can in order to create different effects. They are taught how to clear their work or save it to disk or hard drive. Staff throughout the school make good links between ICT and other subjects and this was evident in some work pupils in Year 2 undertook in science. They used an art program to illustrate the effect of exercise on the body. They produced lively images of *Sammy Skeleton* swaying and dancing.
125. Good progress continues in junior classes. In Year 3, pupils learn to send electronic mail. They start up the program, access facilities and use the toolbar appropriately. They learn how to fill in carefully the address for sending and how to attach a document. The lesson observed in the computer suite also helped the pupils to appreciate the benefits of sending email rather than using the postal service. Pupils in Year 5 are taught how to use a spreadsheet to make up and alter a cost analysis of an imaginary school trip. They enter data accurately in the *cells* of the spreadsheet and use formulae to provide total cost per child and grand total. They see the effect of altering data on totals calculated. This lesson made clear links with work currently being completed in mathematics. Pupils in Year 5 have also researched in history the censuses in Fazakerley in 1851 and 1891 and analysed the popularity of children's first names, producing charts of the outcomes. Pupils in Year 6 successfully research the Internet, using well-known *search engines*, to find out more about rivers they are studying in geography. They learn how to refine their searches by adding details to their search requests. They work well independently and many have the confidence to sort out problems they encounter without calling for assistance.
126. The quality of teaching is only rarely ever less than good and this is because the staff have used their in-service training well to make best possible use of the computer suite and the interactive whiteboard, as well as other equipment such as a digital camera, which is used extensively to record activities in school and on visits. Teachers plan lessons very well, so that very good links are made with other subjects of the curriculum. This was evident in almost all lessons observed. Teachers have very good organisational skills, so that even where classes are too large to accommodate two pupils to each machine in the computer suite, the pupils' learning is not adversely affected. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the very few at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, are well involved in the activities. The pace of lessons is good and pupils concentrate well. Pupils have learned the necessary routines in the computer suite and their behaviour was very good overall in lessons observed. In only one lesson seen in the computer suite was there support available from a classroom assistant. She contributed well to the overall very good quality of teaching in the lesson. The lack of support available in

some of the larger classes, for example in Years 3 and 4, reduces the overall rate of progress that pupils can make, and this is a point for improvement. A further point is the use that staff make of computers located in classrooms. There were very few examples of teachers in Years 1 to 6 planning for the effective use of available machines, except in occasional lessons in mathematics and science.

127. The co-ordinator is very effective in her leadership and management of the subject. She monitors teachers' planning and makes termly reports to the headteacher, evaluating work completed. There are appropriate systems in place to check on pupils' progress and record it and there is an extra-curricular club for pupils to enjoy.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

128. Pupils in Year 5 are taught weekly lessons of French through a service level agreement with the local education authority. The teaching is well co-ordinated by subject tutors in the modern languages service and undertaken by an *assistante* from a French university. One lesson was observed and this was an excellent example of how to enthuse primary-aged pupils in the enjoyment of speaking conversational French. The lesson, which was entirely oral, set a lively pace and covered greetings in French, answering questions about pupils' names and ages, and counting to twenty. The *assistante's* very lively manner helped the pupils to forget any embarrassment, and consequently there were plenty of volunteers to lead the pupils from the front in a series of fast-moving games. Particularly effective was the variation she put into her voice, by singing, whispering, chanting and shouting, which the pupils then had to repeat. This focused attention on new words that she was introducing and yet made the learning fun. There are simple homework assignments set, for example, *How many French footballers can you name?* As a result of this excellent provision, pupils' progress in a few short weeks has been very good. The pupils are well on the way to achieving well above average levels of attainment in speaking and listening skills in French by the end of Year 6.
129. The recently appointed deputy headteacher co-ordinates provision for the subject effectively and provides the link with the local education authority's service. Year 5 teachers attend lessons and this gives them the opportunity to learn from the expertise of the *assistante*. There is a good action plan to take the subject further and several staff have begun to take lessons in Primary French after school. Just prior to the week of the inspection, the whole school enjoyed a *French Theme Day*, which included a lunch menu celebrating French cuisine. There are proposals for the teaching to be extended to Year 6 as well as Year 5, for all classes to have a short focus on French at the start and end of each day, and for a short visit by older pupils to France in the summer of 2004. The subject makes an excellent contribution to the overall quality of the curriculum and to the pupils' social and cultural development.

## MUSIC

130. Attainment is average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is better than at the time of the last inspection, when standards at the end of Year 6 were below average. There are two reasons for this improvement. First, a specialist music teacher now teaches pupils throughout the school, and, second, improvements have been made to the music curriculum following the introduction of national guidelines to support teachers' planning and fill any gaps in provision.
131. The quality of teaching overall is good, a significant improvement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. The music specialist uses his expertise well to

lead by example. Clear demonstrations using voice or instruments help pupils to understand the work they are about to do. He has high expectations of pupils and provides them with a challenging range of musical activities. Pupils in Year 5, working in groups, rose to the challenge to concentrate on dynamics and to reach a *crescendo* as they played several layers of rhythm patterns. Particularly effective throughout the lesson was the use of correct musical terminology, and this helped pupils to appreciate how changes in *pitch*, *timbre* and *dynamics* affected the character of the music. Teachers have benefited from working alongside the specialist teacher and they have made good use of a commercial scheme to structure their teaching. In a good lesson in Year 6, there was a strong literacy content in examining and changing the lyrics of a well-known popular song. The teacher used her own clear singing voice well to help pupils as they tried out the new lyrics to the melody of the song.

132. As a result of enthusiastic teaching, pupils have good attitudes to music. They are well motivated and join in readily. They understand that they have to be good listeners. Pupils in the mixed Years 3 and 4 class showed this when they listened carefully to *The Carnival of the Animals* in order to pick out the instruments used to portray the movements of the elephant.
133. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. She has already implemented a scheme of work that covers all areas of the subject and increased the number and range of teaching resources in order to develop the musical expertise of the staff. A comprehensive action plan is in place and this ensures that the school is in a good position to raise standards. The school choir is a pleasing mixture of boys and girls. Under the guidance of the music specialist, they take a very professional attitude to their singing, which is tuneful, with clear diction. A number of pupils receive either brass or woodwind tuition from visiting teachers and there are three recorder clubs to extend pupils' interest in music. Provision is enhanced by participation in the concert for local schools held at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall each year. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. Pupils' attainment is average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improved position in the junior classes since the last inspection, as standards were then below average overall. Swimming was judged to be above average. The good teaching and learning and clear development of skills ensure that pupils make good improvements and learn well. The improved standards reflect the good improvements in teaching and learning.
135. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic learners. In Year 1, they worked hard as they balanced a softball on a bat. They developed their skills further as they used the bat to bounce the ball on the floor. Pupils watched carefully those chosen to show good techniques and skills, so that they learned how to improve their own efforts. As a result, they made significant gains in their learning. In a Year 2 lesson the pupils bounced a ball firmly into a hoop so that their partners could catch it. The pupils learned to work co-operatively and to concentrate hard as they passed the ball and controlled its movements. In Year 4, pupils had been inventing their own invasion and defence games up to the week of the inspection. In the lesson observed, they demonstrated their games to the rest of the class. The teacher encouraged the pupils to watch each other's games and to evaluate them sensitively. The genuine applause and supportive and evaluative comments that pupils made showed the very good attitudes the pupils have to each other and the help they were prepared to give to enable all to improve. In a Year 6 gymnastics lesson, the pupils worked in pairs and larger groups to demonstrate their sequence of movements incorporating balance. The

teacher was effective in pointing to good features of their work. The pupils showed good levels of co-operation and personal development as they worked effectively together.

136. Swimming lessons are well organised and all the junior classes have opportunities to learn to swim in a timetabled rota. Lessons are well planned, and the class teacher and pool instructor provide well-focused instructions for the pupils. As a result, the pupils make good progress in their swimming. The non-swimmers are confident in the water and the swimmers making good gains as they improve their skills further. Behaviour is exceptionally good. No lessons involving pupils in Year 6 were observed to judge standards.
137. The quality of teaching physical education is good and the insistence by the teachers that the pupils should follow instructions ensures that the pupils make good gains in their skills. Teachers manage the pupils very well in lessons and as a result pupils put in a very good amount of effort and concentrate very well. The school is linked to the local high school, which has a Sports College status. The teacher from the college has very good levels of expertise and visits the school to share them with the teachers and pupils. She works alongside the staff and as a result the pupils' standards in gymnastics are improving. The pupils are developing a clear sense of performance as they work to improve their gymnastic sequences. The teacher's use of the digital camera in this lesson was a very effective teaching tool. This was because it enabled the pupils to see exactly how they performed and to recognise where they needed to improve.
138. The co-ordinator gives good support and guidance in this subject. She has clear ideas for the future development of the subject. Assessment is at present underdeveloped. Extra-curricular activities are very good and cater for a wide range of interests and ages. Resources are satisfactory and suitable for all the age ranges of pupils in the school. They are organised well and are readily accessible.