

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC JUNIOR  
SCHOOL**

Walton, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104650

Headteacher: Mrs. E. Seymour

Reporting inspector: Mr. G. J. Martin  
21563

Dates of inspection: 23 – 27 September 2002

Inspection number: 246397

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	7 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hale Road Walton Liverpool
Postcode:	L4 3RL
Telephone number:	0151 525 7602
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father J. B. Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	November 27 <sup>th</sup> 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21563	Mr. Graham J. Martin	Registered inspector	Information and Communication Technology Educational Inclusion	What sort of school is it? How well do pupils achieve? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13746	Mr. David Russell	Lay inspector		How good are pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2700	Mr. Peter Sudworth	Team inspector	English Modern Foreign Language Physical Education	
7994	Mrs. Pamela Weston	Team inspector	Art and Design Design Technology Geography History	
14991	Mr. Alan Hardwicke	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15292	Mrs. Janet Pollard	Team inspector	Science Special Educational Needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Junior School is a school for seven to 11 year olds. It is a much larger than average sized school for children in Key Stage 2. It is a Voluntary Aided school situated in the Walton district of Liverpool. Currently there are 462 pupils on roll, with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is organized with four classes in each year group, with an average number of pupils per class of about 29. The roll is stable and few pupils transfer in or out of the school during each school year. Pupils attend the school from a number of surrounding parishes and the majority of them transfer at Year 3 directly from the nearby St. Francis de Sales Catholic Infant School. The area around the school consists of well-established housing mainly dating from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a mix of privately owned and rented housing. The district has a high level of unemployment and other indicators of social disadvantage. The inspection found that the overall attainment of pupils when they enter the school is below average compared to pupils of similar age nationally. About thirty nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above the national average. At the time of the inspection, the school had no pupils on roll from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language. At twenty six per cent the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is broadly in line with the national average. Of these, just two have statements of special educational need. The range of SEN includes pupils with moderate and specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems. In 2000 the school received a Department for Education and Skills achievement award for its improved results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils. The school teaches Spanish as a modern foreign language in addition to the subjects of the statutory National Curriculum.

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

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Junior School is an effective school. It has strengths in a good many aspects of its work and has improved rapidly. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection and it is no longer an underachieving school. The quality of teaching is good, with over a third of teaching being very good, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have good attitudes and the school promotes high standards of behaviour. The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and they achieve very well in comparison with similar schools. Good provision for moral and cultural education prepares the pupils well for living in a society with a diversity of cultures. There are strong features in the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher and governors have a clear view of the school's needs and are determined to maintain school improvement. The management team has worked hard on school self-evaluation and improvement and they are committed to continue taking the school forward. Resources are managed well for the benefit of the pupils and financial planning is sound. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The Year 6 pupils attained standards well above average in the 2001 national tests in English, mathematics and science compared with similar schools. In science, standards are very high and in the top five per cent nationally. Compared with all schools, there are better than average standards in physical education and in information and communication technology.
- The very good attitudes of the pupils is a strength of the school.
- A third of teaching is very good or better and the overall quality of teaching is good.
- The very positive school ethos promotes very good attitudes and good standards of behaviour.
- The school cares for its pupils very well; it has very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and it promotes high moral standards.

- There is a very good range of extra curricular opportunities, the community contributes very well to pupils' learning and there are very good relationships with other educational institutions.

### What could be improved

- The school should continue its work to improve the standards in English, especially through greater consistency of effective assessment, marking and correcting of work to help the pupils know what they must do to improve.
- The senior and middle management team could have a greater impact on the consistency of teaching and learning by: a) further developing their individual and shared roles; b) monitoring lessons and c) providing clear whole-school guidelines for aspects of teaching, such as marking for assessment, setting pupils' targets and giving homework.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to make consistent and rapid improvement since it was last inspected in November 2000. At the time of the last inspection the school was considered to be underachieving; this is no longer the case. Pupils attain standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 that are at least in line with national averages and at least well above the average when compared with similar schools. There is now good teaching where previously the majority of lessons were satisfactory. In a third of lessons, pupils benefit from very good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs have good provision and the overall provision for higher attaining pupils is satisfactory, both improvements since the last inspection. Staff with management responsibilities have made a good contribution to school improvement, although there is a continuing need for them to expand and strengthen their roles as subject leaders and heads of year groups. There has been good improvement in the breadth and balance of the curriculum, which was previously considered unsatisfactory. Very good improvement in the provision for art and good improvement in the provision for music, history, geography and design technology has contributed to the overall improvement in the curriculum. Similarly, improvement to the curriculum has resulted in better provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school has effectively improved its links with parents and the majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that the school has now set up good lines of communication.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Results of national tests show that the attainment of pupils is in line with the national average in English and mathematics and well above the national average in science. Compared with similar schools, attainment is well above the average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The table shows that there is a trend of rapidly improving results over the last three years. The unconfirmed results for 2002 show overall attainment that is still close to the national average although the school did not quite achieve its own challenging high target for the English results. However, the late admission to the 2001 Year 6 classes of a number of pupils with below average attainment impacted on the overall English result.

Evidence from the inspection of the attainment of the current Year 6, close to the start of the school year, shows attainment that is below national expectations in English, above national expectations in physical education and information and communications technology, and in line with national expectations in all other subjects.

**PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are positive about school. They work enthusiastically and they show interest in their lessons. Given the necessary support and guidance, most pupils try hard and do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and the majority have good behaviour on the playground. They respond well to the school’s high expectations of their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have a very good awareness of the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They understand very well how their own actions affect other people. There are good relationships in the school. Pupils are willing to take responsibility and they show good initiative.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school has worked hard to promote better attendance and punctuality, although a very few pupils still arrive shortly after the school day has started.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

*‘Satisfactory’ means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Overall the quality of teaching is good. It has improved since the last inspection. Significantly, over a third of lessons observed were very good. There is very good teaching in science and information and communications technology and good teaching in all other subjects, except music, where, overall, teaching is satisfactory. The teaching has a number of strengths, such as the way teachers organise pupils and use the time available to meet lesson objectives, although in a very few lessons too much time is spent giving instructions and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn from being active. Very good relationships between pupils and teachers contribute to the quality of teaching and consequently the pupils want to do well for their teachers. The teachers have a good knowledge of what their pupils know and can do, so they plan lessons that move pupils on well with their learning. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well and the majority of lessons taught to these strategies promote good teaching and effective learning. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs means that the school now meets the needs of all pupils equitably. In some lessons, particularly in English, pupils in some classes are not consistently reminded to correct spellings and punctuation. Consequently, errors are repeated and carried over into other subjects. Some teachers are not consistently following school guidelines on correcting and marking work, on the presentation of handwriting, on setting targets for pupils learning and on providing homework. As a result standards of work between pupils of the same age can vary. Some teachers make good use of teaching assistants but less experienced assistants need clear guidance on how to support good teaching and learning in the classroom.

**OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the	Good. There has been good improvement in the breadth and balance of the curriculum



curriculum	since the previous inspection. Subjects such as art and design, history, geography and music are now embedded into the curriculum. Provision for these and the other subjects promotes learning that is at least satisfactory and often good, benefiting the pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum for the pupils and broadens their experience of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has made significant improvements in its provision for pupils with special educational needs. Release time for the special needs coordinator has enabled the needs of individuals to be clearly identified. Targets for their learning are set in individual plans. Teachers provide work to meet these targets in small group work and in class lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with very good provision for pupils' moral development. There have been improvements in the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. The expectations shown to pupils of how they should develop a moral code is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall and a strength of the school. The school has high expectations of behaviour and relationships. This has a positive effect on pupils' personal development. There are very good procedures for improving attendance and punctuality. Assessment procedures have steadily improved but there is inconsistency in the use of day-to-day assessment in some classes.

The overall quality of the curriculum has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. Pupils now have better opportunities for a broader and more balanced set of opportunities to learn. The school has worked hard to continue to improve its links with parents since these were found to be an area for improvement in the previous inspection. Parents are pleased with the improvement in the quality of links between home and school. These links are now satisfactory, not least because the school has improved the quality of information it provides for parents about school life and the progress of their children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is a strength, not least of all in how she has inspired rapid school improvement. The deputy headteacher has given good support to ongoing school improvement. Other key management staff work hard to support school improvement but some aspects of their roles, such as monitoring teaching and learning, are still developing. Overall, therefore, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher promotes a strong ethos for effective learning.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	Governors monitor the improvement of the school well and they have a secure knowledge of its strengths. They have given good support to the headteacher in her drive for school improvement. They are more active in school improvement planning and in using key information to evaluate the school's performance. Information is used well to plan investment and to ensure that best value is considered in any spending plans. Overall, the governors' fulfillment of their responsibilities is satisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has successfully identified its own priorities for improvement. The School Improvement Plan provides a satisfactory framework from which the middle management team can plan their own actions for improvement. There is a need for the senior management team to review and monitor the work of the subject leaders and heads of year in order to develop and support their work to improve teaching and learning.
The strategic use of	Good. The school has invested well in resources to support effective learning,

resources	especially in information and communications technology. Resources are used effectively, which promotes good teaching and learning.
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The school has continued to make rapid progress with its drive for self-improvement. There has been good investment in resources, especially for new technology, and overall, learning resources are good. The accommodation is used well to enrich the curriculum. Good use is made of the outside hard surface areas for extra-curricular sport.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour in school is good</li> <li>• The teaching is good and their children achieve well</li> <li>• Their children are happy, they enjoy their lessons and the opportunities the school provides.</li> <li>• The school is helping them to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• Their children have an interesting range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of parents would like to know what to expect of their children's homework.</li> <li>• A small number of parents would like the school to work more closely with them</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the largely positive views of parents. The school has made good efforts to work more closely with parents and this is having a positive impact on the links between home and school. The inspection team agrees that the school could do more to make the guidelines for homework clearer for parents who wish to support their child's learning at home.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics, standards were well above those expected in similar schools and close to the national average. The number of pupils reaching standards above those expected for 11 year olds (i.e. Level 5) was well below the national average in English and close to the national average in mathematics. Test results for reading were better than those for writing, reflecting the national trend. The school improved the number of pupils achieving the expected level in writing from the year 2000 test results reported in the previous inspection. In the 2001 science test, pupils' results were very high in comparison with similar schools and well above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5) in science was well above the national average.
2. The general trend in national test results shows rapid improvement since 1999, although the unconfirmed results for 2002 show that overall results are not as high as in the previous two years. The school succeeded in meeting its targets for English and mathematics in 2001. The challenging target for the English results in 2002 was not met, largely because the school admitted some pupils with lower than average attainment shortly before the tests were taken. Good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, booster classes to provide additional support for Year 6 pupils and better teaching overall have a positive impact on the attainment of pupils. The introduction of a form of setting for English and mathematics for Years 3 and 4 has a good impact on learning in the early years of Key Stage 2. The support given to pupils' progress is good and helping to raising standards further for pupils of this age.
3. Inspection findings show that in all aspects of English, standards of the current group of Year 6 pupils, early in the school year, are below average. Few pupils are attaining above expectations for their age. An analysis of the pupils work and of their attainment in assessments from Year 3 through to Year 6 shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress overall from a low base at entry. Speaking and listening skills are below expectations in Year 6 and limited vocabulary is reflected in written work. There is a wide range of attainment in reading at Year 6. Higher attaining pupils read aloud with good expression and accuracy. Other pupils read more hesitantly, unsure of pronunciations of words, although with good attention to punctuation. The standard of writing is adversely affected by the limited vocabulary of many pupils and the below expected standard of spelling. The standard of spelling in Year 6 is weak and punctuation is not consistently used well in writing. A lack of clear guidelines for teachers on the standard expectation of writing, spelling and handwriting is hindering the consistency of standards across the school.
4. Standards in mathematics have made good improvement since the last inspection and are now in line with national expectations. Results in national tests show attainment that is in line with the national average and well above the average compared with similar schools. The majority of Year 6 pupils are working at the nationally expected level and on target to achieve the national average in the national tests next May.

5. Pupils make good progress in science and achieved results in the 2001 national tests that are well above the national average and very high compared with similar schools. The work of the current Year 6 shows that their attainment is at least in line with national expectations and that they could be expected to achieve results above the national average in the national tests next May.
6. Standards in geography, history, art and design, music and design and technology are in line with national expectations. This shows good improvement from the last inspection when standards in all of these subjects were below national expectations. The improvement in standards in art is particularly notable and this subject now makes a much better contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
7. Standards in information and communications technology are above national expectations, a good improvement since the last inspection. In physical education standards since the last inspection have remained consistently good.
8. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress. The school has worked well to improve the provision for pupils with SEN and the work of the coordinator (SENCO) is effectively supporting the learning needs of pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers are more aware of how to plan and provide for pupils with needs and they achieve well because they are given appropriate work to help them to learn. This is an improvement to the situation found in the previous inspection, when it was seen that pupils with learning difficulties were not always appropriately provided for.

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

9. Pupils show very good attitudes towards school. Since the inspection two years ago, the school has continued to improve on the pupils' good attitudes, values and personal development. There is a noticeable enthusiasm, interest and involvement in lessons. There are particular strengths in the positive response to lessons in information and communication technology, art, design technology and investigative skills in science where pupils' intense concentration levels and enjoyment are clearly visible. Very good resources available in these areas have a positive impact on pupils' learning and commitment to achievement. Teachers create a calming working atmosphere for group work by playing appropriate music pitched at an acceptable noise level and pupils respond positively.
10. Pupil behaviour in lessons is generally good. In the few incidences of challenging behaviour in some classes sanctions are implemented to control these without adverse effect on pupils' learning. There have been no exclusions from the school over the last three years. Pupils move in and around the school in a very orderly manner. Appointed prefects from each year group carefully monitor pupil movement in the corridors. Lunchtimes are civilized and orderly and pupils take every opportunity to interact and socialise with friends. Pupils are easy to talk to and show genuine politeness and interest in visitors to the school.
11. Some boisterous behaviour occurs on the playground, mainly at lunchtimes when pupils are not directly supervised by teachers. It is in this area where most detentions are administered and effective control is exercised. Pupils clearly understand the impact of their actions on others. One pupil who, in a small temper inadvertently kicked and hurt another pupil, showed very real remorse that was clear and evident for all to see. Playground supervisors handled the situation sensitively. Reprimands for inappropriate behaviour during playtime and having to miss play as a punishment have a noticeable effect on pupils' attitudes, encouraging them to think about their actions.
12. The school provides ample opportunities to encourage personal development. Selected pupils, from all year groups, act as prefects. This encourages responsibility and a sense of purpose. There are plans to introduce a School Council during this term that will provide pupils more opportunities for active involvement in making decisions about school life. Relationships between

pupils and adults, and amongst pupils, are good and contribute to the positive ethos that is evident throughout the school.

13. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. This judgement is based on the adjusted figures as a result of the identification of an anomaly relating to pupils leaving the school but remaining on the registration system. The school has reported this matter so that figures can be corrected in nationally reported data. Previously reported data for 2000/2001 placed the school's attendance as being below the national average. The levels of unauthorised absences are below the national average.
14. Attendance levels are slightly below the general national target of 95 per cent. Trend analysis over the last two years shows that all year groups are contributing to lower than normal attendances during the Summer and Autumn terms. During the Spring term lower than normal attendances arise from Years 5 and 6 pupils where, during 2001/2002, three out of the four classes in Year 6 had less than 90 per cent attendance rates. If this trend continues, it is likely to have a negative effect on learning and attainment.
15. The school is very aware of the few pupils arriving late each morning. Effective monitoring systems are now starting to impact on late arrivals. There is still a very small number of pupils who regularly arrive late and the school is openly operating a "zero tolerance" on latecomers. This policy is clearly understood by pupils and it is effective in promoting better punctuality.

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

16. Teaching is good in nearly all subjects. In some lessons in nearly all subjects it is often very good. Teaching in science and information and communications technology is very good. In all other subjects it is good overall, except in music where teaching is satisfactory. The good teaching overall results in good learning in all subjects, although learning is erratic in English and mathematics, where there is inconsistent marking and correcting of pupils' work.
17. Three quarters of the lessons seen were good or better and a third of all lessons were very good or excellent. This represents a very good improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the last inspection, when less than half of the lessons seen were good or better and only eight per cent were very good. Teachers have continued to improve their practice in teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, resulting in more focused teaching in all other subjects. The school is now ready to move forward in improving the frequency and consistency of good teaching. It can do this by continuing to develop the monitoring of teaching and by responding effectively to the section of this report about what the school should do to improve further.
18. There are strengths in the good and very good teaching that have a very noticeable impact on pupils' learning. The quality of relationships amongst teachers and pupils makes the pupils want to do well. The very good management of pupils by some teachers means that pupils remain on task, producing good work and learning effectively. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum and how to focus on basic skills when teaching the literacy and numeracy strategies. A variety of teaching methods is used well to suit a particular purpose, such as group teaching in literacy lessons or for pupils with special educational needs.
19. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of what their pupils know and can do, so they plan lessons that move pupils on well with their learning. However, in a very few lessons, time is not used well. Too much instruction is given and the pupils have insufficient time to engage with learning by being active. Pupils' begin to lose concentration after listening for too long to instruction and their learning becomes less effective. Where this occurs, teachers could monitor effective

teaching and share better practice within the school to further increase the amount of good and very good teaching.

20. There is room for continued improvement in the overall quality of teaching through sharing good practice. Some teachers are very effective at conveying high expectations to pupils but others are inconsistent. For example, marking of pupils work varies from class to class and some teachers are lax in their expectation of what pupils should do to correct their work. This often leads to the repetition of errors, such as spelling mistakes. The expected standard of work presentation was not clear to inspectors as there is variation in the standard between classes. This was seen where some pupils were writing in a joined-up style and others were still using print. A lack of clear guidelines to set the expected standard for marking, correcting and presenting work, for setting individual learning targets and for giving homework are hindering the overall improvement of teaching. This is because, where some teachers set their own high standards, others have a less rigorous attitude, leading to inconsistency of practice across the school.
21. Teachers are good at meeting the needs of the wide range of abilities represented in their classes, and support staff are increasingly used to assist them. At present the use of support staff varies, and their time is not always used to best purpose. Some are recent or new appointments, and need guidance on strategies to use in the classroom. Greater involvement in planning work, and in discussing aspects of classroom practice is needed in order to gain full benefit from the use of classroom assistants.
22. There is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The school has improved its provision for pupils who have difficulties with learning. These pupils learn well and make good progress in all subjects. The release time given to the special needs co-ordinator has enabled her to make an effective contribution to the quality of provision pupils with SEN. Teaching assistants are deployed well by some teachers, who provide them with effective guidance on how they can support teaching and learning for all pupils. Less experienced assistants who are not sure how to support the learning of pupils need clear guidance from the class teacher to help them to become more effective.

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

23. The school's curriculum is satisfactory overall. It provides breadth and balance, an improvement since the last inspection when weaknesses were found in the provision of some subjects. All statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. The school provides a good range of curricular and other opportunities for all its pupils and has successfully addressed those areas which were identified as weaknesses in the last inspection. Not all subjects yet have working policy documents and this lack of guidance for teachers contributes towards variable approaches to many aspects of teaching and learning which were seen during the inspection. The recommendations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used in teachers' planning, and both strategies are well established in the school.
24. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The way in which teachers implement the school's aims, together with aspects of work in science and physical education, make positive contributions. Pupils are encouraged to share and work together co-operatively, and be aware of the feelings and opinions of others. The Christian ethos of the school is well implemented in its day-to-day life, and helps promote social responsibility, self-esteem and mutual respect. Health education is dealt with through aspects of science and physical education topics, which include health, relationships and drugs awareness. Sex education is provided by the school nurse, and parents are given the opportunity to withdraw their children should they so choose. All these areas are sensitively treated, at appropriate stages in pupils' development.

25. The school has chosen to include the teaching of Spanish in its curriculum. Many aspects of Spanish culture are covered throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 receive Spanish lessons as part of their normal timetable. This subject makes a valuable contribution to the breadth of the school's curriculum and enriches the life of the school.
26. The present organisation of year groups, each with its own Head of Year, can lead to a lack of continuity as pupils move from year to year, and this can have a negative effect on their learning and personal development. A closer and more consistent liaison between year groups is needed, so as to ensure that assessment and pastoral information is effectively shared. Because of the physical separation of year groups, and the relatively few opportunities for mixed-age activities, ways should be sought to bring pupils together on a more regular basis.
27. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including visits, both to the school's own neighbourhood, and more distant areas. Sporting and other clubs are provided after school, and these are enthusiastically supported by large numbers of pupils. Amongst the very good range of after school activities offered this year are: health and fitness, football, cricket, netball, athletics, computers, judo, basketball, drama and art and design. The school participates enthusiastically in local schools' sports leagues, and has achieved many successes.
28. Links with the school's partner institutions are very good. Staff from the local secondary schools come and teach groups in school, such as for physical education and sports coaching. There is very good liaison which contributes to the smooth transfer of pupils from Year 6 to their new school. Links with the nearby Infant school are also very good. There are also very good links with schools in other countries. Similarities between their own school and one in Madrid are studied, exchanging information and learning about the lives of children of their own age in Spain. Pupils' moral, social and multi-cultural development are all well supported by such work.
29. Very good links have also been established with the local community. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils visited a local supermarket as part of their mathematics work. They looked at different containers, relating them to their previous work on three-dimensional shapes. Links with St. Francis' church are strong, with pupils visiting the church frequently. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. Pupils joined children from St. Francis de Sales Infant school to celebrate a first Holy Communion. Local football clubs are keen to provide a range of different schemes and activities and the school makes full use of these. Coaching by club staff, as well as visits to football grounds, are well used by the school.
30. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are clearly identified, and the groups and setting in literacy and numeracy allow them to have full access to the curriculum at their own level and pace. Challenge and encouragement are given by celebrating positive responses and good work. The quality of individual education plans is good because they are well organised, straightforward, written in clear language, and shared with pupils and their parents. Targets can be achieved in a half-termly cycle. Because these targets now match pupils' needs, and the withdrawal and setting systems are effective, pupils are fully included. The groups are flexible and pupils can move through the groups and sets as their needs are met.
31. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and that for spiritual, social and cultural development is now good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when moral development was good, social and spiritual satisfactory, and cultural unsatisfactory. The high expectations, and Christian values of hard work, perseverance, and pride in achievement, which are included in the school's aims, are at the heart of its daily life and work.
32. Pupils' spiritual development is well provided for. The parish priest visits the school on a regular basis and is well known to pupils throughout the school. Pupils not only visit the church regularly, but also visit places of worship of other faiths, such as the synagogue, as part of their studies.

Occasions such as the feast day of St. Francis de Sales, and the mass to celebrate the feast of reconciliation, form important parts of the yearly life of the school.

33. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings through prayer and reflection, both in assemblies and at other times during the school day, such as before lunch and before going home. Spiritual values are strongly reflected in the school's aims, and these are very well upheld in the daily life of the school. Religious education lessons and school assemblies are not the only occasions on which spiritual values are taught. They are built into working relationships in all parts of the curriculum. This gives pupils many opportunities to consider aspects of spiritual development.
34. During the inspection some occasions were observed when opportunities to introduce a spiritual element to lessons were missed. Teachers often did not give pupils a few moments to marvel at some new discovery or to reflect on the awe and wonder of a scientific observation or mathematical pattern. The 'special' nature of acts of collective worship was also sometimes lost by the difficulty of accommodating large numbers of pupils together at the same time, and by the need for them to bring coats and bags into the hall. Music could also be used more to give a feeling of calm and reflection in the hall.
35. Moral development is very well promoted throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to recognise that everyone is equally important. They are clearly taught that care and consideration should be shown to all, so that everyone can work harmoniously together. From the youngest classes, pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. The school's ethos promotes care for each other and personal responsibility. This is built on strong relationships amongst all involved in the life of the school. Teachers, support staff, lunchtime and other staff, all play their parts in this process. The school has been involved in a wide variety of charity fund-raising activities, such as the Poppy Day Appeal, Comic Relief and the Samaritans.
36. Provision for pupils' social development is good. In many lessons and other activities pupils are required to work together co-operatively. They generally respond very well to this approach. As they move through the age groups, pupils are given increasing opportunities to help around the school. Year 6 pupils volunteer to act as monitors at doors and on the stairs, and they take these responsibilities very seriously. A School Council is being formed, where pupils can discuss ideas for improving different aspects of the life of the school, such as the facilities in the playground. The school is fortunate in the many contributions which members of the local community, and other visitors, make to its life. During the past year a police officer has visited school to talk to pupils, a school governor has talked about drugs, and ceramic mosaics were made with a local artist. Students from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts brought dance activities to the school.
37. The school's provision for pupils' cultural education is also good. Despite the cultural make up of the school, with no pupils from ethnic minorities, much is done to make pupils aware of other cultures, and to understand their varying traditions. Pupils are given a very strong feeling for their own cultural traditions and history. They learn about different periods in local and British history, such as the Tudor period and the Second World War. Pupils have visited the Town Hall and Liverpool Football Club. Last year's Morris Dancing activities gave another insight into pupils' cultural heritage. Their understanding of different world cultures has been developed through the school's growing links with a Spanish school, and also by projects such as the recent Chinese Week. Musical instruments from a variety of world cultures are available for use in music lessons.
38. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development makes a good contribution to preparing pupils for living in a culturally diverse society.

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



39. The school provides a very caring and secure atmosphere in which the pupils can flourish. Pupils are respected and valued as individuals. They are listened to sympathetically by the staff and headteacher whenever they have concerns. The welfare of the pupils is a strength of the school.
40. Supervision in the classrooms and at playtimes is good, and at dinnertime it is satisfactory. The playground has little to make it interesting for pupils but there are plans in place for this to be developed, to include gardens and seating. The pupils are safe and secure whilst at school.
41. Dining is a social occasion and is well organised. The lower juniors have an earlier lunchtime than the upper juniors, so that all pupils have time and sufficient space to eat their meal. The school manages the space well and uses the hall as well as the dining room.
42. Procedures for child protection are very good. The local education authority's policy has been adopted and all staff are familiar with the school's procedures. The staff member responsible has been trained and there are clear strategies for taking action should this be necessary.
43. The school's approach to health and safety is very good. All the necessary checks are regularly carried out. The school has been recently refurbished and meets all the building regulations. The site manager carries out any minor repairs straight away. For example, during the inspection there was an immediate repair to a damaged piece of fencing. The first aid cover is good and all procedures are in place for reporting accidents. There are regular fire drills. A governor who works part-time in the school regularly inspects the premises with the site manager.
44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Data is stored electronically and there is a very clear system for recording absence and identifying trends. Unauthorised absences and lateness are followed through consistently. There is a very good relationship with the education welfare officer who is involved with the rewards system for excellent attendance. Each pupil's annual report includes the record of attendance and absence.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. There is a consistent approach to behaviour through the ethos of the school that recognises, encourages and celebrates individual and group good behaviour. Procedures for dealing with bullying are consistent and good. The school has adopted the local education authority's race equality policy and procedures are satisfactory. The headteacher knows the pupils well and is aware of all matters relating to inappropriate behaviour. Opportunities for listening to and helping pupils with problems are provided when necessary.
46. The monitoring and supporting of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. This is undertaken informally. As the teachers and support staff know the pupils well, they monitor pupils' progress on a day-to-day basis. There is a whole school ethos of nurturing and enabling the pupils to develop self-confidence and positive attitudes, but there is insufficient written evidence to show the progress pupils make over time. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in assemblies and in class. This includes recognising those achievements gained outside school.
47. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Assessments are undertaken at each half term based on the recently introduced targets for all pupils. Teachers have records of pupils' performance from tests and use these to group pupils effectively and to provide differentiated work for lessons. This ensures that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their needs.
48. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school are satisfactory. The school possesses considerable information about the attainment of pupils, both from its own procedures and through the information provided by the National Curriculum statutory and optional tests. Effective use is made of this information, and the school has evidence of how much progress individual pupils make. There is analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' responses to

the tests and this information is used in the curriculum planning process to improve standards. Information technology has clear and well-defined assessment procedures.

49. Targets have recently been introduced in pupils' English, mathematics and science books but are not yet fully established in the school. There is inconsistency in marking and correcting pupils' work across the school and some pupils are making the same errors over time, limiting their progress. There are few comments in pupils' books that tell them how to improve their work.
50. In other subjects of the curriculum no formal assessment currently takes place. Assessment opportunities are usually listed in teachers' planning but few records are kept and as a result little information is available either to judge present attainment, to illustrate pupils' progress or to help to provide suitable work for the future.
51. The school has taken good steps to improve the overall quality of the support and provision for pupils with special educational needs. The SENCO has been released full time to develop the system further, by analysing the data available for pupils' with special needs, to monitor their attainment and progress and to ensure that all their needs are met. There is now good provision particularly for the younger pupils and this is a good improvement from the last inspection when special educational needs was unsatisfactory. There are detailed records kept for the pupils in Years 3 and 4. As pupils enter the school their prior learning is used as a basis to identify their current needs. Assessment is ongoing, half termly and annually for all pupils with special needs. Pupils' participate well in the process through their knowledge of the targets that are shared with them and their parents.

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

52. Parents have good, positive views of the school, as expressed on the 159 questionnaires returned. Only two parents attended the pre-inspection parents meeting but their views mirror the questionnaire responses. About twenty negative comments were received, mainly relating to the homework given to the pupils and the amount of extra-curricular activities available for the pupils.
53. Evidence supporting the views relating to homework, especially for older pupils, include the lack of guidelines for staff and the variable approach from teachers in setting homework. The latter results in inconsistency of approach between classes. Some parents seek clarification about homework and the inspection team agrees that this would support those parents who wish to be more involved in helping their child at home. The provision of extra curricular activities is very good, enhancing the curriculum for all pupils who choose to take part. The few negative comments from parents about extra curricular opportunities cannot be substantiated.
54. The quality of information provided for parents is good. In particular, the well presented newsletters about the curriculum, topics to be covered in lessons and school activities are all helpful to parents. Reports for parents on pupils' progress are quite detailed. They contain meaningful information for parents about how well their child is doing and what they need to do to improve. There is a section highlighting the pupils' personal development so that parents can understand how their children are benefiting from life at the school.
55. The Governors' Annual Report for 2000/2001 contains useful information for parents. Some sections of the Parents Handbook are, however, disappointingly brief. For example, there is a short statement in the Parents Handbook about pupils with special educational needs (SEN) but this does not explain what the school does to help these pupils. Parents of pupils with statements receive copies of the relevant documents and the school invites parents to attend meetings to discussing their child.

56. Parental partnership is developing but there are still minor concerns about the level of parental contribution to pupils learning at school and home. Parents attend school assemblies and there was good representation at the Year 3 collective worship during the inspection week. Very few parents help around the school, although some are keen to help with swimming, after school clubs and taking pupils to competitions at other schools. There is some evidence to show that pupils read to parents at home to extend their reading skills. Further work needs to be done to encourage more parents to be involved in supporting their child's learning at home. The main parental contribution is from fund raising activities at Christmas time.
57. From the beginning of this term a Parental Links co-ordinator is in post whose aim is to build and develop the positive relationships formed since the last inspection. Various initiatives have been considered to move this aspect forward but as yet have not been actively implemented. Therefore the effectiveness of the school's links with parents can only be considered as satisfactory. The school's links with parents is an area that the school wishes to develop and improve further.

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

58. There are strengths in the leadership of the headteacher that have effectively supported continued school improvement. The positive ethos of the school, where pupils are well cared for and expected to have positive attitudes, has enabled teachers to establish good relationships with pupils so that they are keen to learn. There has been good investment in resources and staffing to support the improvement of teaching. The governors have been kept well informed about how the school is improving and they have monitored the development of the school well. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of her staff well. The management system set up by the headteacher, such as the delegation of responsibility to subject leaders and year heads, has had a good impact on the work of the school. However, she is aware that more needs to be done to develop the roles of the management team so that they can contribute more effectively to achieving her aim of continuous school self improvement.
59. There has been both improvement and consolidation in the work of staff with specific responsibilities since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher has given good support to the headteacher's drive for school improvement. Some staff are very new to management roles and some, such as the heads of year, do not have action plans for their work. The inspection finds that the school is now ready to move forward with clearer direction by defining precisely what each member of the management team needs to do to take their area of responsibility forward. Because of the size of the school it would be easy for individual managers to find themselves working in isolation. However, further development needs to be done with the strategic overview of a senior member of staff so that action can be coordinated and its effectiveness can be monitored. For example, the lack of clear whole-school guidelines on aspects of teaching such as marking and correcting work, setting learning targets and homework is leading to inconsistencies in the quality and standard of work between classes.
60. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is effective and well structured. Continuous monitoring of staff performance promotes ongoing improvements in teaching styles with more focused approaches to delivering lessons and achieving good pupil learning. The school should further develop systems to support staff by implementing a detailed Staff Handbook with clearly defined aims, objectives and guidelines for good practice. The school needs to sustain the good efforts it has made in recent years to maintain high standards of teaching, staff commitment and involvement.
61. Through effective financial planning and budget allocation educational priorities have been well supported. Generally, financial systems are administered well. Awareness of budget allocations and spending is well documented and reported regularly to the governing body's Finance Committee for review. There is an acceptable extent to which the principles of best value are

applied. For example, advice about catering services costs was obtained from other cluster schools for comparison. Besides cost considerations, variety of menu offered and the nutritional value of food provided were considered. This is a school with high levels of free school meals and this was an important area for consideration. During accommodation modification careful consideration was placed upon the water heating system for pupils toilets. After consultation with the school's governing body the designers agreed to install independent water heating systems rather than circulating hot water throughout the school.

62. During the previous academic year the school has not actively pursued a well-defined School Development Plan. The draft document prepared in September 2002 has yet to be approved by governors. The draft development plan takes a broad and strategic overview of the school's improvement needs. Action plans prepared by the senior management team provide the detail for each aspect of school improvement. Improvements to the rigour of the overall improvement plan would convey clearer expectations to the senior management team of what is expected from their own action plans. For example, an internal audit review in November 2001 found that the existing school development plan did *"not aggregate the cost of delivering the whole plan to confirm its source of funds and viability."* There are indications that the headteacher and members of the senior management team have not implemented these findings into the draft plan due for review.
63. The school's use of new technology is very good. The computer suite is very well used and its effective use makes a good impact on pupils' learning. The availability of an interactive white board is a strong feature for assisting teacher presentation in information & communication technology (ICT) lessons. The school have invested heavily in laptop computers and these are used well, such as by giving the teaching staff more flexibility in organising computer activities in the classrooms. Systems for monitoring attendance and tracking test results have benefited greatly from the use of electronic registration systems and optical marking recording facilities. Good use is made of the internet and CD ROMs for acquiring key curriculum information for specific lessons.
64. Specific grants are used well for their designated purposes and standards funds have been well allocated to meet the demands of the curriculum. Funding has been directed at English, books/stationery/materials, mathematics, ICT, library resources and science to good effect. Several grant bids have been successful including one for *Seed Challenge* capital for refurbishment of the building and *'New Opportunities Fund Out-of-School'* for a health and fitness club and an art and drama club.
65. The adequacy of the accommodation is satisfactory. There is a combination of strong and weak features at the school. For example, the school is reasonably well designed and caters for a full range of pupils' needs. These include a disabled pupils' / visitors' toilet and a passenger lift to take any less physically abled pupils from lower school to upper school since the school is on two levels. The majority of classrooms are quite spacious. Wall displays are a pleasant feature around the school, which is an improvement from the last inspection, which found that displays lacked stimulation and were largely unattractive. Pupils are disadvantaged by not having a hall capable of holding all pupils for collective worship or an outside playing field for sports activities.
66. There has been a high investment in learning resources throughout the school. Overall the adequacy of learning resources is good. The adequacy is variable across the curriculum areas and the resources in science, information & communication technology, design & technology, history and art particularly are very good. The resources in English, mathematics, geography and music are good. Resources are satisfactory in physical education. The resources are well organised and readily available to staff and pupils.
67. The school has done well to improve rapidly and to strive to improve standards. The school provides good value for money.

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

68. The school has continued to make good improvement overall since its last inspection and it is clearly a self-evaluating and self-improving school. To improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English further by:
  - a) Continuing with the good work on promoting higher attainment
  - b) Developing more consistent good teaching throughout the school
  
- (2) Further the impact of the work of the management team, especially on the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - a) Developing their individual and shared leadership roles
  - b) Increasing their involvement in the monitoring and improvement of teaching
  - c) Providing clear whole-school guidelines for aspects of teaching such as marking for assessment, setting pupils' individual targets and giving homework.

In addition, the school should also aggregate the total cost of the school development plan to follow the recommendations of the internal audit from November 2001.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

72

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

16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	23	31	16	1	0	0
Percentage	1.4	32	43	22	1.4	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	462
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	178

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	123

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	56	43	99

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	46	48	55
	Girls	39	30	41
	Total	85	78	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (76)	79 (74)	97 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	47	52
	Girls	33	32	38
	Total	72	79	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (73)	80 (75)	91 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	460	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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



## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	28.8

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	229.5

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001 -2002
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	£
Total income	953800
Total expenditure	935219
Expenditure per pupil	2024
Balance brought forward from previous year	15941
Balance carried forward to next year	18581

## Recruitment of teachers

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

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	262
Number of questionnaires returned	159

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65.4	30.2	3.8	0	0.6
My child is making good progress in school.	54.7	40.3	1.9	0	3.1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56.6	37.1	1.9	0	4.4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36.5	37.1	12.6	5	8.8
The teaching is good.	56.8	38.7	0	0	4.5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42.7	46	8.2	0	3.1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60.4	33.3	3.1	0.7	2.5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65.4	32	1.3	0	1.3
The school works closely with parents.	38.6	45.2	12.4	0	3.8
The school is well led and managed.	60.4	36.5	0.6	0	2.5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59.8	35.8	1.3	0	3.1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64.2	28.9	4.4	1.9	0.6

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

### **ENGLISH**

69. The last three year's national test results in English at the end of Year 6 have shown significant improvement for both boys and girls over previous years. They fell back slightly in 2002 when the school did not quite reach the target set jointly by the school and Local Education Authority, largely due to the admission of a number of lower attaining pupils shortly before the tests. The gap in performance between the school's boys and girls is lower than that normally found nationally, although girls still attain more highly overall. Whilst over three-quarters of the pupils reached the expected level in 2001, well above the national average, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well below the national average. Nevertheless, the school's performance against similar schools was well above average. National comparisons for the 2002 results are not yet available. Just over three-quarters of the pupils reached the expected standard and nearly a third attained the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 6 pupils, who had lower than average attainment on entry to Year 3, have attainment in all aspects of English that is below average overall. Few are attaining above expectations for their age. Pupils are generally making satisfactory progress from this low base at entry.
70. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below expectations in Year 6 and many pupils lack confidence to contribute to class discussion. Pupils have a limited vocabulary and this is also reflected in their written work. Many pupils have not yet acquired the skill of speaking in standard English for more formal occasions such as the school setting. As a result their speech is sometimes grammatically incorrect. Pupils do not always pick up the main ideas or features of what is being said, for example when teachers are asking questions, and when following the lesson theme.
71. By age 11 pupils' attainment in reading ranges widely. More able pupils read aloud with good intonation, expression and with accuracy. Other pupils read more hesitantly and slowly, although with good attention to punctuation. Pupils know the function of an index and a glossary and can find information, although several have not yet fine-tuned the skill of scanning a text. Some can express an author preference and give general reasons for discussing book preferences but pupils' analysis of character and in depth comprehension, such as deduction, is not yet well developed. Several pupils belong to the local library and these pupils have a greater interest in books and better reading skills. Elsewhere in the school, the overall standard of reading is generally appropriate for the pupils' ages. In general, however, not enough parents hear their children read on a regular basis at home and some teachers do not read enough to pupils to develop their all round vocabulary and to stimulate their interest in books.
72. Pupils' generally limited vocabulary and below expected standard of spelling are common features across the school which affect pupils' writing adversely. Spelling standards in Year 6 are weak. Not enough Year 6 pupils consistently use punctuation correctly and not all check their own work carefully enough. Upper and lower case letters are frequently interchanged, apostrophes appear in the wrong places and they frequently confuse homonyms such as 'there' and 'their'. Pupils are capable of writing in a neat joined script but too often they print their work or do not maintain the good handwriting standard of which they are capable.
73. While pupils are learning to structure their writing in literacy lessons, there is little narrative writing at length. In some subjects such as history, some good examples of cross-curricular work were observed as when Year 5 pupils write a wanted poster for Henry VIII. *'He has strawberry blond hair with brown eyes.....He is a wealthy man, he looks strong and overweight'*. However, in science, pupils' writing about their work is restricted by the use of too many worksheets and teachers do not

take up on opportunities in the literacy hour to develop word-processing skills in information and communication technology.

74. The quality of teaching is good overall with a range from very good to satisfactory. The school has implemented the literacy strategy well and lessons are structured well. Good attention is given to meeting pupils' prior attainment and building on previous lesson content. Lessons are well prepared and quickly get under way with a good use of equipment and books, such as overhead projectors to display the shared text. Individual whiteboards are used effectively for pupils to draft ideas and vocabulary. Teachers model writing well. There is often a good dialogue between teachers and pupils achieved through good quality questioning. Lessons often proceed at a brisk pace with effective use of time reminders. The well prepared content interests most pupils who work well and try hard. Their behaviour is mostly good and many show good levels of concentration as a result. However, better use could be made of paired discussion in lessons to share ideas and develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Significantly the overall effectiveness of teaching is affected considerably by a lack of rigour in some teachers' expectations of pupils' finished work and their lack of intervention to secure improvements when monitoring or correcting pupils' work. As a result pupils repeat the same errors over again and this reduces the overall effectiveness of teaching and the pace of pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the extra provision made for them in group work and through the more individual support given by the teaching assistants. More able pupils make satisfactory progress.
75. Resources for the subject are good. The school has good provision for the literacy hour. General library and classroom book stocks are at a satisfactory level in range and quality. There is scope for improvement in the way they are presented to pupils throughout the school to attract pupils to books. There is also scope for improving the general shelving arrangements in the libraries such as by using an author index for fiction books and more accurate use of Dewey system cataloguing in the non-fiction section.
76. The co-ordinator's leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Good provision for the literacy hour has been provided to support better teaching and learning. He has selected the correct priorities for the subject's further development, although some initiatives such as the work in speaking and listening are only just beginning. Except for the handwriting policy, guidance in the school for implementing a common approach in other aspects of the subject is not yet secure. The teacher recently appointed to promote drama, speaking and listening in Years 3 and 4 has not yet had chance to plan out strategies to improve work in this aspect but she has clear ideas about what needs to be done.
77. In the main satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Some improvements have been made in standards but several features reported at the last inspection still remain issues. There are still missed opportunities to develop longer pieces of writing. Spelling is still an aspect of the subject that requires further improvement; handwriting standards are not consistently high enough. Many pupils are quite capable of writing in a neatly joined hand and many show good skills in handwriting lessons. However, pupils lack consistency in applying these skills in their other work and in maintaining the standard of which they are capable. Too frequently pupils print their work or mix up print and cursive writing. Many pupils still lack confidence to discuss the works of authors. Some teachers do not maintain the standard of punctuation and grammar consistently throughout the school because of the lack of rigour in marking.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. By the time they reach the age of 11 pupils achieve standards which are in line with those found nationally. At the last inspection standards were found to be below expectations. There has therefore been good improvement since the last inspection. The reasons for this are that the

National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented in the school, the quality of teaching has improved, and the curriculum is now broader and more balanced. The school has done well to bring about the basic changes needed to enable this improvement to take place.

79. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds show that pupils are attaining the expected standards. When compared with similar schools results are very high. Analysis of the work of pupils in Year 6, and observations of their lessons, show that they are in line to achieve the national average in next year's national tests. Pupils read and plot co-ordinates and understand the properties of two-dimensional shapes. They show satisfactory calculation skills and they apply this knowledge to their everyday work. The higher attaining pupils predict and discuss patterns when shapes are moved to different co-ordinates. Average attaining pupils draw shapes according to a wide range of co-ordinates, plotting their shapes on a worksheet. Lower attaining pupils could develop greater accuracy when working with simple co-ordinates, especially when working with the help of a teaching assistant. Teachers generally use correct mathematical vocabulary to discuss the work, and this helps to develop pupils' language skills, such as when they discuss negative and positive numbers, and vertical and horizontal axes.
80. Pupils throughout the school produce a good amount of work. They generally sustain a satisfactory standard of neatness. In some classes, however, where work is not marked consistently well, the presentation of work is variable, and is sometimes untidy and careless. In lessons seen during the inspection pupils worked hard, and showed determination to succeed. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and share positive attitudes towards their work. The good teaching seen in all year groups ensures that the majority of pupils are given work that has a high level of challenge, whatever their level of ability.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall, and because of this pupils learn well. Teachers have done well to firmly establish the National Numeracy Strategy. They now confidently adapt the official guidelines to the needs of their class. Basic number skills are taught systematically so that pupils develop their confidence in carrying out simple calculations. The school identified multiplication tables as an area needing more attention, and so introduced additional time into the curriculum to address this need. Pupils with special educational needs are generally given good support, both by class teachers and support staff, and this enables them to be fully included in the work, and so to make good progress. Overall, teachers have good working relationships with their pupils, and classes are well managed. This ensures that pupils work hard and behave well and so make good gains in learning. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher used questions very effectively to keep everyone involved in the work. He was very good at assessing pupils' understanding of co-ordinates, and tailored the next stages of work appropriately, so as to maximize learning for all. The quality of working relationships in this lesson was excellent, and pupils enjoyed the work and showed very good attitudes and behaviour.
82. In some lessons seen during the inspection, too much time was spent on the introduction, so that pupils became restless and did not sustain their concentration. This also meant that the time for group activities was reduced and sessions at the end of lessons to review learning were far too brief. A better balance between these different elements of lessons would result in pupils' attention and interest being maintained, better opportunities for group work matched to the pupils' needs, and more time to sum up and evaluate learning at the ends of lessons.
83. The grouping of pupils according to ability in Years 3 and 4 is an effective strategy, and enables the work to be more closely targeted to the pupils' level of understanding. The marking of pupils' work, in all year groups, is, however, inconsistent. The school has a policy for the marking of work but all teachers do not consistently use it. As a result some pupils' work is only briefly marked, and rarely commented on by the teacher. Good practice is seen in other classes where teachers make frequent helpful notes, which enable their pupils to see what to do next in order to improve. The introduction of personal 'Target Sheets', stuck inside pupils' books, is a positive development that the school aims to monitor and consolidate.

84. In some lessons seen during the inspection teaching assistants were not used to full advantage so their value in supporting learning was not fully realised. Particularly where different groups are working on practical activities, teaching assistants need to be fully involved in planning and supporting the teacher, so that they have a more direct and positive impact on learning.
85. The curriculum leader is effective in managing the subject, and combines this role well with other management responsibilities. He has a good overview of the subject. The detailed work he has done to analyse pupils' work and standards makes an effective contribution to the school improvement plan. The monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet been part of the subject leader's role, and there is a need to develop this aspect, so that variations in practice can be addressed, and the very good practice that is seen in some classes can be shared and extended. Good use is made of national tests to assess the attainment of pupils annually. This information is used well to monitor achievement in all year-groups, and to identify areas of learning that could be improved. A system of key learning objectives, which are shared with pupils, and which inform teachers and pupils of achievement through successive stages of the mathematics curriculum, has recently been established. Further development of this approach will enable teachers and pupils to gain a clearer picture of what needs to be done in order to improve.
86. Resources for mathematics are good. They are well organised and readily accessible, and most are of reasonable quality. New books from a commercial scheme have recently been acquired, to match the requirements of the latest national guidelines.

## **SCIENCE**

87. By the age of eleven, pupils attain standards well above the national average. The proportion working beyond the expected level is also well above national expectations. Current school data shows a broadly similar pattern and that the very high standards have been maintained. There has been satisfactory progress. This is due to the very thorough analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the tests and this information is used to inform curriculum and lesson planning.
88. Over Years 3 to 6 pupils gain a good understanding of a fair test and know the importance of 'keeping things the same'. They carry out tests and investigations very well. Older pupils take responsibility for their tests and collaborate well. They devise what needs to be done when given a problem to solve. Good explanations and questioning by teachers results in pupils working independently, predicting and recording their own work. Year 6 work well at filtering solutions and understanding dissolving. They discuss what they are doing and measure accurately. One pupil was interested in how the solids could be re-cycled and used again. They talk about dissolving, solutions, filtering and residue, showing good use of technical vocabulary. They are confident about their results which they record using a well-defined system of tables. This ensures that all the aspects of the investigation are included. The presentation of tables is organised so that all pupils, whatever their level of learning, can respond at an appropriate level.
89. Pupils with special needs are well supported and complete their tasks. Year 5 pupils describe accurately changes in water by heating and cooling. They understand evaporation and reversible change. Younger pupils enjoy investigating keeping ice cubes cold, and describe and record their results using a table. There was good use of laptop computers for those pupils with learning difficulties to help them with their recording.
90. The raising of drugs awareness is undertaken in Year 5 and elements of sex education are introduced into the curriculum in year 6. Throughout the school, teachers reinforce vocabulary and pupils use scientific terms in their work. Pupils use their mathematical skills to record their work using tables and graphs. Some teachers make effective use of worksheets, but in some classes there is overuse and this constrains pupils' writing about their activities. Marking varies from class

to class and some errors are not corrected. There are insufficient comments made by teachers to help pupils to improve their work

91. The quality of teaching is very good overall and accounts for pupils' continuous progress. The best lessons are interesting and as a result pupils have very good learning experiences, they show good attitudes towards science and apply themselves to the tasks well. Most lessons are very well planned. In the good and very good lessons pupils have the opportunity to undertake demanding and interesting investigative tasks. Teachers share clear objectives for the lessons with the pupils. They set a lively pace of work and use review sessions to reinforce and assess learning. Most teachers are confident and have good subject knowledge. They give clear explanations and ask questions that require pupils to solve problems and extend their understanding. Lessons are well organised and effectively resourced. Health and safety aspects of lessons are stressed and good guidance is given. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to use and extend their scientific vocabulary well. Teachers plan across year groups, but there are some inconsistencies in the way lessons are delivered such as in the imbalance between instruction and active learning. Most teaching assistants work conscientiously with the pupils and make a positive impact on their learning. However some, particularly those who are recent appointments, are not fully involved in the planning of lessons.
92. The subject is managed well. The coordinator monitors teachers' planning effectively and the work in pupils' books. However, the coordinator's role is under-developed because there is no monitoring of teaching. This limits the development of the subject as there is limited sharing of advice, good ideas and effective practice.
93. Pupils are assessed each half term and formally at the end of each year. It is a very thorough process and has a positive impact on maintaining high standards. Targets are set in pupils' books and reflect their abilities. There is monitoring of work each half term to assess pupils' progress. The co-ordinator scrutinises the assessment test results thoroughly and uses them well to build a clear view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Any areas for development are well incorporated into the curriculum. The curriculum is based on national guidelines modified to meet the school's needs. This supports teachers planning well. There is a clearly devised improvement plan in place for the further development of the subject, including homework being given to the pupils each half term, but the monitoring of teaching is not included in this plan. The school is very well resourced and the resources are easily accessible and well used. There is some use of information and communication technology during lessons. The school has sufficient software to support the topics covered by the curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Attainment of pupils by the age of eleven is appropriate for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection found that attainment was below that expected when pupils leave school. The school has made very good progress in the development of an art curriculum that aids the systematic development of skills. Staff have received training in the subject, and as a result of these initiatives pupils now experience and benefit from, a very high quality and range of learning opportunities. All pupils achieve well.
95. By Year 6, pupils appreciate different artists' paintings and printing techniques and this enables them to produce different textures and patterns in their own work. Year 4 pupils produce a very good abstract interpretation of 'The Last Supper' using geometric shapes and various materials such as wood chippings, tissue paper, shells, paint and glitter. Pupils make good use of their sketchbooks when they study movement in different settings. They work in pairs with one pupil performing and the other recording the movement from four different perspectives. Their sketches show good understanding of line and tone, shape, form and space. Lower attaining pupils benefit from working with higher attaining pupils. Often their work enhances other areas of the curriculum;

for instance when Year 4 pupils design and make a chair for a character from the story of 'Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone'.

96. Art and design makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to present their own ideas and feelings and to have an understanding of the artist. They work in a fully inclusive atmosphere where all work is valued. They study art from other countries, such as Egypt; a very good example of this is the Egyptian wall mural produced by Year 3 pupils working under the supervision of a textile university student.
97. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, in Years 3, 4, and 6. Examination of teachers' plans, pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils show that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in all classes. The teachers are now more confident to teach the subject and use their good knowledge and understanding to provide good quality, interesting experiences from which the pupils learn well.
98. Lessons are introduced well, building on previous knowledge with assessment built into the planning. Teachers use good examples, for example portraits by Picasso, to illustrate simple style. As a result pupils develop their skills well, showing increasing control of tools and techniques and their knowledge and appreciation of famous artists. The staff give good encouragement and support to pupils in developing their ideas. Through careful presentation of work, they raise confidence and self esteem so that pupils take pride in their achievements. The teachers planning shows clear objectives and well focused teaching points which they share with pupils. This leads to a clear understanding of the content of the lesson. A good example of this is when pupils in Year 6 sketch and design their own masks. Because the teacher gives good examples of how to process the masks and to build up features using a wide variety of resources, such as egg boxes, wool, straws and cotton wool, all work diligently and produce very effective masks. Music is often used to create a calm working environment that is conducive to learning. It helps to be creative and to get their imagination flowing.
99. The curriculum is considerably enhanced for all pupils through the use of visiting specialists and visits to for example, the Liverpool Art Gallery, to view the William Turner and Paul McCartney exhibitions. There are very good links with other subjects across the curriculum. A very good example of this is the contribution made to the school's 'Chinese Week'. During this week a Chinese Artist working with Year 3 and Year 6 pupils enabled them to produce interesting paintings that included Chinese writing and taking part in performing Chinese lion dancing.
100. Art and Design has a high profile in school. The displays of finished work are of a high quality and provide a stimulating environment. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection. Of particular note is the number of 'creation' tile mosaic pictures on display throughout the school. These are the result of a visit of an artist in residence who worked with Year 4 pupils, teaching them to translate their designs into mosaics and cut the tiles for themselves.
101. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject and to raise the confidence of the staff to teach the subject. The continuation of art monitoring to give feedback and assistance to teachers and the increasing use of ICT will further enhance the curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Attainment of pupils by the age of eleven is appropriate for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection which found that attainment was below that expected when pupils leave school. The school has made good progress in the development of a design and technology curriculum that aids the systematic development of skills. Where possible units of work have been



linked to science topics. Staff have received training in the subject. As a result of these initiatives pupils now experience and benefit from a good quality and range of learning opportunities. All pupils achieve well.

103. In the lower juniors, pupils evaluate the fillings in sandwiches for appearance, flavour, texture, smell and healthiness. The teacher asks probing questions to encourage the use of descriptive vocabulary and as a consequence of this at each tasting the pupils respond with suggestions. The range of vocabulary is limited and some pupils find it difficult to express their judgements other than with simple words. Higher attaining pupils use an advertising poster to present their findings very successfully. Lower attaining pupils are well supported by the effective use of a classroom assistant. In this lesson in particular there are very good links to science when the pupils discuss the ingredients for a sandwich, considering what fillings are healthy and why.
104. As pupils move up the school they develop their skills further. Older pupils know that biscuits come in a variety of textures, shapes and forms and begin to design their own biscuits. They consider a variety of needs, to clarify ideas and use appropriate words. Discussion of these words to describe texture and taste fosters good links to language development. The pupils know how to use a thesaurus to look up alternative words. By Year 6 pupils know that the quality of a product depends on how well it is made and how well it fits the purpose. When making a toy with a mechanism, they consider the suitability of the toy to a child's age and taste and how complex they want their toy to be. Lower ability pupils plan well because they use a good framework that helps to guide them.
105. Teaching and learning is good overall. In the three lessons seen it was at least satisfactory with some very good teaching and learning taking place. In the better lessons there is a very good pace and the pupils interests are maintained because of the lively and enthusiastic teaching approach. Practical activities are well chosen to match the wide ability range of the pupils; because of this they are well focused on their tasks. Teaching and learning is less successful when pupils begin to get restless. This is due partly to the level of challenge being a little too high for some pupils in terms of recording outcomes. Examination of teachers' plans, pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The teachers are gaining in confidence to teach the subject. They use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to provide good quality interesting experiences from which the pupils learn well. Good examples of this are when younger pupils design a monster that moves, exploring pneumatic systems to make movement. Teachers consolidate previous learning when they plan for pupils to revisit methods used to join and strengthen materials, such as when considering and assembling three dimension shapes.
106. From talking to pupils it is clear that they enjoy designing and making. Pupils have good working relationships and a sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm. They are given good opportunities to discuss their designs and to present their ideas to others and this supports the development of their speaking and listening skills.
107. Management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator is keen to improve standards further, for example by providing word banks of everyday language and technical vocabulary for the pupils to use. She recognises the need to develop more focused practical activities; links to other subjects; more use of ICT control to make things move in various ways and, when working with tools, the importance of accurate measurement to make quality products. At the last inspection the school was judged to have insufficient resources and tools to support the teaching of the subject. This has now been rectified and the subject is very well resourced to meet the delivery of the curriculum.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108. Attainment of pupils by the age of eleven is similar to that expected for pupils of this age. Evidence was unavailable at the previous inspection for the inspection team to make a judgement of pupils' attainment when they leave the school. From lesson observations during the inspection, looking at the planning and talking to pupils and staff, it is possible to say that standards are in line with expectations. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, so achievement overall is good.
109. Younger pupils learn about the importance of the River Mersey and its use for trading today and in the past. They learn about how rivers flow, becoming familiar with vocabulary such as source, mouth and tributary. Higher ability pupils complete and label correctly diagrams explaining how a river flows and some of the features that they would see if they walked along the riverbank. Pupils in Year 4 use an Ordnance Survey map to plan a route between the Albert Docks and Central Station in Liverpool, using compass directions and degrees. Older pupils in Year 5 learn about erosion, particularly related to coastal features. They describe features of different localities such as bay, cliff and headland and give explanations of how they are formed. The lively pace and interesting teaching involves pupils of all abilities and challenges them to extend their learning. Pupils in Year 6 use globes, poster maps and atlases to identify and plot the route of the clipper ships. This is a good activity and by the end of the lesson the pupils know that the world is divided into hemispheres, that there are five oceans and they can name the continents. Lower achieving pupils need more practice in using the index of an atlas to locate pages and co-ordinates.
110. All work is well matched to the various levels of ability. This enables all pupils to be fully included in all activities. Often two pupils work in partnership as they did when studying coastal erosion. Here they attempt to form cliffs with dry sand and then later with wet sand. They work sensibly together and are keen to describe what they see and to attempt explanations for example 'the dry sand keeps sliding back'.
111. Teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons have a good pace, there is a good focus on learning objectives and resources are well prepared. Where lessons are very good there are clear explanations and interesting practical activities that challenge all pupils. This results, for example, the development of a firm understanding of coastal erosion. Pupils visit Knowsley Park where many geography themes are covered. Comparison is made between the pupils' own environment and the rural environment of the park, the human influence on the environment and the changing face of the farming business. 'Thank you' letters sent to the park guide after the visit are a very good example of formal letter writing. There was little evidence of the use of ICT during the inspection but the very good portfolio of pupils work compiled by the co-ordinator suggests that this is well used. A particularly good example is the research completed about the countries competing in this year's football World Cup.
112. The subject is now more firmly embedded in the curriculum than at the previous inspection. Lessons are now timetabled weekly and this aids continuity and helps lower attaining pupils to retain facts more easily. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of where she sees the subject heading and is keen to develop further the present scheme of work so that planning is more personalised to the schools needs.

## **HISTORY**

113. Attainment of pupils by the age of eleven is similar to that expected for pupils of this age. The previous inspection found that attainment by the age of eleven was broadly in line with expectations. Since the last inspection the re-organisation of the teaching of history to enable it to be taught weekly rather than in blocks has provided a continuous development of skills. Historical events are now taught in a logical sequence which make it easier for pupils to follow and place on a historical time scale. This enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress and represents good achievement.

114. By Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of aspects of the history of Britain and the wider world. They describe some of the main events, people and changes, the reasons for those changes and the effect on peoples lives. For example, they can describe the effect on the people of Liverpool following the blitz of the city during World War II. The use of a video recording of the blitz enables the pupils to obtain first hand evidence of the effect of the air raids. Younger pupils in Year 3 use books to research how life around the Nile was affected by flooding with higher ability pupils able to write a good paragraph. Pupils in Year 4 use a time line to place the Romans and Celts in historical order. They select and record information and then make comparisons between life styles.
115. Because work is adapted to meet all levels of ability, lower achieving pupils perform well and are able to search for information to complete a grid comparing and contrasting Roman and Celtic items. Pupils in Year 5 consider the Tudors and the power of the Monarch. Because of good, open ended questioning by the teacher the pupils are encouraged to respond. They draw on previous knowledge and answer accurately.
116. Throughout the school, teachers are conscious of the need to include all pupils in all activities. All work is carefully set to match all levels of ability with classroom assistants supporting groups well. This enables all pupils to be fully included in all activities. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good, with one or two incidents quickly dealt with by staff who do not allow this behaviour to detract from their teaching. Pupils are encouraged to express opinions and explain their reasoning. In this way the subject makes a good contribution to speaking and listening skills, and to personal development.
117. There are very good opportunities for the pupils to empathise and reflect, in particular with the plight of evacuees during World War II. They reflect on the consequences of war and bombing when they consider the effects on their own city. An unusual slant to this topic is the visit of one lady to the school who was a child in a host family for evacuees. She was able to describe her feelings and the upheaval to her family life when an evacuee family moved in with her family. This provided very good opportunities for the pupils to reflect carefully about the feelings of both parties at this distressing time.
118. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned with work well matched to the various levels of ability, so that all pupils are presented with a good level of challenge. There are good opportunities for discussion and problem solving. In one lesson the teacher is very confident and has good subject knowledge. He very successfully helps the pupils to understand how to contrast and compare Celtic and Roman vases. Sometimes copying out from a worksheet detracts from the overall good quality teaching and learning. Similarly, on occasions, copying out the lesson objective can slow down the written information. Teachers demonstrate good questioning techniques, a good example of this is when the teacher, having first established that the pupils knew what the word transport meant asks, 'what kind of transport would you use on water?' History offers a good opportunity to enhance writing skills and on occasions opportunities to do this are missed. Correction of spellings and also the need for joined writing in older pupils work, is not always seen as a priority. As a result opportunities are missed to draw the pupils' attention to the need to concentrate on these areas of development.
119. The subject has moved forward well since the last inspection and is seen as an important part of the school curriculum. It is well managed by the co-ordinator who has continued to improve resources, including artefacts. There are very good links with other subjects, with many visits from, for example, a theatrical group who work with each year group. During the inspection, a drama specialist working with Year 5 pupils very successfully used drama to enable the pupils to explore the differences in living standards between the rich and the poor in the time of Henry VIII.
120. Information and communication technology is being used increasingly to research information, with a very good example of the use of e-mail demonstrated by Year 6 pupils. When researching for their World War II topic the pupils, with the help of a parent, e-mailed local people who lived through the war to ask them about their war-time experiences.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. The school has continued to make satisfactory improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards are above those found in most other schools nationally. Pupils make good progress and standards overall are good. Year 6 pupils at the end of the key stage have good knowledge of the applications of ICT and they develop good skills in the use of computers.
122. The good attainment by the end of Year 6 is seen in the use of computers for a range of applications linked to other aspects of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils produced information leaflets about their school for pupils about to transfer into Year 3 from the nearby infant school. The quality of this work is of a good standard, using a combination of media to present key information in an interesting way.
123. Teaching in ICT is very good. It is enhanced very well by the high quality of support given from a technician working alongside teachers in the computer suite. Links with a local support network for ICT, Merseygrid for Learning (MGL) further enhance the quality of teaching.
124. Pupils have good keyboard skills and know how to use the computer mouse to combine text and graphics in multimedia presentations such as 'PowerPoint'. They develop slides for a presentation on Spain, linked to topic work they are doing in class. The slides combine a variety of media, including graphics, text and sound. In their title slides, pupils use eye-catching colour and fonts to capture the attention of a potential audience. In a very good lesson where pupils worked on their title slides, the teacher, technician and helper gave pupils the advice they needed to develop their work independently. This independent working enabled pupils to investigate the applications of the software and to try a combination of options to enhance their presentations.
125. The scheme of work is an effective working document which provides a good framework for planning. It successfully underpins a broad and balanced curriculum. By assessing the acquisition of key skills against the content of the scheme of work, teachers successfully build up a good picture of the attainment of pupils. This is an improvement from the last inspection when there was little formal monitoring of the development of ICT skills. The work of the subject leader has had a positive impact on the improvement of ICT. Good investment in resources, the support of a knowledgeable technician and a productive link with the MGL support team has enriched the subject.
126. In some classes, 'stand alone' computers are not used to full advantage. The skills developed in the computer suite are not carried over into work done in the classroom.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

127. The very recent introduction of, and provision for, a foreign language (Spanish) is a good feature of the school's curriculum. The subject is in its first full year. There is no previous evidence, therefore, to indicate what pupils have achieved at the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy the sessions, which begin in Year 5 with a few taster lessons before becoming more formalised in Year 6 where weekly half-hour lessons take place. One of the Year 6 teachers with good Spanish speaking skills ably supports the Spanish teaching assistant who teaches the sessions. The Spanish assistant conducts the lessons well, makes them interesting and briskly paced and involves the pupils actively in short conversations.
128. The Year 6 pupils know the numbers from nought to ten, and can say them backwards. They know how to respond to the question 'What is your name?' and can name others in the third person for example 'Your name is .....'. They can exchange greetings of the time of day and respond to

'How are you?' Pupils pronounce the words well and co-operate enthusiastically in lessons, particularly when the puppet duck 'Kiko' is used to bring interest to the lesson. Pupils volunteer readily to go to the front and engage in short conversations. The pupils operate the puppet in response to Spanish commands such as 'repeto', 'silencio', 'hola', 'escudo'. The school staff support the introduction of the language well through informal methods, such as labels around the classroom, 'el profesor', 'la libreria', 'el escritorio'.

129. Good links have been established with a Spanish primary school. The two schools exchange information about the work each is doing, such as their respective work on the Egyptians.

130. There is an extra-curricular Spanish club for the pupil in Years 3 and 4. This gives good encouragement for pupils to take an interest in the subject early on in the school. Pupils play fun games and sing songs to encourage them to develop an interest in learning Spanish.

## **MUSIC**

131. At the time of the last inspection standards in music were found to be unsatisfactory. They are now in line with those found nationally, and so the school has made good progress in raising standards.

132. The standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. During the time they are in the school pupils are given a wide variety of musical experiences. These include participation in concerts and performances as well as music workshops with the Liverpool Peripatetic music team. Some pupils take part in flute and clarinet groups and others work with a local group of Gospel singers. Pupils have opportunities to listen to music and to complete 'music opinion sheets' in response to such music as 'In the Hall of the Mountain King', by Eduard Grieg. Pupils in Year 3 made their own musical instruments. This gave them good insights into the ways in which sounds can be produced, on tuned and untuned instruments.

133. All aspects of the music curriculum are given appropriate coverage, although there are times when the different classes in the same year group do not receive equal amounts of curriculum time. For example, when the Year 5 pupils are working on a performance with the Gospel singers. Care needs to be taken, so that, over the whole school year, all pupils receive the same amount of curriculum time for music.

134. In assemblies music is sometimes used effectively, but more could be done to use music to create a 'special' atmosphere, where pupils could quietly reflect on issues raised. At present music is not used sufficiently in the day-to-day life of the school to enhance the quality of the learning environment, although recorded music is used well in some classes to establish a calm working atmosphere

135. The subject is effectively managed and the subject leader is very experienced. He has not had opportunities to monitor teaching in other year groups and classes. Resources are well organised and easily accessible. Instruments and other resources enable pupils to experience music from a good variety of world cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

136. Pupils' attainment in physical education is above expectations by age 11 in most aspects of the subject. This is similar to that at the time of the last inspection, and National Curriculum requirements are fulfilled. It was not possible to come to a judgement about pupils' level of swimming attainment because swimming records had not been maintained fully.

137. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in a range of activities including dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. Whilst the school does not have its own field, it compensates by making good use of the playground for games activities. Additionally the school's link with a local secondary school's sports academy and the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities contribute significantly to the good progress that the pupils make. Combined with the good work of the co-ordinator, a specialist teacher from the sports academy provides demonstration lessons for the school and helps to update the school's curriculum. This contributes to improvements in the already good quality of teaching and results in good pupil progress.
138. By age 11 pupils participate in team games with a good sense of position. They develop good skills in gymnastics and execute forward somersaults and other rolling movements to a good standard. Pupils work confidently and develop various interesting ways of moving across large mats. For example they perform star jumps and combine movements together into a smooth sequence. They think of different ways of moving on one foot and one hand. They know the reasons why warming up is an important part of the lesson
139. Overall the quality of teaching is good. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and boys and girls participate equally enthusiastically in lessons. They use their time effectively, co-operate well with others and are keen to do their best. They generally behave well. Teachers set a good example in their own style of dress for lessons. This encourages pupils to be keen to wear the appropriate kit for lessons. Lessons usually proceed at a good pace. Classes are well managed. In the best lessons there is a good demonstration of techniques by teachers. Good use is made of pupils' own demonstrations to refine their technique and improve their performance. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils were taught well to position their feet correctly when throwing and their performance improved as a result. In an unsatisfactory lesson pupils were queuing too long for turns and did not have enough opportunities to practise their skills.
140. In the main good attention is paid to health and safety issues. For example, pupils removed any items of jewellery before lessons. However, not enough attention is paid to ensure the hall is free of unnecessary furniture. Corners of the hall are cluttered, which reduces the overall space in which to move and work.
141. The school participates in a wide range of inter-school sporting activities. This involves a large number of pupils and the school gains a high degree of success. The coordinator is enthusiastic and has very good subject knowledge. He provides a very good role model for the teaching of the subject. He has produced a clear policy and scheme of work based on national recommendations with additional advice to reflect good practice. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. There is a very good provision of small equipment but a more limited variety of large equipment. Because of the very good links with the community and other schools, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development.