

INSPECTION REPORT

FARNBOROUGH ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

Southport

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104863

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Hartshorn

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. H. Cole
3369

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May 2003

Inspection number: 246419

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Farnborough Road Birkdale Southport
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Gregson
Date of previous inspection:	24 th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3369	Mr. M. H. Cole	Registered inspector	Science Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
31718	Mrs. D. Shields	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32704	Mr. P. Barraclough	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education	Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development
29688	Mr. M. Brammer	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	
27568	Mrs. M. Davidson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Physical education	
24052	Mr. T. Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school educates 443 boys and girls aged four to seven in fifteen classes. A further 120 children attend two nursery classes part-time. For a school serving this age range, it is exceptionally large. Overall, there are 17 per cent more boys than girls. The present Year 2 has 31 per cent more boys than girls. Almost all pupils are white British. English is an additional language for about two per cent of pupils, but only a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. Children start at the school with a wide range of attainments but the overall picture is currently of an average level. The social and economic circumstances of parents are quite diverse but overall are average. About one pupil in eight is eligible for free school meals. This is a broadly average proportion but, contrary to the national trend, the proportion has risen in the last three years. This coincides with the enlargement of the school in the last three years (from four to five classes in each year group) and the recruitment of pupils from a wider area. At the same time there are more pronounced fluctuations from year to year in the attainment of pupils on starting at the school and in the level of special educational needs amongst pupils. Currently, an average proportion of pupils is identified as having special educational needs and there is a wide range of needs, including speech and language, general learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although only one pupil (a low proportion) currently has a statement of their special needs, the number of other pupils with significant levels of need requiring support from external agencies is considerable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Good teaching is helping pupils to achieve well in their work, to develop good attitudes and to behave well. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school overcomes very well the challenge of caring for an unusually large number of young pupils through its everyday routines. The promotion of long-term school improvement is a weakness. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well. Standards in information and communication technology and in art and design are above those expected for pupils' ages. In several subjects Year 1 pupils are doing better than expected for their age.
- Pupils have positive attitudes, behave well and make good relationships.
- The teaching is of good quality and includes very good arrangements for homework to support learning.
- There is a good range and quality of opportunities for learning, which includes good provisions for pupils' moral and cultural development and very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The management of the school is very successful in organising the day-to-day life of the school and in ensuring very good personal support and guidance for the very large number of pupils.
- Parents feel very positively about the school and there is a very good partnership between school and parents.

What could be improved

- Checks on the effectiveness of the school's work, especially the teaching, are not sufficiently rigorous.
- Planning for school improvement is insufficiently based on evaluation of the school's performance, lacks a sufficiently clear and long-term strategic view and receives too little consideration by the governing body.
- Too little is done to encourage and enable pupils to become independent, especially in their learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in November 1997. It continues to perform well in areas of strength. Allowing for fluctuations from year to year, standards of work have been maintained. Much of the school's time in recent years has been taken up with major changes in organisation. The teaching and curriculum have been radically revised to bring the school into

line with the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, and for the curriculum for pupils under five. Compliance with the national initiative to cut infant class sizes and extension of the school to include an additional class in each year-group has meant substantial changes and additions to the accommodation. All of these organisational changes have been accomplished successfully. In contrast, the picture of improvement in relation to recommendations made at the previous inspection is mixed. Sound improvement has taken place in improving pupils' mental mathematics and writing, in providing more challenge for more able pupils, in communicating with parents and in appraising staff performance. Progress in relation to timing of music lessons and provision for collective worship has been only partial. In particular, there has been too little progress in increasing the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators in evaluating teaching and learning in their subjects. This goes together with insufficient progress in strategic planning for school improvement. These remain vital areas for development if the school is to increase its capacity for improvement which at present is no more than satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools ¹
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	C	C	C
writing	C	C	C	C
mathematics	A	B	C	C

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

¹ Similar schools are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

In the tests of all recent years the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the National Curriculum level of attainment (level 2) expected at their age has reached or exceeded 90 per cent. Variations in the grades shown above reflect small changes in the proportions of pupils who have either exceeded or fallen short of level 2. In 2002 the proportion exceeding level 2 was a little lower than nationally, while the proportion falling short was a little higher, reflecting a significant level of special educational needs within the year-group. During the present school year the school has been focusing on raising standards in reading and writing and paying particular attention to challenging the more able pupils. Provisional results for the 2003 reading tests taken days before the inspection show a considerable rise in the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the higher level 3. Inspectors' observations and the teachers' formal assessments also show more pupils than before achieving the higher level 3 in writing. However, a year-on-year increase in the level of special educational needs means that the proportion of Year 2 pupils not achieving the expected level 2 has also risen. A further influence is the predominance of 'summer-born' pupils so that pupils are younger than average for their year-group. The overall picture from work seen during the inspection is that the oldest pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics continue to match the national standard, as recent test results suggest. This is also the case in all other subjects except information and communication technology and art and design; here standards exceed the level expected for pupils aged seven.

With teachers' improved attention to challenging more able pupils, pupils of all abilities are now achieving well in relation to their previous attainment. This is true regardless of pupils' gender or background. Pupils with special educational needs receive much support and mostly make good progress, though a small minority of Year 2 pupils make less progress than they could because of behavioural difficulties. Pupils generally respond well to the appropriate challenges teachers set. This is especially apparent in Year 1 where many pupils are progressing well and exceeding the attainment expected for their age. In the nursery and reception classes most children are on track to achieve, by the end of the reception year, the early learning goals set for communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children are likely to exceed the goals for their creative development. Although the children achieve

well in many areas, the inadequate reception class accommodation and outdoor learning resources hinder provisions for some aspects of their physical development and more practical areas of their learning. The children's overall achievement in these early years is therefore judged satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like school, most show interest in their work and a good number join keenly in activities outside of lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The great majority of pupils behave well in classrooms and behaviour around the school and in the playground is satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make good relationships and show respect for others. They show satisfactory levels of responsibility and independence. A few pupils have difficulty working and behaving in lessons without constant supervision.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is typical for an infant school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teachers have a good understanding of their subjects. Lessons are well planned, making good use of national guidelines, and show a clear sense of what pupils are to learn. In each year group teachers plan closely together so that pupils have similar opportunity regardless of the class they are in. Most subjects, including English and mathematics, are well taught. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy, are well taught both through lessons dedicated to this work and through contributions from work across the curriculum. Throughout the school, teachers provide tasks that, with occasional exceptions in mathematics, are well adapted to the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs. There is good co-operation between teachers and classroom assistants to provide for any pupils' special educational needs and to give extra help where pupils need it. Teachers make lessons interesting and they expect pupils to work and behave well. As a result pupils respond well, showing interest, concentrating on their work and making a good effort to succeed. However, teachers give pupils too little encouragement and guidance for them to develop good habits of working by themselves. Teachers make very good, imaginative and systematic use of homework to extend pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well supported by learning opportunities outside lessons and by very good links with the community and partner schools. Personal, social and health education is good. The school strives conscientiously to see all pupils have equal opportunities to learn.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The identification of pupils' needs and the design and provision of programmes of support are all very thorough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils concerned are soundly supported.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with particular strength in the provisions for moral and cultural development. Provisions for spiritual and social development are satisfactory overall, showing some good features but also some missed opportunities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care of pupils benefits from the school's very caring ethos and its very good links with parents. Much trouble is taken to keep an eye on pupils' personal development and give support where needed. Despite the very large numbers, the school understands and meets pupils' needs well. Some statutory procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are not properly formalised. Procedures for encouraging and checking on attendance are not rigorous enough.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads a hard-working team of staff with a strong personal example of commitment to caring for the full range of needs of the very many pupils. Planning and organisation of the day-to-day life of the school is very effective. The school has responded successfully to nationally imposed change but its own longer-term strategic planning for school self-improvement is a weakness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Some individual governors fulfil their responsibilities well in relation to particular areas of the school's work but the governing body's procedures for supporting planning for improvement and for keeping a check on the school's performance are not sufficiently rigorous.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Checks on teaching and learning are not thorough enough to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses as a basis for properly focused planning for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial planning shows awareness of the need to obtain best value from available funds, management of funds is efficient, and the resources acquired are soundly used. Resources of staff and of books and equipment for learning are adequate. The cramped accommodation is unsatisfactory, hindering work in a number of subjects and in teaching of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>That their children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like school and make good progress • behave well at school • become more mature and responsible <p>That the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well led and managed • provides good teaching and expects pupils to work hard • is approachable with questions or problems and works closely with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small proportion of parents would like more information on their children's progress. • A significant number of parents completing the questionnaire did not think the school provided an interesting range of activities outside lessons. <i>(Parents expressing these views were mostly those with the youngest children for whom schools do not generally make regular provision.)</i>

Inspectors' findings generally support the positive views of parents. Inspectors agree there is some room for improvement in written reports on progress but consider these at least satisfactory. They note that the school makes a good effort to inform parents in other ways such as through parent-teacher consultations. Inspectors judge the provision of activities outside lessons to be good for an infant school. They also note that every pupil from the Reception classes to Year 2 normally takes part in mounting a substantial musical and dramatic performance for parents twice each year, with separate performances for each year-group.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2)

1. The work of the oldest pupils (Year 2) seen during the inspection shows that standards in the main subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science are in line with the national standard. This is similar to the picture from by the 2002 National Curriculum test results. These are similar findings to those reported at the previous inspection. However, comparisons over time, including those derived from past test results, must be treated with some caution in view of a change in the school over the last three years as it has begun to draw pupils from a wider area and from more varied backgrounds. This has led to more significant fluctuations from year to year in pupils' attainment when they enter the school, and in the proportion of them exhibiting special educational needs. The range and severity of those needs has also increased. These are all marginal changes but they are sufficient to have some impact on the overall profile of pupils' attainment.
2. It should also be noted that the present Year 2, on whose work judgements of the school's standards are mainly based, differs from previous year groups. Attainment on entry to the school was lower and the level of special educational needs higher than usual for the school. Also, more pupils than expected were born in the summer months and are therefore young for their year group. As a consequence of these factors the range of attainment shown by the Year 2 pupils is wide. Despite the lower overall ability of the group and their special educational needs, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher level 3 of attainment in reading and writing is significantly better than in the previous year and compares favourably with last year's national average. This reflects the school's success in challenging and supporting pupils' achievement of the higher attainment levels in reading and writing, a focus for school improvement over the past year. On the other hand, a greater proportion of pupils fall short of the expected level 2 of attainment, in most cases because of their significant level of special educational needs.
3. In both English and mathematics, standards are satisfactory in all aspects of the subjects. The proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in mathematics is not quite as good as in last year's tests. This reflects the lower profile of ability in the year group and the fact that teaching in this subject has not made the same progress as in English in challenging the most able.
4. The standards achieved by Year 2 pupils in all other subjects at least meets the national expectations for pupils' aged seven, or the local expectations for religious education. However, in art and design and in information and communication technology (ICT) standards exceed the expected level. In art and design pupils apply a good range of skills to good effect as they respond keenly to the stimulating themes presented by the good teaching. In ICT pupils show a good understanding and competence in using a wide range of computer programs with impressive independence.
5. Inspectors found a marked difference between Year 2 and Year 1 pupils in the standards achieved in relation to their ages. The Year 1 group included far fewer pupils of low earlier attainment and with special educational needs and it showed a better balance in terms of gender and age. This year group appears to resemble in profile those more regularly recruited by the school in past years. More Year 1 pupils than expected are exceeding the attainment expected for their age, often showing the attainment normally expected in Year 2 and occasionally even beyond. Very few Year 1 pupils fall short of the expected attainment.
6. Taking account of their attainment on starting in Year 1, both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are

currently achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly making good progress against the individual targets set for them. Pupils' sound achievement reflects teaching that, following recent developments, is now more successfully challenging the full range of abilities. It also reflects the sensible and co-operative way the great majority of pupils tackle the appropriate tasks they are set within the well-organised curriculum. Pupils achieve soundly regardless of gender, cultural or linguistic background, or ability level. This reflects the school's good commitment and conscientious approach to ensuring all have equal opportunities to learn which are relevant to their individual needs.

Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes)

7. Overall, pupils in both nursery and reception classes achieve satisfactorily at this stage of their schooling, although achievement is good in some specific areas. The great majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals in mathematical development by the end of their reception year. More children than expected are on track to exceed the early learning goals in the area of creative development. In other areas, pupils achieve satisfactorily, so that most will attain the levels expected in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the area of communication, language and literacy, achievement is mixed, with good progress being made in reading and satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. However, in writing more children than might be expected are falling short of the early learning goals for this skill at the end of the reception year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good overall and reflect a well ordered school community. Almost all parents feel that their children enjoy school and behave well, although a few are concerned about the lack of adequate play area for the large numbers of pupils. The overall positive picture is similar to that at the previous inspection.
9. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good. Where teaching was particularly effective, pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions and listen attentively to their classmates. In some classes pupils also volunteer information and make active contributions to the lesson. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, a pupil was able to suggest what information could be gathered from a block graph that he and his partner had created. Pupils in a Year 2 class were absorbed by another pupil's description of her christening – carried out by her grandfather. In this case pupils not only learned about the significance of christening ceremonies in the Christian church, but also demonstrated their respect for (and some wonder at) the pupil's experience. Pupils co-operate well when working in pairs and groups, sharing their ideas and resources to good effect. The pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school and respond well to planned activities that meet their needs.
10. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is good. Teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils' behaviour that are reinforced by classroom codes of conduct, and the use of strategies such as 'golden time' to reward good behaviour. Where the teaching is less effective pupils can lose interest and a few pupils do not pay attention or chatter inappropriately in lessons and sometimes during assemblies. Teachers ensure that pupils behave satisfactorily when moving along the confined spaces of the corridors, and when playing. Some boisterous behaviour was seen during break times, a consequence of the limitations of the school's hard surface play area, and the lack of outdoor play equipment and games led or encouraged by adults. No bullying was seen during the inspection, and pupils were clear about what to do should it occur. There were no exclusions of pupils in the last school year; this year there has been one permanent exclusion following application of proper procedures.
11. Pupils' personal development is sound. They make good relationships, regardless of differences in gender or background. Pupils work together well, co-operating with each other in group tasks and

sharing equipment amicably. The teachers provide a good role model, demonstrating respect for pupils and their views. Most parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils learn to understand the impact of their actions on others and reflect sensitively on ways in which they can affect others' feelings. However, whilst some pupils are given responsibilities for classroom duties and delivering registers to the office, the opportunities to take on and demonstrate responsibility for themselves and others are limited.

12. Attendance rates have fluctuated over the last three years; currently rates are roughly the same as those of other infant schools. Since the time of the previous inspection, however, the schools rates have declined by almost one per cent. Although the school monitors requests for holiday during term time it does not sufficiently analyse the overall reasons why pupils do not attend. Records show that a small but significant number of families take holiday during term time. Most pupils arrive at school on time; nevertheless a few families do not ensure that their children are punctual. This puts pupils at a disadvantage because they miss the introduction to their lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching in the school is good. Two-thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection were of at least good quality; this included one lesson in eight that was considered very good. The remaining one-third of lessons was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. In all parts of the school the majority of lessons are good, but the proportion is higher in the nursery and Year 1 classes than in the other year groups. The overall good quality of teaching reported at the previous inspection has been maintained. However, the level of challenge presented to the more able pupils has improved, especially in reading and writing, and provision of homework is now a significant strength.
14. Teaching at the **Foundation Stage** - the nursery and reception classes - is good. It is consistently good in the nursery, where teachers plan expertly to maintain a good balance between adult-focused tasks and those selected by the children. They are very well supported by their nursery nurses, who contribute significantly to the quality of the learning environment. In the reception classes, too, teachers are ably supported by nursery nurses, who take an appropriate teaching role, particularly with small groups of children. The good management of children is particularly noticeable in the nursery, where very good use is made of inside space. Children learn to tidy up tools and work in particular ways in the special areas. For example, the cutting area has well organised resources and marked places to store scissors and glue. In the reception classes, children learn best when working with an adult. Good questioning in class sessions enables all children to participate. Teachers ask questions of varying difficulty, aimed at particular children, so that some can contribute rhyming words and others practice initial sounds with Mr Bat, the puppet. Good questioning from nursery nurses assists children in their construction of animal masks, developing collage and painting skills.
15. Although a good balance of activities is maintained in the nursery, not all reception teachers plan consistently well for structured play activities. Occasionally child-selected activities, the quality of which is often constrained by the size of the classroom, do not link effectively to the topic being taught or provide sufficient challenge to engage interest and independence in learning. Occasionally during these sessions, children become noisy and are distracted from their tasks. In the best lessons however, structured play tasks are well designed and link effectively to the main topic of the lesson. They engage children's interest, for example the role-play area, 'in the jungle', allowed explorers to search for animals, use binoculars to track them and to dress appropriately for their safari. In these lessons good organisation ensures that all children have access to a variety of activities, and engagement with construction toys and sand is not just aimless play, but has a purpose.
16. Teaching in **Years 1 and 2** is also good. Teaching in most subjects, including the priority subjects

of English, mathematics and science, is good. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. This is achieved by a systematic approach that makes good use of the guidance from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in lessons dedicated to this work. It is also soundly supported by the provision of opportunities to practise and develop basic skills in other lessons. In several subjects pupils have good opportunities to write about their studies, enhancing literacy skills. At other times, such as science lessons, they are encouraged to apply mathematical skills as when they record science observations in tables, Venn or Carroll diagrams or simple block graphs.

17. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects of the curriculum which enables them to plan lessons well so that they have a clear sense of what pupils are to learn. This leads to clear explanations and demonstrations and effective questioning of pupils to draw out their understanding check their progress and reinforce key points. Planning benefits from the close co-operation of the five teachers in each year group and the support of subject co-ordinators. Combining individuals' expertise promotes consistently good quality in planning.
18. Careful planning also means that, with occasional exceptions in mathematics, tasks presented to pupils are well adapted to the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs. This is also made possible by the sound processes teachers use to mark work and keep a check on the day-to-day progress of each pupil. Appropriate tasks and the good co-operation between teachers and learning support assistants in giving extra help where necessary mean that all pupils are able to make good progress in the majority of lessons. Learning support assistants give good help to pupils with special educational needs. During whole class discussions they often reinforce the point the teacher is making to further learning and to enable pupils to take a fuller part in the lesson. They also work effectively alongside pupils when they are writing to guide and support them. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is particularly evident when pupils work in small groups, sometimes outside the classroom, on particular programmes to meet their needs. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language are also well supported.
19. Following a recommendation at the previous inspection the school has raised the level of challenge in tasks set for more able pupils. The success of this is apparent in the recently improving proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 of attainment in the National Curriculum by the end of Year 2. A sound strategy for supporting a small number of pupils of high ability has been under development but has yet to be fully implemented. An example of good practice seen, an able pupil's class teacher set challenging individual targets when marking the pupil's literacy book and made special homework provision.
20. Teachers make lessons interesting, expect pupils to work and behave well and they use sometimes use praise and reward effectively to give general encouragement to pupils. As a result the great majority of pupils respond well, showing interest, concentrating on their work and making a good effort to succeed. During whole-class teaching almost all pupils are attentive to the teacher and a good many respond keenly to opportunities to answer questions and join in discussion. The great majority also get on with their work well when working by themselves or in groups. Pupils generally co-operate well with each other and share books and equipment amicably in group activity.
21. On occasions when some pupils make less progress than they might, it is generally because these pupils have difficulty in maintaining interest in and concentration on a task when not directly supervised by an adult. This is particularly the case with a number of boys in Year 2 whose attitudes and behaviour are immature compared with others and who sometimes seek the attention silly behaviour brings. In some cases these pupils are younger than most in the year group and in other cases they have identified special educational needs in relation to learning and/or emotional and behavioural matters. Teachers persevere in their insistence on good work and behaviour and they use some appropriate behaviour management strategies focused on difficult pupils. Despite this, a few pupils do waste time when they are supposed to be working by themselves and

occasionally they distract others. Throughout the school, teachers' strategies for encouraging and rewarding pupils' ability to work independently are less effective than the other aspects of their teaching. Teachers do not set clear enough targets for attainment and behaviour during independent work and do not reinforce their expectations through full enough use of reward. As a result a good many pupils are not as good as they could be at getting on with their own work and solving their own problems, and the minority of pupils who find independence hard to handle have especial difficulty in knowing how to work and behave well.

22. Teachers make very good, imaginative and systematic use of homework to extend pupils' learning. This is a shining and commendable strength of the teaching. Although a very small number of parents thought there was too much homework, the proportion of parents showing approval in their questionnaire responses was very high. A good range of homework tasks appropriate to pupils' ages is suggested and they support learning in a wide range of curriculum areas. There is a clear system, including holiday tasks, which is well understood by parents. Pupils' homework books have become a valuable channel of day-to-day communication between teachers and parents.

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

23. The overall quality and range of opportunities for learning offered by the school is good. There are satisfactory provisions for the Foundation Stage curriculum in the nursery and reception classes and for the National Curriculum in Years 1 and 2. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is also followed. These basic elements are supported by good additional opportunities through personal, social and health education, through good activities outside lessons and through very good links with the community and partner schools. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good - a clear strength of the school.
24. The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned satisfactorily in the six areas of learning. In the nursery the team of practitioners contributes effectively to each planning stage and adapts activities for specific children. In the reception year there is good evidence of similar learning objectives being taught in each class. At present the use of the outside area is not fully exploited and this is an area for development for both age groups in the Foundation Stage. At present in the nursery, the timetable does not ensure that all children have adequate time to use the outside area as an extension of the classroom and play times are sometimes crowded. In reception, there is no equivalent equipment for climbing and balancing, and the outside area is not sufficiently inviting, at present, to provide a complete outside learning environment.
25. The National Curriculum is presented in a broad, balanced and relevant way. This is similar provision to that at the time of the previous inspection. Long-term curriculum planning is good overall and provides a sound basis for teachers to plan lessons that effectively provide the continuous and progressive learning opportunities that are helping to maintain standards. Teachers in each year group work closely together to plan each week's lessons ensuring that pupils have similar learning opportunities regardless of the class they are in.
26. The school has effective strategies for planning and teaching literacy and numeracy. Teachers' plans make good use of the guidance given by the national strategies for teaching in these areas. The literacy strategy works well, good planning ensuring that pupils develop their literacy skills across many subjects. For example, they practice their writing and punctuation in history, geography and religious education. Speaking skills are also planned across many subjects. Overall, the numeracy strategy is working satisfactorily; skills of mental calculation are being well promoted but not enough attention is paid to investigation and problem solving.
27. The school works well to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum: to learning opportunities that match their needs, and to activities outside lessons. The provision for the pupils

with special educational needs is very good. The individual education plans written for them are well devised to develop their learning in small steps and help them to make good progress. Where pupils are finding difficulty the school uses a range of special programmes of intensive individual or small group support, especially in relation to language and communication difficulties, and including a 'Mathematics Recovery' programme for those finding difficulty with numeracy. Pupils with medical problems receive very good support.

28. Within sound provision for the most able pupils, a register of a small number of pupils of high ability has been established, staff training in provision for these pupils undertaken and individual education plans for the pupils written. These are valuable developments but implementation of the policy is not yet complete.
29. The school gives sound and sensitive support to a very small number of pupils who are at a relatively early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. This is helping these pupils to make sound progress both in English and across the curriculum.
30. For an infant school, the provision of activities outside lessons to enhance the formal curriculum is good. A good example of such activities is the 'Internet Café' where both pupils and parents are actively involved in developing their IT skills together. Many Year 2 pupils attend a lunchtime recorder club. A feature of the school each Christmas and summer is the presentation of extensive year group musical and dramatic productions for parents in which every pupil participates. These are of a very good standard and are admired by parents.
31. The school has very good links with the local community, business and commerce. It participates in a range of local community events, for instance the Ainsdale show and local dance festival. Members of the local community were involved in the schools "buy a brick" fund raising initiative. Local and national businesses also support the school; for example' donations were made towards the development of parts of the school grounds. The nearby and wider localities are very well used to support the curriculum and pupils have the chance to undertake visits to many places of interest, such as Windmill Farm. A very good range of visitors also broadens pupils' curricular experiences. Pupils' self esteem, confidence and overall personal development are considerably enhanced because of the wide range of opportunities that they are able to take part in.
32. In addition, the school's relationship with its partner institutions is very good, particularly with the junior school. Here there are very close links and liaison on a broad range of common issues. The very good transition programme ensures that pupils soon settle into new school life when they transfer at the age of seven. The school gives good support to trainee support staff and work experience pupils (most of whom are ex-pupils of the school); they all speak very highly of the support they receive during their placements. There are no links with initial teacher training establishments.
33. Provision for personal, social and health education including drugs and sex education is good. Visitors such as a representative of the local road safety team and members of charitable organisations support the provision. Many opportunities are taken to discuss individual and group difficulties, and this has a positive impact on the good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils across the school. Good provision for circle time, when pupils are able to take turns to discuss personal feelings and problems, fosters pupils' awareness of personal and moral issues and help them develop empathy with their peers.
34. Overall the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and remains a strength of the school. The school gives considerable attention to the personal development of its pupils within the context of an orderly and caring community, and this makes a significant contribution to the achievement of most of the school's stated aims.
35. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is most successfully developed in lessons across the curriculum, as the result of good quality teaching. For example, pupils in a Year 2

class, studying the symbolic significance of water in Christianity, demonstrate a respect for, and are absorbed by, the photographs of a pupil's own christening and that of her mother. Teachers make effective use of resources, such as a collection of African artefacts, to generate pupils' interest and empathy, and then, through skilful questioning, lead pupils to reflect on the complex pattern of living things. This thoughtfulness is evident in pupils' artwork, and this subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. However, the spiritual development of pupils is not consistently achieved through collective worship. Although regular and planned, acts of worship do not sufficiently involve pupils or provide them with the opportunities for quiet thought and reflection about the stories heard or events described in them.

36. Good provision is made for pupils' moral development. This is underpinned by the work of all staff in reinforcing standards of behaviour in classes, and through opportunities during 'circle time' that help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong. Pupils in each class discuss simple 'rules' for a code of conduct, which is then prominently displayed. In a Year 2 class pupils were discussing examples from their own experience, of the difference between right and wrong. The teacher recorded their suggestions inside a life-sized silhouette, to distinguish internal feelings and outward behaviour. This helped the pupils very effectively to understand the need to think about their own behaviour in a positive way.
37. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. It is strongest in lessons, where teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together, and where they are able to direct and monitor the work of the pupils. In the best lessons pupils co-operate well. They share resources, discuss their work and listen to their classmates. Pupils in a design and technology lesson in Year 1 worked well in pairs to build a house using construction equipment. Groups of Year 2 pupils discussed their work on creating simple block graphs and pooled the materials available co-operatively to enable everyone to complete their task. Circle time and assemblies focus on themes such as the need to co-operate. In some instances the constraints of the building and play areas provide little opportunity for the social development of pupils. Movement about the building, including timetabled visits to the toilet by reception pupils, is closely controlled reducing the scope for pupils to show independence. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to take responsibility for themselves and their school community, and develop independence, for the school to achieve fully its declared aims in this area.
38. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. Through lessons in history, geography, religious education, dance, art and music pupils learn about a range of customs, traditions and styles of life and expression. This is supplemented by visits made to places of local interest such as Southport Art Gallery and Museum and Croxteth Hall, and by visitors into the school, such as the 'Didgeridoo Man' representing Aboriginal culture and exponents of the Gamelan music of Indonesia. Pupils develop a greater awareness of the wider world, and learn about other cultures, through the use made of resources available to the school. Chinese music was played to Year 2 pupils as they entered a music lesson, and a collection of African artefacts gave pupils an insight into the importance of pattern in African culture, art and traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. There are very good arrangements for the day-to-day pastoral support of the pupils. This is an area of strong commitment on the part of the headteacher which is well expressed through the caring relationships she and her staff make with pupils and the close links they maintain with parents. Formal procedures to ensure pupils' welfare are often good but include some aspects in need of improvement. The quality of provision in most, but not all, areas has been sustained since the time of the previous inspection.
40. The headteacher, who knows every pupil by name, ensures that they are all made to feel valued and special in this friendly school. In addition the secretarial staff, classroom assistants and mid-

day supervisors as well as teachers all play a significant part in the success of this aspect of the school's work. Personal development is monitored and supported very well. Information about pupils is shared regularly. Written records are kept that enable teachers to support discreetly those individual pupils who might need additional help and support. Where problems are identified, for example, if a pupil is unhappy or wants to talk to a teacher, staff make time to listen to them. This high quality support gives boys and girls of all ages the confidence to seek help if they should need it and enables them to develop in confidence and self esteem. Pupils say they feel safe, secure and well cared for at school. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support for their academic performance and their personal development. Their needs are identified at an early stage and their individual education plans are well focused.

41. Procedures relating to child protection and to the support of those pupils who are in public care are satisfactory. The designated person has detailed knowledge of local practice. Any issues or concerns, where they are known, are dealt with extremely sensitively. Arrangements, however, are not always made explicitly clear and known to all staff. For instance, there is no written child protection policy, as guidelines suggest, drawn up and approved by the governing body. The staff handbook does not identify the designated person to whom concerns should be taken and some staff are unclear about this. Not all staff have received recent update training.
42. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory; the governing body monitors both these areas well. Systems to ensure the safety and security of pupils on the school site are good. Governors have spent much time and effort trying to improve this aspect, especially in relation to cars entering the school car park at the start and end of the school day. Despite their efforts and the vigilance of school staff, cars and delivery vans still occasionally create danger on the school site and this is a continuing concern to a number of parents.
43. Some safety arrangements are too informal, for instance, those that relate to assessment of risks during school visits. The current health and safety policy is outdated and is not specific to the school and the age of the pupils. A number of minor health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of the headteacher and governing body during the inspection. The medical and welfare needs of pupils are very well catered for, including the provision of a specific medical room, and a suitable number of staff members who are trained in first aid and therefore able to deal with accidents or injury should they occur. The school has a very good working relationship with a wide range of health professionals so that there is ready access to expert advice should it be required.
44. Outside, the space available for play is extremely small. There is an adequate number of adults on duty at lunchtime and pupils are generally well supported by the mid-day supervisors. There are, however, too many instances when supervision is not sufficiently constructive or preventive. Neither constructive play nor games are sufficiently encouraged. As a result pupils' behaviour is sometimes boisterous and inconsiderate in the restricted space available.
45. The headteacher is well aware of those pupils who have the poorest attendance and do not attend school regularly or on time, she liaises closely with the local education welfare officer regarding several pupils. The administration officer responsible for the computerised attendance system has good systems to update records and to produce reports for class teachers so that they may follow up why a pupil has been absent. In practice, though, attendance is not sufficiently monitored or analysed with the exception of holidays taken during term time. Because staff have not received suitable training, insufficient use is made of the computerised attendance system to track overall attendance rates or those of particular classes or individuals. In addition, attendance is not sufficiently promoted across the school to raise some families' awareness of the need for their children to attend school regularly. There is no provision for rewards, for instance, to encourage an improvement in punctuality.
46. During religious education lessons, circle time and assemblies, emphasis is placed on friendship

and good relationships and pupils are very aware of issues such as bullying and tolerance of others. Pupils confirm that they would speak to an adult if they were unhappy. They are fully aware of the school's Golden Rules and that punishment has to sometimes be used. The loss of Golden Time, if they do not work hard or behave as well as they should, is accepted, albeit reluctantly! Since the previous inspection, the behaviour and discipline policy has been reviewed so that there is now a greater emphasis on encouraging self-discipline and on rewarding appropriate behaviour, effort and achievement. However, as yet there has been no monitoring of classroom practice to ensure that there is consistency across the school. There are a few pupils who have great difficulty controlling their behaviour. They are well supported by the provision of individual behaviour plans, which are agreed and regularly reviewed with their parents. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not always manage these pupils effectively or apply behaviour expectations as laid down in these individual plans.

47. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Teachers keep a wealth of data on the progress made by children in the Foundation Stage. Record sheets are maintained while adults work with small groups of children and well planned observations take place, leading to the efficient maintenance of the local authority Foundation Stage record which will later extend to the Foundation Stage profile at the end of the reception year. From these observations, targets are set. Teachers and nursery nurses observe children's behaviour and are adept at monitoring their progress in personal, social and emotional development. However, at present, despite ability groups being identified for communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development, the data collected is not consistently used to identify next steps for learning and to provide challenging tasks.
48. In Years 1 and 2 teachers make assessments of pupils' progress in most subjects at the end of teaching units, except in physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. In English, particularly, examples of writing are regularly assessed and the levels of attainment are carefully checked. Teachers mark satisfactorily. There is good practice when older pupils' work in English is marked with reference to the learning objectives shared with the pupils. Work is usually well annotated, describing the circumstances under which it was carried out.
49. Teachers regularly evaluate their teaching and the success of curriculum planning and related pupils' work. These general evaluations are used satisfactorily, to feed back into the next round of planning, to make necessary adaptations and to identify pupils in need of extra help. Analyses of pupils' test results are also used in this way. From the end of the reception year continuing observations of pupils' progress are also used to share with pupils targets for learning in literacy and. However, some pupils do not know what their targets are or mean.
50. There is good practice in assessment in reading where pupils' progress is carefully tracked against predictions. In science and in information and communication technology there is some sound assessment of progress but the data is not collated and used effectively to identify gaps in learning and to specify the next steps required to ensure the best progress of individuals and groups. The use of assessment to make predictions for pupils' progress from year to year, though part of the school's planning, is not yet consistently in place across the school or curriculum. This is a weakness in the school's procedures for setting itself goals and evaluating its own success.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents have very positive views about all that the school does for their children. A very effective partnership has been established between parents and the headteacher and her staff. It enables parents to contribute very well to their children's learning and is a strength of the school. These findings represent an improvement on those of the previous inspection.

52. At the meeting with parents before the inspection, and in parents' response to the questionnaires, virtually no dissatisfaction was expressed. Parents feel able to approach the school if they have concerns and are happy that they are quickly resolved. They consider themselves to be involved in school life and therefore able to contribute their views if the school is planning to review its practice. For instance, the school has sought parents' views about a possible change to the school uniform and about the development of the school grounds, incorporating their suggestions in the final decisions made.
53. Because of the very good partnership the school has established, parents support the school in many ways. Their help is much appreciated by the school which organise an end of year "thank you" event for them. A significant number help with classroom activities and the help they provide has a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve. They also help with other activities such as school visits, and have helped to build the school pond and amphitheatre. The parent and teacher association (PTA) raises significant sums of money that benefit the school, such as funding towards the recent building of the new resources centre. The work that children have to do at home is also very well supported by parents. For instance records show that they regularly hear their children read, even from the earliest days in the nursery; this has a positive impact on the standards their children achieve. They also support other aspects of their children's work, for example, by making costumes for them to wear during world book day, or by attending the school's Science Day or the Internet Café.
54. The nursery teachers establish very good relationships with parents. Parents are fully involved in helping to settle their children when they start in the nursery or reception class. This ensures that the transition to school life is smooth and pupils usually settle quickly into the routines. Every day each teacher greets children and carers on arrival at school and is thus available for informal or urgent discussions. Throughout the Foundation Stage there are many well planned and regular opportunities for parents and carers to discuss progress with teachers and to attend curriculum evenings to learn about literacy and numeracy. Parents and friends are welcomed into classes to help and many of them contribute significantly to the support of activities in the classroom. Books are sent home to be shared and detailed reading records, which act as messages between home and school, are well maintained. In the nursery and reception classrooms informative lists of what is being taught are posted on the noticeboard, so that parents and carers understand the topics of study for each half term.
55. Relations with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. Parents are invited to meetings at which the pupils' progress is discussed, and almost all attend. The pupils' individual education plans are signed by both parents and the pupils. The school has organised meetings for parents of pupils undertaking special programmes to help them to support their children. It has also arranged parenting courses for more general support. Parents of pupils with special educational needs also support the work their children do at home very well, some often borrowing the "buddy bags" that provide for additional games and work.
56. The information provided for parents is good overall. Day-to-day communication is extremely good and has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and other adults who work in the school are available to talk to parents both at the start and end of the school day. As there are large numbers of pupils in the school a "door message system" operates each morning; this contributes to the very effective communication system and means that questions and concerns are quickly dealt with. Letters are very regular and sent in good time. Newsletters keep parents informed about school life and teachers provide parents with regular information each term about what their children will be learning. The reading diaries and homework books for pupils ensure that parents know when and what their children are expected to do at home, but are also used as a means of communication with home. There is a very wide range of information booklets and meetings that keep parents fully up to date with ways to support their children. Regular formal opportunities for parents to meet and talk to teachers are also planned throughout the year. Because of the limited accommodation available, it is difficult for

discussion with teachers to take place in private. However, if there is a need to discuss confidential information alternative arrangements are always offered.

57. Annual reports giving detail of children's progress are variable in quality but satisfactory overall. Nursery reports are very good and provide a very clear commentary about how children have settled and what their main strengths and weaknesses are. However, they do not indicate targets for improvement that would inform parents how they might help their children to improve. Other reports do not always clearly reflect individual pupils' strengths or areas needing improvement. Some provide parents with a good picture of the progress their children have made during the year, but not all. There are several instances when the emphasis is more on the pupil's attitude to a subject, and on what topics have been covered, than on progress. Educational jargon is sometimes used that may not be familiar to all parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management of the school display a mixture of significant strengths and some unsatisfactory aspects; overall they are satisfactory. Apart from the much improved arrangements for formal appraisal of teachers' performance, the picture of leadership and management is largely similar to that painted in the previous inspection report. Positive features have been maintained but some weaknesses continue to apply.
59. The headteacher leads the school with an energetic commitment to meeting the full range of needs of all of the very many young pupils in her care. Her strong personal example is well supported by her deputy and other colleagues in a hard-working staff. Personal endeavour is backed up with good day-to-day systems to ensure every pupil's needs are well understood and well supported. Parents applaud the high level of care shown to pupils and value their very good relations with the school. This is reflected in the fact that every parent expressing a view in the pre-inspection questionnaire considered the school to be well led and managed. Some parents express surprise and admiration at the headteacher's apparent ability to know every pupil personally and of the whole school's success in knowing and treating every pupil as an individual. The school surmounts impressively the considerable challenge of maintaining the personal and human touch with young children while dealing with over 550 of them.
60. The school also manages to achieve a good degree of consistency in the way almost all of the aims it has set itself are translated into daily action. These aims are well understood and shared by the school's large staff and everyday routines are well co-ordinated to create a smooth-running school which is true to its aims. Only in respect of the school's declared aim to encourage pupils' independence is there some disparity between intention and practice.
61. Although the school overcomes the challenge of its unusually large size in its everyday routines, it finds less success in meeting a different challenge, that of managing change. The school has been required to change a great deal in recent years. The school has completely transformed its approach to the school curriculum and timetable in response to the recommendations of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Compliance has also been achieved with the government's initiative to reduce infant classes to a maximum size of thirty pupils when previously most classes in this school were larger. This change was accompanied by a decision to raise the school's level of admissions and thus create, in time, five classes in each year group. All of these changes have been successfully implemented and revised arrangements are in effective operation. This is achieved through careful and effective planning and management of elaborate day-to-day routines and staffing and timetabling procedures, for example, for moving pupils about the school to use the hall for assemblies and physical education or to visit the computer suite.
62. While these externally imposed changes have been successfully managed the school has not done enough to implement change that has been internally planned. Following the previous inspection

the school drew up an action plan for tackling eight areas for improvement recommended in the inspection report. Four of these issues have been largely resolved, one partially and three hardly at all. Most seriously, the issue given top priority by previous inspectors - the role of curriculum co-ordinators in evaluating and improving teaching and learning - remains the main concern after this inspection, too. Responsibility for improving practice and raising standards has not been delegated to co-ordinators with sufficient vigour or effectiveness. Subject co-ordinators generally give some good leadership to the planning of the work in their subjects and there are occasional examples of useful analysis of pupils' written work and test performances. Generally, though, there is insufficient precision in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in the subjects. As a result co-ordinators are often unclear about exactly how they can raise standards. They do not identify with enough precision where teaching and learning are most and least successful. They are unable, therefore, to see that successful practice is shared with and adopted by all colleagues or that support is given where practice is less successful. Nor are they in a position to iron out minor inconsistencies in practice across the curriculum of their subjects or between different classes.

63. Weakness in procedures for improving the school is also to be found in the work of the governing body. Some individual governors take a close and well-informed interest in particular aspects of the school's work as members of a number of sub-committees. They are sometimes closely involved with key school staff in discussing these matters. Procedures, however, for co-ordinating the work of sub-committees through the activities of the full governing body do not result in a sufficiently clear whole-school view of what the school is doing well and what could be done better. Lacking this view, governors have played too little part in working with senior staff to agree a long-term strategy for improving the school over forthcoming years with a sure sense of priorities and a realistic long-term timetable for achieving them. As a result school improvement has been patchy and governors have not held the school or themselves sufficiently to account for the pace of improvement. Significantly, governors have failed to meet the statutory requirement to include each year in their annual report to parents a statement of the progress made on the action plan that followed the previous inspection.
64. Although observation of lessons has been little used by subject co-ordinators as a means to identify ways to raise standards, some senior staff have been involved in a programme of observing colleagues' teaching. This takes place as part of the school's satisfactory arrangements for appraising and rewarding teachers under the national procedures for performance management introduced since the previous inspection. The resulting identification of individual teachers' needs for ongoing training is used in conjunction with the school's needs, identified in development planning, to organise staff training opportunities. This is done systematically and satisfactorily. Training has occasionally taken the form of visits to another school, but more could be done to keep teachers abreast of educational developments beyond the school. The staffing of the school has shown an unusual stability in recent years. While this is beneficial in maintaining the smooth running of a large and complex organisation, it also has the drawback that the school receives few of the inputs of fresh thinking that new teachers can bring. The school has sound procedures ready to support the induction of new teachers should they arrive but all of the present staff have been in the school for at least two years and most for much longer.
65. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator and her shadow are most conscientious. The pupils' learning benefits from the very good relationships that have been established with outside agencies, with colleagues from the neighbouring junior school and from the teamwork in the school. The governor with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs is supportive. The learning support assistants are dedicated and well trained and make a good contribution to the pupils' progress.
66. The school's procedures for financial planning and management are sound. Planning and prudent decision-making has satisfactorily ensured that the school has acquired the staffing and learning resources necessary to fulfil its functions during the many curricular changes and the expansion of

recent years. Accommodation has been expanded, too, within the limitations of the cramped site and available funds. The school accumulated a large surplus at the end of the 2001-2002 financial year but this was planned to pay for alterations to and equipping of the accommodation; expenditure has halved the surplus in the latest financial year and it is set to fall further. Some projections of future income and expenditure are made to inform financial planning but long-term planning for major expenditure is hindered by the school's weakness in long-term strategic prioritising and planning. Governors with a particular delegated role in relation to finance are well informed and have recently given good and partially successful support to the school's endeavours to increase the funds allocated to it by the local authority. Day-to-day financial management is in the hands of a Secretary/Bursar supported by occasional expert external advice. Local auditors have approved the school's financial procedures making only minor recommendations for improvement which the school has since adopted. The Secretary/Bursar had been absent through sickness for several weeks at the time of the inspection but the systems in place are secure enough to allow others to cope in this situation. Two further administrative staff make a valuable contribution to the smooth-running of the school and relate in a warm and caring way to parents, pupils or others who call at the office, thus contributing to the good ethos and relationships that surround the school.

67. Although additions have been made to the building since the previous inspection, there is insufficient space available to accommodate successfully the very many young pupils that are on roll. The accommodation is unsatisfactory and cramped and the teaching of several subjects, and especially the Foundation Stage curriculum, is hampered. The nursery accommodation is adequate and pleasant, but because it is in a separate building, children in the two year groups within the Foundation Stage have always to be taught separately. Classrooms are variable in size, but many are small for thirty children. Reception classrooms, in particular, are too small to accommodate practical and role-play activity or provide quiet corners where pupils might look at books quietly by themselves. It is therefore often difficult for pupils to move about between activities and noise levels are high because of the need for pupils to work in close proximity to each other; this sometimes detracts from the quality of their learning. The hall is too small, inhibiting the teaching of physical education. It also means that the school, as a whole, cannot gather together, for instance for collective worship. The ICT suite is too small to accommodate comfortably all pupils in a class or the amount of equipment desirable. Storage space in the school is extremely limited. As a result corridors are restricted because portable coat racks have to be located in them, as well as storage boxes for subject resources. This contributes to an overall impression of "clutter" throughout the school. There is no provision of a disabled toilet, although some pupils would benefit from this. There is a very limited number of adult toilets for the number of staff employed by the school. The number of pupil toilets is barely adequate. Most of the pupils' toilets have been refurbished, but by the end of the school day there is, as one parent commented, a "very pervading and unpleasant smell" from them, despite the best efforts of the cleaning staff.
68. Generally the school is well maintained and clean, but there are several classrooms that would benefit from refurbishment and redecoration. Teachers try hard to brighten up classrooms by displaying lovely colourful displays of good quality, which celebrate pupils' work and achievements.
69. Outside space is at a premium. Hard-surfaced play area is extremely limited. Some improvements have been made to the overall appearance by the provision of planted areas. However there is very little for pupils to do; for instance, there are no climbing frames. This impacts on pupils' overall behaviour, especially at lunchtime. The school is aware of this and there are plans to develop the outdoor space.
70. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good use is made of the available resources to support learning. There are good resources to support those pupils with special educational needs and this contributes to their good rate of learning. The library does not

have an adequate and suitable range of books, although satisfactory use is made of the limited supply available.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise standards and improve the quality of education further, the school should

1. Improve rigour and precision in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's work, by
 - devising a realistic strategy and timetable for regular monitoring of all aspects of the school's work, involving external consultants and school governors where appropriate and possible;
 - increasing the frequency of direct observations of lessons in action;
 - examining more thoroughly samples of the work pupils produce;
 - analysing more closely information from assessment of pupils' progress;
 - giving curriculum co-ordinators the necessary training, support and time to carry out the above processes in relation to the subjects for which they are responsible;
 - identifying and then extending the most effective practice throughout the school's work, and devising relevant action to improve the less effective practice;
 - checking whether action for improvement has been implemented and is proving successful.

(Paragraph 61)

2. Adopt better procedures through which senior management and the governing body can work together to plan school improvement and raise the pace of improvement, by
 - using the findings from improved monitoring to devise a long-term strategy for school improvement over a minimum of three years ahead;
 - increasing governors' and school staff's awareness of educational improvements in primary schools generally;
 - identifying whole-school priorities clearly in relation to raising standards;
 - setting realistic timescales for each project;
 - setting challenging but achievable targets for each school year;
 - monitoring regularly and rigorously the progress that is being made in implementing improvements;
 - reporting to parents annually on the progress being made in implementing the post-inspection action plan, as the law requires.

(Paragraph 61 - 63)

3. Increase pupils' levels of independence, both in lessons and at other times, by
 - giving more emphasis to independence in provision for pupils' personal development;
 - providing progressive opportunities and challenges as pupils move through the school to show independence both in lessons and at other times;
 - encouraging and rewarding more regularly pupils' ability to think and act independently and take responsibility for their own work and behaviour;
 - setting objectives and targets for pupils' independent work in classrooms, sharing them with pupils and rewarding them when they succeed.

(Paragraph 11, 21, 36, 59)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Doing everything possible to improve the accommodation and minimise the constraints it imposes on the teaching and curriculum *(Paragraph 66-68)*;
- implementing plans to extend the use of assessments of pupils' progress to set precise individual targets and to track progress in each class *(Paragraph 48-49)*;
- improving procedures for encouraging full attendance *(Paragraph 44)*;
- improving communication amongst staff on arrangements for child protection *(Paragraph 40)*.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	41	27	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	53	35	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60	443
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	52

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.4*

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

* National comparative data for absence is for all primary schools including infant and junior and junior schools.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	73	69	142

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	64	64	69
	Girls	64	64	67
	Total	128	128	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (92)	90 (94)	96 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	66	71	70
	Girls	63	61	66
	Total	129	132	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	93 (95)	96 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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	284	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	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	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR - Y2

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	330

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	984,897
Total expenditure	1,032,745
Expenditure per pupil	2053
Balance brought forward from previous year	99,548
Balance carried forward to next year	51,700

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	566
Number of questionnaires returned	148

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	59	40	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	52	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	44	3	3	15
The teaching is good.	67	29	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	50	11	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	27	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	43	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	39	52	5	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	56	41	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	28	25	3	28

Note

- The majority of “don't know” responses were from parents of part-time nursery pupils.
- Most of those (28%) recording negative responses to Q. 12 were parents of the younger (nursery, reception and Y1) pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

FOUNDATION STAGE

71. The Foundation Stage of this school is very large. There is provision for 120 children to attend part-time in the nursery unit and there are 150 full-time pupils in the five reception classes. About 115 children transfer from the nursery to reception, and others come from a variety of pre-school settings. Most children start in the nursery in the September of each year but younger ones enter between October and January. The nursery unit is housed in a spacious, purpose-built unit, with its own outside play area. There is some element of isolation from the main school for both staff and children.
72. Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities, making the overall profile broadly average. Attainment in communication and language skills is an area of weakness for a significant number of children when they begin in the nursery. Those who have difficulties with learning are identified early, and particularly careful records are kept for these pupils who provide cause for concern. Their progress is carefully monitored and they make satisfactory progress. Similarly, a very small but increasing number of pupils identified as having English as an additional language receive satisfactory support and make appropriate progress. In the nursery, children settle well into a well-organised and welcoming environment. They experience a large variety of well-planned activities and make good progress, transferring successfully to the reception class. Good teaching helps pupils achieve well in some areas of their learning and satisfactorily in others. More than might be expected will exceed the early learning goals in the area of creative development. A large number of children will attain the early learning goals in mathematical development. In other areas, pupils achieve satisfactorily, so that most will attain the levels expected in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the area of learning concerned with communication, language and literacy, the outcomes are more mixed, reflecting some children's early difficulty in this area. Good progress is made in reading and satisfactory progress in the area of speaking and listening. However, in their early attempts at writing fewer children than might be expected are reaching the expected levels at the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Good teaching in the nursery ensures that children develop well in this area. They respond positively to the well-organised environment and consistent expectations of good behaviour. They learn routines well and begin to recognise the need to take turns, by raising their hands to answer questions. They know how to hang up and collect their coats and learn that aprons should be worn for certain activities and returned to the correct place. They also know how to remove and store their shoes before going into the sandpit and try very hard to put their socks on again afterwards! Activities are available for children to choose and most are able to do this. The less mature children need encouragement to move and try new experiences and this is done sensitively. In the reception classes, children learn to become part of the main school, using the hall for physical education and assemblies. In assembly they enjoy stories which appeal to their understanding of 'keeping promises' and the story of the Pied Piper. They were fascinated when their teacher also played a wooden pipe. However, the structure of lessons does not consistently give children sufficient opportunity to develop real independence in learning. Similarly, the size of classes and the constraints of the building do not always allow children the opportunity to operate without supervision.

Communication, Language and Literacy

74. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. An expected proportion will attain the early learning goals by the age of five. Good teaching ensures that in reading more children than might be expected attain the early learning goals. In the nursery, every opportunity is taken

to increase children's thinking and use of language by extending their vocabulary. Speaking and listening skills are supported well. Children learn how to say rhymes, listening for rhyming words like 'see' and 'me'. They engage in conversation in the role-play areas, like joining the train at the outside station or booking a holiday in the travel agents. Teachers are particularly skilful at storytelling, using their voices well, so that children's attention is maintained. Children begin to recognise letters pulled from a magic bag and select cards with their names ready for activities. Older children consolidate their knowledge of phonics in a satisfactory manner. They respond well in class sessions. Children recognise animal riddles, and higher attaining children can suggest animals to match their animal alphabet. By the end of the reception year, children can identify some familiar words and those with higher level reading skills begin to learn how to sound out new words. In all classes children have the opportunity to choose to write. They fill in little books and forms in the nursery, beginning to make marks for writing. In the reception class, they have chances to write about farm animals on specially prepared sheets, use book templates or make birthday cards, as well as the more directed writing as part of literacy hour activities in preparation for Year 1. Although the higher attaining children are able to write short sentences with plausible spellings, fewer than might be expected can employ their phonic skills to write new words or use simple punctuation correctly. Children in the nursery learn to trace their names and some are ready to form letters on their own. The school has introduced cursive script from the start, but this has proved difficult for those children with poorer language and handwriting skills.

Mathematical Development

75. Good teaching helps most children to attain the early learning goals in this area. In the nursery children make good progress. They count by using rhymes and stories. Nursery nurses effectively reinforce the concept of 'two' and pairs, by retelling the story of Noah in a dramatic way; the children were enthralled. During the inspection, reception children were involved in work on patterns. Most were able to recognise simple repeating patterns and could extend them. The higher attaining children were able to compose complex patterns, involving the repetition of three elements. These concepts were well supported by enjoyable activities, for example by making a sandwich with repeating patterns of tomatoes, cucumber or cheese. Where good teaching linked this activity effectively to work about wild animals, children were able to recognise the repeating patterns of animal skins to make their own headbands to wear in the role-play safari. Simple matching programmes on the computer were used to support this learning. Children, as is appropriate for this stage in the reception year, are experiencing elements of the numeracy lesson, although group work often extends throughout the day. Teachers use satisfactorily the reception planning outlines of the National Numeracy Strategy, and children have opportunities to compare lengths and name common 2 dimensional shapes. They recognise coins to 20p, and in one class use these in their farm shop.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

76. Most children will achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. The teaching is good. In the nursery, the children have good opportunities to investigate materials, making boats and testing them in the water tray. The well-designed sensory area ensures that even the youngest children discover and enjoy textures, sounds and lights. Good opportunities for constructive play with water and sand help children develop an appreciation of the properties of these materials and what can be done with them. Children also progress well in both nursery and reception classes in understanding some basic principles and processes of modern technology. They begin to learn how to use the mouse with a computer to create pictures, and they learn how to give a wheeled robot a series of commands to direct its movements remotely. Children learn about Bible stories and in reception classes they learn in a more structured way about wild animals and begin to realise the differences between habitats of local animals, having visited a local wildlife area. They have chances to make maps of their visits. Children make satisfactory progress with cutting and sticking skills, and are able to use dough and clay to reinforce learning about pattern making.

Creative Development

77. Good teaching in this area helps children achieve well and most will exceed the early learning

goals at the end of the reception year. Pupils experience a wide range of artistic media from the beginning of the nursery. They paint and print and use collage materials. These skills are developed effectively in the reception classes, where children make convincing animal masks and paint large-scale pictures of sunflowers, with a good sense of colours and form. Children learn to mix colours appropriately and these skills form a good basis for the quality of art in the rest of the school. Pupils also make good progress in music. They benefit from the expertise of a specialist teacher in the reception class. Having been introduced to some African music, children use drums and other instruments effectively, to illustrate a 'safari story'. They also learn how to clap the rhythm of their names and use handprints in bright colours to illustrate this. All children enjoy their time engaged in imaginative role-play and each class provides opportunities for this. Where the activity is led by an adult, as in the train ride in the nursery, or when children continue to play after roles have been modelled to them, then they make significant gains in learning. When this activity is unsupervised or when children see less purpose in it, learning is less effective.

Physical Development

78. Children achieve satisfactorily in this area and the majority of them will attain the early learning goals by the age of five. However, teaching, though satisfactory, is less strong in this area and is hindered by the insufficient space available. In the nursery, equipment in the garden enables everyone to have a chance to climb, balance, run and jump, but space is at a premium for the numbers of children and there are few opportunities to move to music inside. Children's co-ordination and control of movement is therefore slower to develop than it might be. The older children have their allocated times in the hall, where they learn to manage small apparatus, like balls and beanbags. These are short periods and the outside area does not yet provide equivalent equipment for physical activity as in the nursery.

ENGLISH

79. The work seen during the inspection supports the view from results of National Curriculum tests and from teachers' own formal assessments that standards are in line with the national standard. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. However, there is a marked improvement this year in the percentage of Year 2 pupils attaining the higher level of attainment (level 3) in reading and writing, even though the attainment of this year group on entering the school was lower than previously. Following these improvements, pupils of all abilities can now be seen to be achieving soundly. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their personal targets. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.
80. The oldest pupils' standards of speaking and listening are average. In whole-class discussions a large majority of pupils are attentive and listen well and this is reflected in their appropriate answers. The best development of speaking skills occurs when teachers make a point of encouraging pupils to express their thoughts in complete sentences. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, when the content of an information leaflet is being discussed, a pupil spoke well with the comment that 'ducks, rats and birds are the snail's enemies'. When talking about a non-fiction text on building, a pupil in Year 1 did well to say 'it would be confusing if the drains were put in after the walls'.
81. Overall standards in reading are average. A feature of the reading in Year 2 is the increased number of pupils who read to a good standard for their age. The standard overall is average because of the significant minority of pupils in the year group with special educational needs who do not obtain the expected level. The more able readers read with good levels of fluency, accuracy and understanding. They have positive attitudes and some belong to a local library. They use their good knowledge of the alphabet successfully to locate information. They understand well how to use a contents page and index in a non-fiction book and some have also used the Internet successfully to obtain information. When looking at a non-fiction text one pupil

does well to recognise and comment that a glossary is arranged in alphabetical order like the index. The teaching of phonic skills (the relationship between letters and sounds) is good and the introduction of an effective new strategy has already led to higher standards in Year 1. A new library has been opened recently and the pupils have begun to use it. At present the school lacks the funds to stock and furnish it adequately. The school has widened the range of books that are suitable for higher attaining pupils but the stock remains insufficient to encourage pupils in reading independently.

82. Most pupils achieve standards of writing that are average. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sound standard while handwriting is of a good standard. An early start is made on teaching pupils to join their letters. This is proving effective and leads to good progress. Although not all form all their letters correctly at first, pupils progress toward achievement of well formed, legible writing. Attention to care in presentation reflects the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. At its best, pupils' writing tasks help them to achieve well in putting their thoughts into words for a range of purposes. For example, they both extend their writing skills and enhance their understanding of history when they write a report about the Great Fire of London or keep a diary as though they are Samuel Pepys. This also makes a good contribution to their cultural development. There is good reinforcement of reading skills when pupils write a book review. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use direct speech effectively and their spelling of common polysyllabic words is usually accurate. A sense of writing for effect is emerging, as when an average-attaining pupil, in a story about a naughty happening, puts a word in capital letters for emphasis. Occasionally pupils practise their writing skills while using a computer for word-processing. However, the co-ordinator is aware of the need for pupils to make more use of information and communication technology to draft and edit their work.
83. The quality of teaching and learning seen ranges from very good to satisfactory and is good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy which helps them to plan well-focused lessons. In the best lessons a good range of strategies is effectively used to keep the pupils involved so that they learn at a good pace. Pupils generally respond with interest and endeavour to the tasks set. In some satisfactory lessons a relative shortcoming is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils who complete their work quickly and are not extended by the next activity. The teachers mark the pupils' work conscientiously and often add encouraging comments. A particularly positive feature of the marking is the way teachers annotate the pupils' work according to an agreed procedure. This leads to precise identification of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement which then informs teachers' future planning. Group targets are set for pupils' future progress and displayed in classrooms but, when asked, the pupils are not really aware of them.
84. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers to see extra support is given to meet the pupils' identified needs. This usually happens within the classroom but occasionally it is outside, as when effective use is made of a phonological awareness programme, the national Early Literacy Strategy and 'Write from the Start'. Teachers also provide those pupils with English as an additional language with effective support so increasing their confidence in both spoken and written English.
85. Homework is very well used to support learning. The pupils are given good encouragement to read at home as well as in school. Leaflets have been produced to help parents to support their pupils' reading. The reading diaries are a very effective link between home and school and are often used as a channel for good quality dialogue between teachers and parents. This gives very good support to pupils' learning. Writing, too, is well supported through homework as when pupils are encouraged to keep a holiday diary during school holidays.
86. The management of the subject is good and has led to standards that are improving. A good example of improvement planning was the careful analysis made of the pupils' answers to the higher reading test in the 2002 national tests. This showed pupils' inferential comprehension to be

a weakness and led to teaching that targeted development of the relevant skills more closely. As a consequence more pupils have achieved the higher level of reading attainment this year. The co-ordinators assist teachers to agree the levels of attainment in samples of written work for each class and this is helping to track the pupils' progress soundly. The pupils' attainment is also checked through consultation with teachers from the neighbouring junior school. This valuable collaboration both supports precision in teachers' assessment of progress and paves the way for a smooth transition in teaching and learning when pupils move to the junior school. The school has no system for the co-ordinators to monitor teaching in the subject regularly and this hinders identification of scope for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

87. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age. Both the work seen during the inspection and recent results in National Curriculum tests show this. This is similar to the situation found during the last inspection. Since the last inspection, the school has worked very hard to improve pupils' performance in mathematics through numerous initiatives, including the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. This means that the needs of the majority of pupils are better met, especially in promoting their mental skills. These are improved since the last inspection.
88. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a sound understanding of the number system and of place value ('hundreds, tens and units'). Almost all of the oldest pupils read and write numbers correctly, add single-digit numbers to a total of 20 and subtract numbers from 20 with confidence. They count in twos and tens and recognise patterns in number such as odd and even, and are beginning to solve simple mathematical calculations. Average pupils have a sure understanding of these concepts and processes and they apply them to larger numbers. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use numbers up to 100 and above and have a good understanding of addition and subtraction, and their understanding of these as reverse processes is developing quickly. Most are able to partition four-digit numbers, knowing that 3569 is composed of three thousands, five hundreds, six tens and nine units. All pupils gain an appropriate range of practical experience, for example, when measuring different objects using both non-standard measures such as paper clips as well as standard units of measurement. A significant number of Year 1 pupils are also attaining the standards expected of Year 2 pupils.
89. The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. In all lessons there is an appropriate balance of class and group work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have integrated the National Numeracy Strategy into their teaching effectively. Overall the quality of planning is good and work is well matched to the prior attainment of most pupils. Teachers generally assess pupils' work well and use their assessment to guide future planning. However, on some occasions the expectations of the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are not always high enough to help pupils make the best progress of which they are capable. Overall, pupils' achievement is therefore judged satisfactory.
90. Teachers conduct well the mental mathematical sessions with which they begin their lessons. In the most successful lessons, teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in these sessions. Relationships are good and this gives pupils of differing attainment the confidence to offer answers, knowing that they will be appreciated. In these lessons, questions are carefully targeted to challenge all pupils. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils practising simple addition using 'gotcha' cards, were all able to be involved and the teacher could accurately monitor how well pupils understood the process. Teachers' lively approaches help pupils enjoy mathematics and their encouragement leads to a positive response to challenge. Good behaviour is usually maintained and pupils are attentive and try hard to answer questions. In many lessons the atmosphere is of active involvement. However, a small number of pupils find it difficult to sit and concentrate when the introductory session is too long or when not closely

supervised while working on their own. This slows the pace of the lesson and pupils cover less work than they should. On the whole, children take pride in the quality of their work and the standard of presentation is generally satisfactory. A strength of the teaching is the way teachers consistently employ, and encourage pupils to use, the appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Regular and effective homework is set during the year, which complements the teaching and assists learning and understanding.

91. The planning of the work covers all aspects of mathematics, but limited opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake investigations, and pupils have too few opportunities to share their thinking with the class. Pupils do, though, have some sound opportunities to apply and practise their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in geography, pupils were asked to record and present data from a traffic survey. In science pupils make measurements, construct graphs and classify living things using Venn or Carroll diagrams. Pupils sometimes use information and communication technology to tabulate data and present graphs in a variety of forms.
92. Pupils with special educational needs are taught effectively, aided by the good help given by learning support assistants which enables them to be fully involved in activities. These pupils achieve as well as pupils generally. Some lessons are given further good support by volunteer parents.
93. The standards of work of pupils aged seven are in line with national expectations for their age. This is shown by work seen during the inspection and is supported by teachers' own formal assessments. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Taking account of their attainment on starting at the school pupils achieve satisfactorily. The great majority of present Year 2 pupils show the expected level of attainment and a typical proportion exceed it. However, more pupils than usual fall short of the expected level, in most cases reflecting the fact that they have special educational needs. Year 1 pupils are achieving well, with a greater proportion than usual showing attainment higher than expected for their age, and hardly any falling short. Pupils with special educational needs receive much support from teachers, learning support assistants and, sometimes, parent helpers and this helps them to join in activities fully and make similar progress to their peers.

SCIENCE

94. The standards of work of pupils aged seven are in line with national expectations for their age. This is shown by work seen during the inspection and is supported by teachers' own formal assessments. Taking account of their attainment on starting at the school pupils achieve satisfactorily. The great majority of present Year 2 pupils show the expected level of attainment and a typical proportion exceed it. However, more pupils than usual fall short of the expected level, in most cases reflecting the fact that they have special educational needs. Year 1 pupils are achieving well, with a greater proportion than usual showing attainment higher than expected for their age, and hardly any falling short. Pupils with special educational needs receive much support from teachers, learning support assistants and, sometimes, parent helpers and this helps them to join in activities fully and make similar progress to their peers.
95. Year 2 pupils show a sound range of knowledge and understanding across the science curriculum. During the inspection they displayed some good knowledge of animal characteristics. They recognise a good range of ways in which they can classify animals, for example, by the number of their legs, or whether they have fur. They sort animals correctly into groups by a range of criteria recording their results in simple tables, Venn diagrams or Carroll diagrams according to their ability. Year 1 pupils seen studying plants and plant reproduction show good knowledge and understanding. Almost all name and recognise the main parts of a plant and explain in simple terms the functions of each. A few more able pupils exceed expectations for their age when they explain the process of pollination and the role of bees in plant reproduction.

96. Teaching and learning are of good quality. All of the lessons seen during the inspection were well taught and resulted in good learning for almost all pupils. All others show interest, tackle tasks with endeavour and care, and behave well. Lessons are very well planned and care is taken to match works to individual pupils' abilities and needs by adapting tasks and by providing extra challenge or extra support. Teachers provide interesting and stimulating tasks and use a good range of methods to encourage pupils to learn actively. Lessons seen incorporated good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, read for research, construct tables and diagrams, investigate real plants with magnifying glasses, undertake observational drawing, and present drawings and text using the computer. The work gave some good support to pupils' development of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Only a small minority of pupils in Year 2 who have difficulty concentrating on tasks failed to maintain a consistently good pace in their learning.
97. The subject co-ordinator leads provisions for the subject satisfactorily. She gives close support to curriculum and lesson planning, ensuring a balanced overall programme of work is provided. However, investigative work in Year 2 does not challenge the more able pupils often enough in terms of making measurements that they can then explain or in recognising what makes for fair tests. A good system for measuring and recording pupils' progress is used but the results across classes are not collated and there is therefore no mechanism for highlighting where teaching and learning are most or least effective. Improvement is also held back by the fact that although there are some checks on teachers' planning there are none on actual teaching and learning in lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Standards in art and design are above those expected nationally for pupils of seven years of age. This maintains the position at the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in two years, building upon good skills learned in the Foundation Stage. This is due to good teaching and effective planning by the subject co-ordinator, which ensures a high level of progression in the acquisition of skills.
99. Pupils are able to mix colours successfully to make skin tones for portraits. They use collage methods well, discussing the most effective use of paper, by cutting, tearing and scrunching. All pupils use their sketch books well, practising types of shading and hatching, and also for planning work and trying out ideas for pictures and projects. Teachers follow curriculum planning closely, and this ensures that all pupils in each year group have equivalent experiences. Pupils learn particularly well because of the relevance of their work. Teachers' careful development of a theme successfully supports the development of creative skills. For example, the planning, construction and production of a printed storyboard to illustrate a fairy story is produced by a group of pupils. Later, details from these pictures are enlarged for collage work, as an individual activity. Teachers' organisation of the classroom is usually good and their careful preparation of materials, together with thoughtful management, ensures that the small rooms are used well. Good mounting and presentation enhances the quality of finished items. Pupils work happily and become engrossed in detailed work. They respond well to the variety of stimuli teachers offer, from analysing collections of pictures, to using information and communication technology programmes to generate their own pictures in the style of Mondrian. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
100. Curriculum plans are regularly evaluated by the year group teams, and the co-ordinator makes useful recommendations for changes and challenges by monitoring results and keeping a wide-ranging portfolio of work. A helpful assessment tool is the collection of drawings showing progression from reception to the local high school. This has been compiled through well established links to the next levels of education. Satisfactory assessment arrangements in this subject related to individual pupils' responses, are recorded at the end of each teaching unit. The

co-ordinator exercises her role effectively through these initiatives, although she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching. She has a good understanding of standards attained by pupils, because of her close involvement, and encourages teachers to use other areas of the curriculum to develop learned skills, for example, using a variety of paint and collage methods to illustrate the Great Fire of London. The curriculum is well supported by visits to a local art gallery to consider portraits and sculpture before embarking on a related project.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards attained by the oldest pupils are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of design and technology and particularly in the skills associated with these activities. A strength is the systematic planning for continuity and progression, based on a good scheme of work following national guidelines, which has been developed by the co-ordinator. At the previous inspection no lessons were seen and no judgements of teaching and learning were made. In this inspection several lessons were seen and these showed teaching and learning to be of good quality.
102. Throughout the school, lesson plans show that an appropriate practical approach is adopted, and that due attention is given to designing and evaluating as well as the teaching of practical skills, to enable making to take place. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in developing skills required to cut and join materials. They practise making windows and doors before planning their house and will be using these newly taught skills in its construction. Year 2 pupils construct a variety of vehicles using fixed and rotating axles and they complete planning sheets showing their design and evaluation alongside the completed models. The well-considered scheme of work and the overall satisfactory teaching ensure that pupils do work that builds effectively upon previous experiences and systematically improves their skills. Pupils can use a variety of simple tools safely. They measure and cut paper and card accurately and translate their designs into products.
103. The teaching is of good quality. The lessons are planned and resourced well and provide good challenge for all pupils. Teachers identify clear learning objectives, which are conveyed clearly to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given good help by support staff to ensure they understand and complete the tasks set as well as every one else in the class. Teachers actively seek to promote other subjects through design and technology, for example, art and design when decorating the vehicles, and speaking and listening skills. Pupils demonstrate good and, on occasion very good, attitudes to the subject. They learn well, listening attentively to instructions and Year 1 pupils concentrate for long periods on practical tasks showing great awareness of their own and other pupils' safety, for example, when using and carrying scissors while cutting out their houses and sticking them onto paper.
104. The subject provision is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has done much to ensure the high status of the subject in the school. Teachers' plans and pupils' work are examined and written comments made, and a sampling of work across the age range takes place regularly, together with the auditing of work samples. However the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues in order to improve the teaching and learning within the subject.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

105. No lessons were seen in these subjects during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from analyses of pupils' work, in their books and on display, together with photographic evidence. School documentation was examined, and discussions held with the teacher who co-ordinates the work in both subjects, with other teachers and with pupils. This evidence suggests that pupils achieve satisfactorily and that, as at the previous inspection, the standards of their work meet the national expectations in both subjects.

106. Pupils at Year 2 show good factual knowledge of events and people in the past. They are able to recall the main features of the Great Fire of London; they discuss the possible causes for the scale of the Fire, and identify two relevant sources of evidence, including Pepys' diaries. They make comparisons between life now and at other times, contrasting health care at the time of Florence Nightingale, with that of today. The use of domestic Victorian artefacts offers pupils the opportunity to find out about washdays in the past from sources other than stories and information books. Pupils are less confident in their interpretation of this kind of evidence, and are less successful at identifying some of the ways in which the past can be represented.
107. In Geography, pupils' work demonstrates an increased awareness and understanding of the local environment. In discussion Year 2 pupils express clear views about their local area and ways to improve it. Workbooks provide evidence of simple comparisons of environmental features in Southport, with those of the Isle of Struay. Pupils in Year 1 know their route to school, and make good use of a digital camera to record significant features. This use of computers also helps pupils to explore a bird's eye view of simple models, and to develop their use of geographical vocabulary. Pupils have designed and mapped changes they would like to see in the school's outside environment.
108. The management and leadership of both subjects is sound. The co-ordinator is able to support and monitor the quality of teachers' medium term planning through meetings of year group staff. This ensures that all pupils cover the National Curriculum for the subjects well. There are samples of pupils' work in both subjects, which enable the co-ordinator to monitor the standards of pupils' attainment, although this is relatively under-developed. As yet the co-ordinator has not been able to observe the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. As a result the subject action plans are limited in scope to improvements in resources and the more effective management of them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

109. Standards of attainment for Year 2 pupils are above national expectations. Year 1 pupils, too, are showing attainment above the level expected for their age. These good standards are an improvement since the last inspection. The provision overall has improved considerably. A computer suite (the 'Mouse House') accommodating additional computers has been established, the optional national scheme of work has been adopted, assessment procedures have been instituted and teachers' confidence and competence are improving. The development of pupils' skills is now well planned. The use of computers to assist and extend learning in some other subjects, particularly mathematics and art, is contributing to the good standards. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress in this subject.
110. Pupils in Year 1 have a good knowledge and understanding of the layout and use of the computer keyboard and all confidently 'log on' and 'log off' the computer and can save and print their work. They word-process short sentences and produce labels, deleting and inserting letters, and using the upper and lower case type with accuracy. In Year 2, the majority of pupils work with relative independence on the computer and have a developing understanding of the uses of ICT in the world around them. In Year 2 there is some extension of the work on word processing and pupils learn to change the type and size of text and to delete or retrieve their work. Throughout the school, pupils develop an appropriate technical language such as *mouse*, *select*, *icon*, and *file* which they use with accuracy.
111. The quality of teaching is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress due to the good level of support they receive. Class teachers have at least a sound knowledge of the subject and all classes benefit from weekly lessons in the computer suite taught by a specialist teacher with good knowledge of the subject. In the best lessons preparation and

planning are good, demonstrations are very clear and time is taken to explain exactly what pupils are to do. This was well demonstrated in a Year 2 database lesson where the children were asked to retrieve previously saved work and then to investigate the data before moving on to construct a graph of their results in a variety of ways. The teacher gave clear instructions using the correct technical terms, thus ensuring that pupils knew how to create a variety of graphs. There is an appropriate focus on relevant vocabulary and questions are posed to check pupils' understanding. Adults interact well with pupils, providing support when necessary to make sure that all can achieve the learning intentions.

112. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT, and at times the noise of children discussing and sharing their findings in the Mouse House does interfere with the work of the pupils in the adjacent classroom. Pupils generally learn well but sometimes the pace of learning in lessons is only satisfactory when too many have to share a computer. When used by a full class of thirty pupils the Mouse House is too small with too few computers. Where there are three pupils sharing a computer, the level of concentration lapses especially for the third pupil. When two share they are quick to offer help to each other when necessary. They are happy to try new things and are able to discuss and explain their work. A group of Year 2 pupils, for example, listened well and persevered with concentration on their task for most of the time. They showed pleasure and amazement when their graphs appeared and continued to experiment on forming pie or bar charts to display the data in a variety of ways. Pupils confidently ask questions of their teachers; they understand about taking care of equipment and do so responsibly.
113. Although some use is made of computers to support work in the numeracy and literacy lessons, and occasionally in art, science and geography, too, learning through the use of ICT is yet to be fully established across the curriculum. In addition, some opportunities are sometimes missed in the planning and teaching to challenge higher attaining pupils through use of classroom computers, especially in Year 2.
114. The subject is well led, so that all members of staff are enthusiastic and share a commitment to developing ICT in the curriculum. The co-ordinator provides a good level of support for teachers, ensuring that they are introduced to new software and hardware and can use them confidently. She has produced useful medium-term plans, taking into account national guidance and ensuring coverage of the skills of ICT. A good system of formal assessment is used to check progress at the completion of each unit. This enables teachers and other adults to record whether pupils have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Management of the subject is disadvantaged by a lack of checks on teaching and learning of ICT within the classrooms.

MUSIC

115. The pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations. This reflects the position at the last inspection. The pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. The pupils sing more tunefully than would be expected at their age and this is a strength of the subject. The key issue from the last inspection to make lessons less rushed has been partially met.
116. Pupils in Year 2 follow a score in which the number of syllables in a word stands for the time value of the note. They play a range of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments. One pupil knows which notes to remove from a set of chime bars to make a pentatonic scale. In Year 1, when the pupils begin with a song, their singing as a class is very tuneful. When pupils sing a line alone they do so confidently and keep the pitch well. They recognise a range of percussion instruments and almost all manage to repeat short rhythmic patterns accurately. They work well in groups. This reflects their good attitudes and behaviour and contributes to their social development.

117. All music lessons are taken by a specialist music teacher. Teaching and learning vary in quality from lesson to lesson but are good overall. When the lesson is good the activities allow the pupils to be fully involved and they learn well. When the lesson is satisfactory, strengths in planning are balanced by a weakness that the accompanying class teacher is not used fully and some pupils have to wait for the opportunity to practise. This affects their behaviour and hinders their learning. Some good links are made to other subjects as when musical instruments are made as part of a science lesson. Music is played before and after most assemblies but opportunities are missed to focus the pupils' attention on it and to extend their listening skills.
118. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A strength is the provision of additional opportunities beyond lessons for musical activity. Each Christmas and summer all pupils in each of the reception, first and second year groups take part in extensive year group musical and dramatic productions for parents. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in concerts with pupils from other schools. All pupils in Year 2 are able to learn to play the recorder by attending a lunchtime club and a good many take up the opportunity. Pupils have been to a Gamelan Workshop and have heard different groups play jazz, folk and pop music. This has made a good contribution to their cultural development. Resources for the subject are good. The school relies heavily on the specialist teacher and more could be done to develop the confidence and competence of other staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. By the age of seven pupils attain standards which are in line with those expected nationally. This was also the case at the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress with the development of skills.
120. By the age of seven pupils are improving their throwing and catching skills, using a variety of different sized balls. They use large apparatus sensibly, generating patterns of movement, which allow them to travel along balancing beams and up slides, using varied direction and height. Most of the pupils can jump from higher stools and land sensibly. In dance they practise motifs and fit them together to make a pattern of movements, interpreting music and using mirrored actions with a partner.
121. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good lessons were observed during the inspection. In the best lessons teachers use limited space well and maximise short sessions so that pupils experience periods of aerobic exercise, as well as developing skills. In these sessions pupils learn well how their bodies react during exercise. They develop their own skills by watching the performance of others. They suggest modifications to their own ball games to make them more difficult. In the less successful lessons, plans are not completed in the time available, and pupils have little opportunity to reflect on how to improve their performance. The system of curriculum planning ensures that all pupils of similar ages have equivalent opportunities. Those children who require support during physical education lessons make good progress because of sensitive interventions by their learning support assistants. A popular dance club builds upon work practised in lessons to create a performance for a local festival.
122. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. She gives good leadership to the planning but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and institute formal assessment of pupils' progress. However, she has appropriately identified several issues for development. The short hall periods frequently do not give enough time for sufficient development of skills and the size of the hall, and the restrictions cause by stored apparatus, are limiting in the scope of activities for large classes. The outside area has not yet been fully exploited for use in physical education lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. As at the previous inspection, pupils achieve satisfactorily and the standards of their work are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make sound progress in the subject.
124. By the age of 7, pupils recognise and name Christian places of worship, describe some religious ceremonies and explain the meaning behind them. They re-tell stories from the Bible about Jesus, and know of stories from other religious traditions. Pupils show some knowledge of other faith communities, and are beginning to understand the importance of symbols in Christianity. Pupils in Year 2, for example, study the symbolic significance of water whilst finding out about christening ceremonies.
125. Teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory, with particular strengths in teachers' planning of lessons, and the use of the resources available for the subject. All teachers are successful in reading stories in ways which hold the interest of pupils, and in leading class discussions which help pupils reflect on their own experience. Clear explanations of difficult ideas are helped by illustrations in 'big books' and posters. The most successful teaching involves pupils in imaginative and practical activities which reinforce their learning. In Year 1 teachers use some simple costumes and props for pupils to create a short play about the work of Jesus. This makes the lesson enjoyable and memorable and helps pupils learn well. During the inspection pupils in a Year 2 class showed a lively interest as they brought in photographs of christening ceremonies, which were included in a wall display about water. The use of toys and a water tray to re-create the ceremony led pupils to a fuller understanding of the symbolic meaning of water, which they were then able to reflect in their art work.
126. The co-ordinator for the subject manages the provision satisfactorily. Long- and medium-term planning ensures that the curriculum meets the requirements of Sefton Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The co-ordinator provides advice and support to teachers when planning lessons, and has recently introduced a new resource book of ideas and visual aids for this purpose. She continues to build a small but useful bank of resources for use in the subject. The joint planning of lessons by teachers in each year group also ensures that all pupils study the same themes and topics. As yet, the co-ordinator has not been able to observe the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Without this opportunity the co-ordinator is unable to build on the co-operative relationships between staff to ensure that teaching and learning is as consistently effective as that in the most successful lessons.