

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY ROSARY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aintree

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104940

Headteacher: Mrs A M Dimeck

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th December 2002

Inspection number: 246425

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Aintree Lane
Aintree
Liverpool

Postcode: L10 2JD

Telephone number: 0151 526 7549

Fax number: 0151 284 8760

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Father John Butchard

Date of previous inspection: 13th October 1997

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
12511	Mrs L Buller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27545	Mr A Scott	Team inspector	English Design and technology Educational inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22657	Mr M Madely	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design	
11510	Mr K Oglesby	Team inspector	Science Physical Education Special Educational Needs	
2461	Mr P Sudworth	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality in Focus
Thresher House
Lea Hall Park
Demage Lane
Lea-by-Backford
Chester
CH1 6LP

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager

Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21

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

26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school for boys and girls between 4 and 11 years. It is bigger than the national average having 325 pupils on roll. The school is situated on two sites which are a mile apart and plans are in place to merge on one site. Most pupils are from white ethnic groups and a very low number of pupils need help because English is not their first spoken language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average (5 per cent). Thirty three pupils (10 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is also below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school provides support for pupils with physical disabilities and also the visually impaired and three pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school serves families from a broad spectrum of social and economic backgrounds. A wide spread of ability is evident as pupils start school but the overall level is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very good features. The provision for pupils' personal development is good and this leads to a happy and welcoming school where all are valued. Achievement is good and pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils enjoy learning and try hard because teaching is good. Leadership and management from governors and headteacher are effective and the school has a clear direction for the future. This is a thriving school and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and art and design are above average.
- Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve their best.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to provide rich and stimulating activities.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and present their work very neatly.
- The help for pupils with special educational needs is very good and all involved with the school are dedicated to enabling all pupils to have full access to everything the school offers.

What could be improved

- Standards in design and technology.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.
- The level of challenge in some of the work and the opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their own activities rather than being too directed by the teacher.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in October 1997. Standards have risen and the school has received two School Achievement Awards for improvement in national test results. Important factors leading to the school's success have been determined leadership, better teaching and a focus on providing an additional boost for pupils who start to fall behind in literacy and numeracy. The issues raised in the previous inspection have all received attention. Spelling and handwriting have improved in response to new teaching methods. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resolved concerns about the teaching of mathematics. Teaching is now monitored regularly and advice given when a weakness is noted. Consequently, teaching has improved. Planning and the teaching of information and communication technology have improved.

because teachers have benefited from training. Insufficient attention has been given to design and technology and standards remain below the level expected for this age range.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	A	C	C	Well above average
mathematics	A	D	C	C	Average
science	C	D	B	B	Well below average

The school's overall performance in English and mathematics was held down because the number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was below average. In science, more pupils reached above average levels and this led to overall results being above the national average and the average of similar schools. The overall trend in results has been similar to the national picture. Current standards show an improvement and are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are average in writing and pupils are less confident writing imaginatively. More attention has been given to the needs of the higher attaining pupils who are now achieving well. Overall achievement is good. The school did not quite reach its targets last year. This year's targets are challenging. Current standards indicate the school is likely to come close to them although the predicted number of pupils to reach above average may be too challenging.

National test results in reading in 2002 at the end of Year 2 were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. This shows pupils are reaching higher standards than expected. Results in writing and mathematics were in line with both the national average and the average for similar schools. These results were not as high as reading because few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. Current standards show an improvement and are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall achievement is good especially for the increasing number of pupils reaching the higher levels.

Children in the Reception classes make good progress in literacy and numeracy and their knowledge of the world and many exceed the level expected for their age. In other aspects of mathematics, personal and social development, physical and creative development progress is satisfactory and children reach the expected level.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and many reach the level expected for their age.

Attainment in art and design, history and geography are above average. Only in design and technology do standards fall below average. Standards in all other subjects are wholly satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very proud of their school. They work hard in lessons and the presentation of their work is of high quality.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. This makes an important contribution to the standards they achieve.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are willing to accept responsibility and work hard to raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good.

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Examples of good teaching were seen in all subjects and all years. No teaching observed was less than satisfactory. Teachers are skilled at making lessons enjoyable and this greatly enhances pupils' learning as they grow in self-confidence during their time in school.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Literacy skills are taught well in the Reception classes. Children get off to a flying start in reading and writing because teachers use a range of practical activities. Throughout the school pupils are confident readers because reading is taught effectively. Numeracy is taught well. Lessons are lively and include challenging questions that extend pupils' ability to solve problems.

Teaching meets the learning needs of all groups of pupils especially those with special educational needs. The teaching assistants play an important part in helping these pupils and enabling them to complete their work.

A positive feature in lessons is the warm relationships which lead to pupils learning in an orderly atmosphere. Lesson planning is good and teachers make it clear to pupils what they are to learn. Teachers do not use computers enough to support learning in other subjects. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach except for design and technology where teachers do not provide sufficient choice for pupils. Across the school a few tasks lack challenge and do not provide enough chances for pupils to use their own ideas. This restricts pupils' creativity especially in writing, investigative skills in science and mathematics and in aspects of the Reception curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A stimulating range of experiences and visits is organised to make lessons interesting. A good balance between academic and creative activities has been maintained and many pupils excel in art and design.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils have detailed individual education plans which make it clear what they need to do to improve. Pupils with physical disabilities are sensitively helped and enabled to play a full and active part in all lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school seeks advice when the need arises but has no formal procedures to monitor their progress. In lessons effective help is available.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is very good and the school enables pupils to grow in self-esteem. Moral development is very good and the clear code of conduct is understood and appreciated by all. Social and cultural development is good. Pupils are friendly and polite. They celebrate their own culture but do not learn enough about life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school provides a caring environment. Suitable child protection procedures are in place. Very good systems are in place to monitor behaviour and eliminate any harassment. The school has good systems for checking pupils' progress.

The school's partnership with parents is very good and they hold the school in high esteem.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has worked hard to overcome the difficulties of leading a school on two sites. Other key staff are increasingly involved in checking on standards and advising other teachers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a high level of commitment to the school. They have a good understanding of what is happening in school and fulfil all of their statutory duties except for omissions in some documents to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and staff meticulously analyse the results of assessments, track pupils' progress and compare the school's performance with both national and local data. Effective action is taken when a weakness is spotted and this has led to an improvement in standards.
The strategic use of	Good. The school uses staffing resources well to provide smaller teaching groups for literacy and numeracy. Money is spent prudently

resources	and governors check that spending has a positive effect on standards in the school. Governors consult widely on any major purchases and give good attention to the principles of best value.
-----------	--

The school has a good number of experienced staff and support assistants. Accommodation is satisfactory. The split site makes it virtually impossible for the school to come together as a whole community. There is no secure outdoor play area for the children in the Reception classes. Resources are satisfactory although there are insufficient computers for pupils to practise their skills in their classrooms.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school and make good progress. • Teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • The school provides well for children's personal development and enables them to mature. • Parents feel welcome in the school and find it easy to ask questions and raise concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agree with all parents' positive views. The programme of after school activities is satisfactory although limited in the infants. The number of pupils who can attend these activities is restricted and this naturally leads to some disappointment.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection and this has been recognised by the school being awarded two Achievement Awards for improvement in national test results.

Standards and progress in the Foundation Stage¹

2. The standards of children on entry to the Reception classes are broadly average. Although their speaking and listening skills are satisfactory, the range of their vocabulary is not particularly broad. Children make sound progress and reach the early learning goals² by the time they leave the Reception classes. In response to good teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills progress is better and many children are working at levels higher than expected for their age. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world through, for example, their use of information and communication technology and an awareness of the changing seasons. Children reach the level expected in their personal and social development. In creative and physical development, children make satisfactory progress but outdoor play is restricted by a lack of suitable play area. Teachers do not always allow sufficient choice in activities and this restricts children's creative skills and ability to make decisions. The small number of children who need support because English is not their first spoken language receive help from the teacher and make similar progress to other pupils.

Results and analysis of national tests for seven-year-olds.

3. In the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds results were average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading both compared with the national average and the average of schools with similar intakes. Standards in reading have been above average since 1999 and this is a strength in the school. In 2002, a high number of pupils (40 per cent) exceeded the level expected for their age and this is enabling the school to sustain its high standards. This was not the case in writing and mathematics. Although the vast majority of pupils achieved expected levels in writing and mathematics, not enough pupils reached the higher levels. This held down the school's overall performance and results were not as high as the previous year. Teachers' assessment shows that standards in science are average. The number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was good in science. Trends in the results of national tests have fluctuated but overall standards since 2000 have exceeded the national average for this age group. Test results in reading have been consistently high because the school sees reading as a priority and provides much support for the lower attaining pupils to enable them to quickly catch up with their peers. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Current standards and achievements in English, mathematics and science in Year 2.

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the Reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and personal and social development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

² Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

4. Current standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and show good improvement since the last inspection. Overall achievement is good. Improvement has been brought about by:
 - more challenge for the higher attaining pupils who are now working at levels above those expected for their age;
 - the focus on the development of pupils' spelling and punctuation skills;
 - the introduction of an initiative to extend writing through role play;
 - the use of joined up handwriting from when pupils start school;
 - better teaching of basic skills in mathematics and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.
5. Pupils have good skills in reading, writing and listening in Year 2. Speaking is satisfactory although a number do not speak in extended sentences or use a broad vocabulary. Pupils read well because they are taught letters and sounds effectively and use this skill to tackle new words. Higher attaining pupils are also including expression into their reading. Pupils' writing skills are strong because of good basic skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Pupils have above average ability in mathematics because they are confident handling numbers.
6. Literacy and numeracy skills play a significant part in standards in other subjects. For example, in music, pupils write imaginatively about the sounds they hear, *I like the ring of a bell, I do not like the buzz of a bee*. In information and communication technology pupils calculate the distance a programmable toy has to move and then try out their predictions.
7. Standards in science are above average. Pupils perform simple experiments by following instructions and handling equipment carefully. They observe results and understand how to take experiments a stage further.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and they have detailed individual education plans which set clear targets for improvement. Teachers and support staff monitor progress closely and when a target is achieved another one is set. As a result, pupils' progress builds successfully on their prior attainment and most are reaching or coming very close to national standards

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

9. Pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools in English and mathematics. In English, a good number of pupils reached the level expected for their age but few exceeded this level and this held down the overall performance. A similar picture was evident in mathematics with the number of pupils reaching above average levels being below average. This was not the case in science and test results were above the national average and the average of schools with a similar intake. Pupils are doing better than expected and an above average number of pupils reached the higher levels. Overall there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
10. The school's trend in test results at the end of Year 6 has been in line with the national trend in recent years. The school did not quite reach its targets in English and mathematics in 2002 because fewer pupils reached the higher levels than expected. The governors have set challenging targets for 2003 based on the school's assessment data. Taking into consideration the pupils' current standards they are likely to achieve the overall target. However, the predicted number of pupils to reach above average levels may be too challenging.

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

11. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science and overall achievement is good. Improvements have been brought about by:
 - the good attention given to raising the standards of higher and lower attaining pupils;
 - closer tracking of individual progress and the setting of targets;
 - detailed analysis of test results and adjustments to the curriculum when a weakness is spotted;
 - the grouping of pupils according to their ability and this makes it easier for teachers to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
 - better teaching in response to training and advice from colleagues.
12. Pupils' attainment in reading is good. They are competent at reading with expression and show good comprehension of texts. Standards are average in writing. Pupils have very neat handwriting, good skills in grammar and spelling, but they are not as creative as they could be. Standards in listening are above average, helped by pupils' eagerness to learn. Speaking skills are satisfactory and a number of higher attaining pupils are articulate and detailed in what they say. In mathematics, pupils are confident working with fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils are less confident putting their skills to work to solve more detailed problems and deciding which methods to use.
13. Pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills to support their learning in other subjects. For example, in history pupils have written letters pretending they are working in the workhouse in Victorian times. Numeracy skills are used in science when pupils in Year 6, for example, calculate what happens to a shadow when the light source gets closer.
14. In science, standards are good because pupils are methodical in their approach and present their work skilfully and neatly. Pupils are not as confident carrying out experiments for themselves or drawing their own conclusions.
15. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make good progress in the juniors. They do well because they know what they have to do to improve and, as a result, older pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils with physical disabilities, including visual impairment, benefit from sensitive and well informed help. Information and communication technology is used effectively when required to enable these pupils to play a full and active part in all lessons. These pupils make very good progress and thrive in this caring environment knowing that friends and adults are always there to provide any additional help. There are no pupils in Years 2 to 6 needing help because they are learning through English as an additional language.

Standards in other subjects in Years 2 to 6

16. In response to good teaching standards in geography and history are above expectations throughout the school. Music is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors because the subject receives less time and teachers find it difficult to fully extend pupils' musical skills. In art and design, physical education and information and communication technology attainment is average. Standards in design and technology are below average because pupils do not acquire enough basic skills to handle a variety of tools. Pupils are underachieving because they have limited experience of design and evaluation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; this has been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. This is evident in their good levels of attendance and the pride they take in the presentation of their work in lessons. Pupils come to school ready to learn and pursue each new task with interest and determination. For

example, in a Year 2 science lesson the teacher's introduction was lively and entertaining and as a result pupils began their tasks with enthusiasm rising to the challenge to apply their knowledge. Children in the Foundation Stage have settled into school happily. The warm relationships, which have been established between children and staff, ensure that they are keen to learn. The children respond well to questions knowing that their answers will be valued and built upon. Pupils with special educational needs also have very good attitudes to learning and play a full part in class lessons. This is due to the very good help they receive which helps them to understand what is going on.

18. Behaviour is good and pupils demonstrate good levels of self-control, they have a clear understanding of the system of discipline operating in school and usually react well to it. Teachers have established very good routines and so pupils settle quickly, listen attentively and do as they are told without making a fuss, allowing the maximum time to be spent on learning. For example, in a Year 1 lesson at the end of the school day, pupils knew what was expected of them. Even when they were very keen to share their ideas they waited patiently for their turn to speak respecting the contribution of others and enjoying their learning. There are times when the behaviour of a few pupils both in lessons and in the playground is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this and has very good systems in place to monitor these incidents and take appropriate action. Bullying is not a problem in school; pupils who say that *if it happens it is handled well by staff* confirm this. There were no exclusions in the last academic year.
19. Pupils' personal development is good. They are confident learners who are capable of working well on their own. A good example of this was in a Year 5 poetry lesson where pupils settled quickly to their task, independently organising their resources, such as rhyming dictionaries and producing good quality work without the need to disturb the teacher or group engaged in group reading. Pupils in Year 6 set their own targets for personal development through the use of personal development diaries and each term review their progress towards them. This enables them to effectively identify their own strengths and weaknesses and understanding of the impact this has on the standards they achieve. For example, one pupil understood that he needed to improve his concentration and that this could be achieved by not always working alongside his friends. Pupils are eager to take responsibility for themselves, others and the smooth running of their school, for example, when answering the telephone at lunchtime, acting as prefects and house captains.
20. Personal, social and health education lessons and displays in school illustrate pupils' ability to reflect on the feelings of themselves and others. In Circle Time³ in Year 5 pupils consider self-image and in Year 3 pupils write about their feelings and the effect of gifts, such as love and kindness. Pupils' knowledge and ability to consider the values and beliefs of people of faiths other than their own are limited due to the few opportunities provided in school. Pupils use their initiative well when carrying out research to complete their home projects. This has a positive impact on the standards they attain particularly in history and geography. For example, the knowledge pupils in Year 3 had gained about Formby added significantly to their ability to identify coastal features. Pupils' ability to use their own initiative in lessons is sometimes limited due to tasks being too directed by the teacher. This was observed across the curriculum but was most evident in the Foundation Stage, design and technology, mathematics and science lessons.

³ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and social issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time can speak. Respect for each pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any interruptions from other pupils.

21. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and are characterised by an atmosphere of praise and encouragement. This ensures that pupils are happy in school and keen to give of their best, when interviewed pupils in Year 4 stated *its just like home*. Relationships between pupils are generally positive in lessons where they work together amicably and share equipment sensibly. Pupils are polite and friendly and confident to discuss their work with visitors.
22. Levels of attendance are good. They are above the national average and have improved since the time of the last inspection; this is one of the reasons why pupils' achievement is also good. There is no reported unauthorised absence due to the good systems, which the school has in place to contact parents when no reason for absence has been given.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed.
The strengths in teaching and learning are:
 - teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach;
 - clarity about what pupils are to learn;
 - the help given to pupils with special educational needs;
 - the management of pupils;
 - the variety of activities which lead to pupils being enthusiastic learners.
24. Areas for development in teaching and learning are:
 - teachers' knowledge of all of the aspects of design and technology;
 - the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects;
 - the quality of assessment in lessons to ensure tasks are set that closely match pupils' ability;
 - the provision of tasks which allow pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning without too much adult help.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage

25. In the Foundation Stage the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching was good and better in slightly more than a quarter of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the rest. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and involves many practical activities that make learning enjoyable. As a result, children get off to a flying start in their reading, writing and mathematics. A common strength is the adults' care for the children and their wish to help the children do well. This successfully enhances the children's self-esteem and willingness to try new ideas. Teachers use praise well to reward the children and their warm manner leads to children learning in a happy atmosphere. Teachers and support staff work well together and lessons run smoothly. Detailed medium term plans are closely followed which ensure the children experience a wide range of activities. However, lesson plans do not always make it clear what skills are to be taught and this restricts progress in creative and physical development when the focus is more on the finished product than on the skills to be learnt. Occasionally, teachers give too much direction and tasks are repetitive and this restricts children's ability to explore their own ideas. The only children in the school needing support because they are learning through English as an additional language are in the Reception classes. Sensitive help is offered to check these children are fully involved in all activities.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6

26. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 to 6. It is better in Year 1 and 2 where four fifths of the teaching seen was good compared to three fifths in Years 3 to 6. Although no teaching seen was unsatisfactory the overall quality of teaching and learning in

design and technology is unsatisfactory because teachers do not give sufficient attention to all of the required aspects of the subject and do not present pupils with sufficient choice of materials or tools. Teachers have a secure knowledge of all of the other subjects they teach and offer good advice to pupils during lessons. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and art and design.

27. The school has given good attention to the weakness identified in the last inspection in the teaching of spelling and handwriting. These skills are now taught well. Handwriting has significantly improved and pupils are taught to join up their letter in the Reception classes and this is then built on in other years and the quality of handwriting is very good. Reading and writing are taught effectively. Letters and sounds are taught through a range of activities and pupils are encouraged to use this knowledge in their independent writing. Teaching of spelling and punctuation is good but teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not always challenge pupils with sufficient opportunities to write creatively.
28. Teaching of mathematics has improved because the school now follows the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are putting to good use their training in teaching numeracy and this ensures pupils learn well. The openings of lessons are lively and teachers follow up responses with a request for explanation of how answers are reached. As a result, pupils learn from each other different methods of mental calculation.
29. Teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory. Basic computer skills are taught effectively in lessons in the infants and in the computer suite in the juniors. However, computers are not used as much as they could be and teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in other subjects.
30. Teachers' planning is good. Since the last inspection the school has implemented new planning guidelines and these are leading to more variety in lessons. Careful attention is given to the mixed-age class so that all pupils all have access to a curriculum suitable to their age and ability. In the best lessons teachers have very clear learning outcomes and they share these with pupils. As a result, pupils are clear about the focus of tasks and can check on their own learning at the end of the lesson when teachers effectively revisit the outcomes.
31. The difference separating the satisfactory teaching from the good teaching is teachers' expectation of pupils. It is higher in the infants and more pupils are working at levels higher than those expected for their age. Weaknesses in lessons which are satisfactory often include tasks that fail to challenge pupils and the pace is slow. This is evident in science and mathematics when tasks are too directed by the teacher and do not allow pupils to set up their own investigations or put their skills into practise in a variety of challenging activities.
32. Teachers often make learning exciting by including a range of interesting activities. This motivates pupils, accelerates their learning and raises standards. For example, in art and design pupils experience a stimulating range of tasks which enable all to achieve success as they learn different techniques to make their work better. Many lessons include collaboration and this enables pupils to share their ideas and learn from each other. This is especially effective in music. For example, in Year 2 the whole class collaborated and produced an imaginative story in sounds retelling the popular text *Peace at Last* by Jill Murphy.
33. A positive feature in most lessons is the warm relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils. These lead to good behaviour and lessons take place in an orderly atmosphere. This is very beneficial for pupils with special educational needs who are well supported by staff and fellow pupils. The overall quality of teaching for these pupils is good because teachers keep very

good records of the progress these pupils make. Teaching is systematically planned to move pupils forward against the targets set in their individual education plans. They work hard to win the certificates awarded for completing a target. The needs of lower attaining pupils are also fully met. The school is quick to provide additional support in literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants have a key role to play within classes. They support and motivate pupils well and the good teamwork in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. The determination to help pupils with physical disabilities is very evident and these pupils receive a stimulating range of experiences which enables them to make very good progress. Resources for the visually impaired pupils are adapted to meet their needs and good use is made of information and communication technology to enable them to have full access to the curriculum.

34. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. Most teachers include positive encouragement but there are limited comments to inform pupils how to improve their work. In Years 3 to 6 pupils have individual literacy and numeracy targets but these are not being as effective as they could be as teachers are not reminding pupils of them in their marking or in lessons. Teachers do not always spot when pupils have understood a new concept and this led to the pace of lessons slowing as pupils lost interest and limited new learning took place. Occasionally tasks are set that do not match pupils' ability because teachers have not given sufficient attention to pupils' previous learning. This leads to higher attaining pupils especially, having to complete work which is too easy before they get to the more challenging work. For example, in Year 3 in English pupils had to copy their ideas into their books rather than moving on with the next part of their play script.
35. Homework is good. Tasks are linked to what has been taught and makes a purposeful contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy the challenge of researching, writing and extending topics, examples of history and geography topics are of high quality.

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

36. The school's curriculum is good. The school has understandably given priority to the teaching of English and mathematics in recent years. This has meant that much of the timetable has been devoted to these two subjects and other subjects have had less time than is normal. Careful planning generally overcomes this problem except in music when limited time is available in the juniors for teachers to fully develop pupils' skills of writing their own pieces of music. The school fulfils all statutory requirements.
37. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is carefully planned to support the children's learning towards the nationally agreed goals in all areas of learning. Significant emphasis is given to numeracy and literacy and this is done in a practical way so that learning is enjoyable. The provision of a wide range of visits enhances children's knowledge of the world around them. The school has no suitable outdoor space for this age range and this restricts their physical development.
38. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers teach basic skills well in English and mathematics and this underpins pupils' work in other subjects. This has been recognised by the basic Skills Award. The school has introduced a good range of support to help pupils who lag behind in their work and those who need a little extra help to reach expected levels in the national tests. For example, there is an efficient scheme to improve reading for pupils in Year 3. The school intends to provide similar opportunities for more able pupils but these are not yet in place. There are some good examples of teachers planning their lessons to help pupils learn subjects through other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 improved their factual and descriptive

writing when they wrote detailed letters of what life would have been like in a 19th century workhouse. Pupils develop their skills in art when drawing maps and pictures in geography. However, teachers do not make the most of such opportunities. For instance, teachers do not promote information and communication technology enough in other subjects, whether drawing a graph in science or word-processing recipes in design and technology.

39. Teachers plan the curriculum well. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resolved the weakness in the teaching of mathematics identified in the last inspection. Spelling and handwriting have improved because the school has introduced and consistently follows detailed planning guidelines. In other subjects the school uses nationally accepted schemes of work which provide good coverage of knowledge and show how skills should progress over time. Teachers hold regular meetings to make sure that pupils in the same year group receive a similar curriculum. This is particularly important in the mixed age class in Years 3 and 4. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils but as yet do not always cater for their needs sufficiently within lessons. However, in Years 3 to 6 the school groups pupils according to their ability in mathematics and this goes some way to targeting learning more effectively. The school is involved with other local schools in a plan to group together gifted and talented pupils so that their needs can be more fully met.
40. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the insistence on equal access to the curriculum that is evident throughout the school. Records are kept in very good order and all staff are involved in the process of developing a suitable curriculum for their pupils. Individual education plans are regularly monitored by the co-ordinator. Progress is closely checked and teachers ensure that there is good communication between staff in the two buildings. The school has adapted the building to provide additional space to cater for the needs of pupils with physical disabilities and this enables them to be fully involved in the school. Information and communication technology is used effectively to help pupils with a visual impairment.
41. The school enriches the curriculum well. There are frequent visits out to places of interest, linked to subjects in school. Pupils visit the Catalyst Museum in Widnes to explore science hands-on, they visit the Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre to strengthen knowledge of the environment and older pupils go to the theatre to watch a Shakespearean play. Experts visit the school to inspire pupils. A theatre company motivated younger pupils with their performance of *The Nursery Rhyme Garden*. An ornithologist brought a selection of owls in so that pupils could fully appreciate the splendour of birds. The school stages speciality weeks from time to time. Most recent was a very successful Art Week. Parents expressed a concern about the number of after school activities available for their children. There is an adequate number of activities after school including, choir, computer and art clubs. However, because these are popular, numbers are limited. This can lead to some pupils being disappointed.
42. The school has satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Teachers plan special lessons in which pupils can discuss personal feelings and contemporary issues. Pupils in Year 5, for example, explored how they might view their own personalities to appreciate how other people might see them. Pupils in Year 3/4 discussed how their moods would affect people around them. Much of health education is dealt with in the science curriculum but there are special lessons to guide older pupils about sex education. Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of the dangers of the misuse of drugs because the school is not giving sufficient attention to this aspect of the health curriculum.
43. The school has good links with other schools, particularly the group of nearby primary and secondary schools. Through the collective energy of this group, the school is soon to benefit from exciting new initiatives to accelerate pupils' learning and a joint multi-activity afternoon.

Secondary school teachers visit the school occasionally to advise pupils about their move from primary school and to teach them topics like information and communication technology.

44. The school has satisfactory links with the community. The choir sings locally in a charity concert. There are football workshops with Liverpool and Everton football clubs, and a local restaurant has begun a small sponsorship campaign.
45. Arrangements for promoting pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are very good. Collectively they help create a very pleasant atmosphere in which everyone can work and grow.
46. The overall provision for spiritual development is very good. The school places great emphasis on this, including it in its mission statement and arranging for staff to have specific training so that they are aware of how to extend pupils' spiritual awareness. Circle Time is mostly skilfully used to explore many themes and the positive atmosphere in these lessons enables pupils to grow in self-esteem. Pupils think and talk about their experiences, and appreciate the time provided in lessons and in assemblies to pause and consider their own circumstances. Prayers are said regularly, and with feeling, and the classroom religious displays provide pupils with a focal point for their thoughts. The wonderful art work around the school and the appreciation of artists' great works are uplifting. Pupils are encouraged to be curious and to appreciate the natural world. For example, in Year 5 the pupils are watching the activities of spiders, slugs and snails in the natural habitat they have set up in their class.
47. Arrangements for pupils' moral development are very good, and all the pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and the great majority abide by the rules and can determine right from wrong. These rules are well known by pupils because they were involved in drawing them up. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and appreciate that all staff apply the rules fairly and rewards are often given. The values of honesty, fairness and justice are very well promoted. Equal opportunities and personal rights are well developed. Pupils look after the younger ones in the playground and support the learning of less able or those with physical difficulties. As yet there is insufficient work planned for pupils to understand the views of other races and cultures.
48. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Adults at the school provide very good role models for pupils and there are positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are provided with good opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own actions, like helping in and around the school or working the computer attached to the projector during a class demonstration. The positive behaviour policy provides good opportunities for pupils to exhibit a sense of self-discipline. Very many pupils appreciate the principle of fair competition and play maths and physical education games within the rules. The school is heavily involved in charity work, particularly for a mission in Zambia, and the pupils give their wholehearted support for this kind of venture. The impact of very good relationships is reflected in the social order and climate of the school, and school and classroom rules are mostly developed with direct input from the pupils. The attitude of very many older pupils towards the care of younger ones is good. Pupils say that Year 6 girls will play with them if they have nobody to play with at lunchtime. The split-site has a negative impact on fostering these kinds of attitudes because of the limited contact the Year 6 pupils have to support the younger children in the Foundation Stage.
49. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils are very aware of the importance of their own cultural traditions. With the help of a visiting artist pupils made an amazing mural in the school hall, which strikingly depicts local history. Studies in history and geography ensure that pupils appreciate the cultural heritage of British society, but not enough is

done currently to provide pupils with an understanding of the culturally diverse society Britain has become. The school provides very many enriching cultural experiences for its pupils in lessons like art, geography and music. In Year 6, a very broad range of English literature is studied which enables pupils to understand the richness and quality of their language. Art Week, Indian Dancers and a West Indian poet give some opportunities for pupils to appreciate the cultures of other groups and religions. Artists and theatre groups are regular visitors to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school's systems to ensure the health, welfare and safety of pupils are satisfactory. The day-to-day care of pupils by staff is good, however, although suitable health and safety measures are in place, they are not all up to date. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and will be improved when the schools plan to train an additional member of staff are put in place. Risk assessment procedures identify the risk attached to those areas of the school, which are in need of repair or maintenance. However, there is no risk assessment schedule covering the school buildings as a whole or the day-to-day practices, which may represent a risk to pupils or staff.
51. The policy and procedures to promote and monitor standards of behaviour and to eliminate oppressive behaviour are very good and are implemented consistently by teachers. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection and ensures that effective learning can take place. Pupils, parents, staff and governors all played their part in reviewing discipline procedures and as a result are all clear about the school rules and feel that they are fair. Praise and rewards are used very successfully to encourage effort and achievements are celebrated in assembly each Friday. Staff monitor any incidents of unacceptable behaviour carefully and parents are involved when appropriate.
52. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. The deputy headteacher and school administrative staff regularly monitor records of attendance. Registers are maintained properly and parents are contacted to supply reasons for absence. As a result, there is no recorded unauthorised absence. Those pupils with 100 per cent attendance are rewarded each week. Despite the good procedures there are still a few pupils whose attendance is a reason for concern. In the main the school use the support of the Education Welfare Service well to help these pupils, however there are one or two pupils whose unsatisfactory attendance over a period of time has not been noted.
53. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils well and work very hard to build their confidence and levels of self-esteem. The Rainbow scheme continues to provide good help and counselling for those pupils with identified needs. Personal development is promoted well through personal, social and health education lessons where teachers use this subject to help pupils understand their own feelings and how their actions affect others. There is good personal support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with a physical disability, with an emphasis on including everyone into the life of the school.
54. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are very good. They provide detailed and reliable information about pupils' attainment in national and other standardised tests, and are used effectively to judge how well pupils are achieving year on year and as the basis for setting individual and year group targets. The results of National Curriculum tests are analysed in detail, and senior staff use this information to compare boys' and girls' results, to see how well the school is doing over time, and to measure how successful the teaching has been in improving pupils' performance.

55. In other subjects, whole-school procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do are not fully in place. A useful and manageable system, similar to that used in science, has been tried and agreed. This is not yet in use, for example in history and geography, because of recent changes in the curriculum. Some subject leaders, for example for information and communication technology, have introduced good systems. The system to collect samples of pupils' work provides parents with evidence of their children's progress.
56. The school has effective systems to assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Their progress is monitored and prompt action taken when progress slows. In their individual education plans, targets are precise and achievable. The accompanying information in pupils' files is thorough, and analyses all the important aspects of development. This ensures that the most suitable individual targets are set. Procedures to monitor the progress of the very small number of pupils learning through English as an additional language are less formal. Teachers raise their concerns with the local authority and seek advice when needed. These pupils are well supported and staff check to ensure they are fully included in activities.
57. The school uses assessment information well to improve teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science. Teachers analyse pupils' answers in tests and this has led to significant changes in the curriculum. For example, in both English and science they have identified the need to extend pupils' vocabulary, as a result all teachers now focus on this in lessons. The results of the school's own assessments are also used effectively. For example, every term teachers compare samples of each pupil's writing with the National Curriculum requirements, to see how well pupils are doing and which areas need more attention. A strength in assessment is the determination of the school to use its information to raise standards. For example, in science, the subject leader analyses the answers of pupils who achieved more or less than the expected level and finds out what made the difference. Teachers then use this in their lessons to move pupils on.
58. The school keeps a careful eye on how well each pupil is learning. Teachers act quickly when it appears that a pupil is starting to lose ground, for example in providing extra support or arranging small group teaching. This has been effective in raising the standard of lower attaining pupils. Individual and group targets are now being given to pupils in English and mathematics so that they have a clearer understanding about how to improve. These are most successful for the older pupils, where there are specific targets and teachers remind pupils of them regularly. These pupils know how well they are doing and talk about their strengths and weaknesses. In some other classes the targets are too general to be useful, although they are good for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils appreciate the certificates given for achieving their targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. Parents have very positive views of the school. They feel that their children like school, make good progress, are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature. They also express the view that they find the school approachable and that teaching is good. Parents' positive views of the school are confirmed by inspection findings. A few parents expressed the view that there are too few activities to interest pupils outside of lessons. Inspection judgements are that there is a satisfactory range of activities. However, these are often directed to particular year groups and the number of participants able to attend is limited and this leads to some inequality of opportunity. This situation is aggravated by the split site as parents need to collect pupils from different buildings and at different times.
60. The quality of information that parents receive is satisfactory overall. Pupils' annual reports to

parents provide good quality information about what pupils can do and the progress they have made in English, mathematics and science. Information regarding pupils' progress in other subjects is satisfactory but does at times concentrate more on pupils' attitude to their work rather than the progress they have made. Newsletters keep parents fully informed about life in school. The prospectus and governors' annual report, however, do not meet all requirements. In particular, the prospectus does not inform parents that they have a right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons. The governors' report lacks several items of information, for example it fails to tell parents what has been done to address issues raised in the previous inspection report. Parents of pupils with special education needs are properly involved and informed about all developments in provision for their children. Parents know what the identified targets are and they are given advice on how they may help pupils at home.

61. The school continues to work hard to build links with its parents and has built a very good partnership with them. This is one of the reasons why pupils have such good attitudes to school. Courses, such as Parents as Educators, enables parents to understand how literacy is taught in school and provides them with good quality guidance as to how they can continue this at home. The very active Friends of the School Association organises a wide range of events throughout the year raising valued extra funds as well as contributing to pupils social development. Parents continue to give good support to activities, for instance a good number of parents attended a drama performance during the week of inspection. A few of them also help out in school, in particular a parent regularly shares with pupils his expertise in information and communication technology. The school encourages children to share books at home with their parents. In this way the learning that takes place in school is well reinforced at home. Overall, parents' impact on how well pupils are doing is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is dedicated to the school and provides very good leadership. Managing the school on two sites provides a difficult challenge, which has been met with a good spirit. The headteacher is eager to keep the school abreast in new development and many new initiatives have been introduced which have especially led to improved standards for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The deputy headteacher helps the headteacher in day-to-day management of the junior building when the headteacher is not present. There is less involvement in strategic planning or commitment to helping with aspects related to financial administration and the headteacher lacks a skilled manager to help with these management roles.
63. Good work by subject co-ordinators contributes strongly to standards in most subjects. Co-ordinators play an important part in updating planning guidelines and this has been effective in resolving a concern about teachers' planning raised in the last inspection. Through observation of teaching and reviewing pupils' work, most co-ordinators have a clear view of standards in their subjects and offer good advice to other teachers. Management of design and technology has been less effective and the subject has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. The school is now giving more attention to the subject and an action plan has been drawn up in an attempt to raise standards.
64. The management of provision for special educational needs is good. The recently revised Code of Practice⁴ is fully in place. All staff know the procedures to be followed and what to do when

⁴ Code of Practice—this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most

things are not working well. Records of pupils' progress are kept meticulously and used in planning. Close links are in place with the nominated governor for special educational needs. This link was important in the recent decision by the school to admit a pupil with physical disability and led to governors agreeing additional spending to provide necessary resources. This reflects the school's commitment to welcoming all pupils to the school. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides strong leadership and staff work hard to make sure that all pupils get the best from their time at school.

65. The contribution made by the governing body is good. Through its committee structure, the governors fulfil most of their legal requirements. Several required items are omitted from information to parents. Governors are very proud of the school and have played an important part in the current decision to merge on one site. Close links are established with subject co-ordinators and an annual meeting take place for in depth discussion about subjects. As a result, governors are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. They attend training and check to see the school is up-to-date and responds promptly to any new legislation, for example, in checking the school fulfils the requirements of the Disability Act 2001. Governors are fully committed to providing an education that meets the needs of all pupils.
66. A concern raised in the previous inspection was the need for more careful monitoring of teaching. This issue has been resolved and the headteacher and senior staff carry out regular monitoring of teaching. All staff are formally observed at least three times a year. This is most effective and has led to improvements in teaching especially in English, mathematics and science. For example, a weakness was spotted in the teaching of letters and sounds and so it was arranged for the teacher to observe other approaches and this led to better teaching. The headteacher carries out very detailed analysis of the school's performance in national tests. This has been most effective in raising standards. For example, the headteacher is quick to spot a weakness in national test results in Year 2 and ensure additional literacy and numeracy help is provided. This has been successful in enabling lower attaining pupils to catch up with their peers and reach the level expected for their age. Governors are included in this analysis of performance and in the setting of futures targets for the school.
67. The school's plan for improvement is a well-set out document which provides clear objectives to lead the school forward. It is drawn up by the headteacher following staff analysis of areas for development. Subject co-ordinators are fully included in the planning process as they feed their action plans into the school improvement plan. Governors are not involved at this stage and so do not have input into setting the priorities for the school. However, they do review the first draft of the plan and raise any concerns at this time. Once in place the school's improvement plan is reviewed regularly at staff and governing body meetings. This makes it very much a useful, working document and changes are made as new priorities are identified and others successfully achieved. Current priorities are correct for the school and include action plans to raise standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. It is a weakness that design and technology is not identified, as this was a concern in the last inspection that has not received sufficient attention.
68. The overall management of the budget is good. Spending is linked to priorities in the school's improvement plan and the governors are determined to maintain the current staffing situations. This includes additional staff to enable pupils in Years 3 and 4 to be taught literacy and numeracy in small groups. The school has accrued a higher financial reserve than is usually seen and this has been a weakness in financial planning. Although the money was earmarked for a nursery the

appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

pupils in the school were missing opportunities to extend their information and communication skills because of lack of resources. Now it is clear the proposed new school will include a nursery the school has spent considerably on refurbishment and extending resources. The carry forward figure is now closer to national recommendations. Overall, monitoring of spending is very good. The recommendations of the most recent financial audit have been implemented. The school's administrative staff are efficient in checking on spending on a daily basis and in providing information about the overall financial situation. Information and communication technology is used well and accurate information on spending can be located quickly. Specific grants are spent correctly in the best interest of the pupils.

69. The principles of best value are applied in a good manner in major spending decisions. The analysis of school's performance has led to challenging targets being set to further raise standards. The headteacher is consistently looking for ways to improve the school and is especially eager to lead the school forward as it merges onto one site. Governors are giving more attention to the effect spending has on standards in the school. For example, the spending on additional support staff and the increase in standards of the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Good attention is given to comparing the school's performance against national figures as well as against the local authority's figures. This enables the school to get a clearer picture of overall performance as the number of pupils eligible to free school meal does not give a reliable figure for comparison because many parents opt to provide a packed lunch rather than apply for free school meals. Consultation is carried out before any major spending decisions are made.
70. The school is well staffed with teachers who provide a good balance of experience and expertise. Teachers are supported by a good number of classroom assistants who in the main work well in partnership with them. When used successfully in the opening part of lessons they provide unobtrusive support to individual pupils. As a result, pupils who are not confident are able to test their answers out with support assistants before putting forward their thoughts to the whole class.
71. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are effective and training is closely linked to the needs of the school. Procedures for performance management are in place. The school puts great emphasis on staff development and is working towards Investors in People status. Procedures for the induction of newly qualified staff are also effective and fully meet national requirements.
72. Accommodation is satisfactory. However, the split site nature of the school affects its capacity to operate as a whole community. Improvements to the accommodation since the time of the last inspection include the creation of a computer suite in the junior building, which although small has contributed to an improvement in information and technology skills of both staff and pupils. Accommodation for the children in the Foundation Stage although satisfactory overall, does not include an outside play area for use in the promotion of children's social and physical development. The library in the junior building although centrally placed is in a corridor, which makes it unsuitable for full class use. The quality of display in classrooms and around the school is good and helps pupils to take a pride in their achievements and those of others.
73. The quality and range of learning resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in mathematics and English with a good range of resources and reading books. Resources are satisfactory for design and technology, information and communication technology and science. Although pupils benefit from the computers in the information and communication technology suite there are no resources in classes in the juniors and this restricts pupils extending their computer skills in other subjects. The libraries in both the infant and junior buildings contain good quality books for guided and group reading including big books for the younger pupils and

contribute well to above average standards in reading. Resources are generally accessible and used well in lessons.

74. The many strengths in the leadership and management of the school ensure that the school's mission statement is reflected in all aspects of daily life. Pupils learn to grow together in a happy and caring school. They are taught how to be friendly, share, grow with God and respect each other.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- (1) improve standards in design and technology by:
 - extending teachers' knowledge;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use a wider range of resources and tools;
 - extending pupils' ability to design their own models;See paragraph numbers 16, 24, 26, 63, and 125-129.

- (2) further develop the use of information and communication technology by:
 - making more use of the available resources;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects;This aspect is identified as a priority in the school's improvement plan.
See paragraph numbers 24, 29, 38, 73, 78, 109, 117, 143, 144, 148.

- (3) provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in challenging work which enables them to take more responsibility to plan and organise their own activities rather than being too directed by the teacher:
This area for development was especially observed in writing, mathematics, science, design and technology and aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. See paragraph numbers 2, 12, 14, 20, 24, 25, 27, 31, 34, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 94, 97, 103, 107, 113, 114, 115, 116, 127, 128.

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

- provide a secure outdoor space for children in the Reception classes;
See paragraph numbers 2, 37, 72, 89.
- provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultures and faiths of a multi-cultural society.
See paragraph numbers 20, 47, 49.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	40	29	0	0	0
Percentage	0	9	53	38	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	Na	325
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Na	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Na	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Na	33

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	16	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	28
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	43	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (98)	91 (91)	94 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	43	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (96)	94 (98)	94 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	30	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	19	24
	Girls	28	26	30
	Total	49	45	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (95)	78 (76)	93 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	21
	Girls	29	28	29
	Total	48	47	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (na)	81 (na)	86 (na)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	319	0	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	258

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	752320
Total expenditure	741001
Expenditure per pupil	2212
Balance brought forward from previous year	97800
Balance carried forward to next year	109119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	325
Number of questionnaires returned	96

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	41	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	29	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	43	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	40	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	71	28	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	41	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	46	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	35	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	39	23	4	9

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

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

76. Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. Currently, 41 children attend full time in two Reception classes.
77. The school has sound links with local authority nurseries and some private providers of pre-school education. Parents and children are invited into school on more than one occasion during the summer term prior to them starting school. These arrangements enable children to settle quickly and confidently into school life.
78. The school uses the early learning goals and the national guidelines for children in the Foundation Stage. These consist of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physically development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *Stepping-Stones* from which progress and standards can be measured.
79. While standards of attainment vary slightly from year to year, results of tests given to children soon after they arrive at school confirm that attainment is typical of children at this age. However, most children's speaking skills are lower than average on entry. Most children are working securely on the second *Stepping-Stone* with many working in or towards the third *Stepping-Stone*, which is appropriate for the age group. Overall, children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception classes. Their achievement is good in reading, writing, number work and knowledge and understanding of the world because there is a strong emphasis on these areas and they are taught well. Almost all children are likely to reach the early learning goals and many exceed the level expected for their age in these areas of learning. Achievement is satisfactory in other aspects of mathematical development, personal and social development and in physical and creative development and children are working at the level expected for their age.
80. The school makes very good provision for children identified as having special educational needs and as a consequence they make good progress.
81. Children who need help because they are learning through English as an additional language are identified early in the year. Suitable support from the family and the local authority are sought. Although all staff provide help and guidance, often through mime or additional resources, teachers' planning does not identify and use this help sufficiently well. These children make sound progress in all aspects of the programme.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good and this ensures children have a firm foundation in these skills when they move into Year 1. Teachers plan together and this helps to provide some consistency for both classes. Teachers' yearly and termly planning are strong, setting out a clear programme of learning, which stresses language and mathematics work. Weekly lesson planning often shows which activities the children will experience but doesn't always provide sufficient detail about which skills the children will learn. This leads to some over emphasis on the end product rather than the children's learning. The use of national guidelines for teaching English and number help the children to make good progress in these very specific areas of learning. Teachers use visits, and walks around the school and church, well to promote children's knowledge of the world around them. The classroom assistants are fully integrated into the team and provide good quality

help for children with special educational needs and other children who need help. Relationships between staff and children are good. Children are managed well using praise and encouragement. This promotes their self-esteem and helps them become confident learners. Some activities are directed too much by the teacher, with too much time being spent on introductions and explanations, and this doesn't allow children to explore their thoughts and feelings or interpret tasks in their own way.

83. Staff make day-to-day assessments of children at work, which are conscientiously recorded in children's booklets. While this information is used satisfactorily to plan further work for the majority, it is not always used effectively to pinpoint specific targets for individuals, for instance to improve the speaking skills of some of the children.

Personal, social and emotional development

84. Children come to school with a spring in their step and leave their carers without a backward glance. Routines are well established so children know what is expected of them, for instance they come in and use the activities laid out in the morning. They are confident learners, all being ready to select an object from a 'feely bag' in front of the class. A few find it more difficult to share or take turns when adults are not there to keep a watchful eye on their activities. They accept small responsibilities well, for instance willingly taking the register to the office or taking Barnaby Bear home and caring for him overnight. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers and staff occasionally offer too much help and this restricts children's opportunities to show their independence. The great majority of children persevere well at tasks and pay reasonably close attention during quite lengthy sessions of teacher explanation. They have a growing awareness of other Western European cultures because they have celebrated the Golden Jubilee, 'America' and 'Italy' days. Apart from the Chinese New Year, their knowledge of non-western cultures is weak. Teachers reinforce the school's values well throughout the day as small incidents arise. Praise is used well to motivate children and good story telling provides opportunities for children to explore their feelings. Resources and displays are attractive and children willingly help with tidying up at the end of a session.

Communication, language and literacy

85. Children enjoy listening to stories, which are told skilfully by teachers, sometimes using puppets. They communicate using simple vocabulary with adults and with each other in the role-play 'hospital' or when completing a puzzle together. Nearly all are interested in books and handle them respectfully turning the pages correctly and commenting briefly on the pictures. Most know that print conveys meaning. Higher attaining children are able to read very simple texts, while lower attaining children rely on their memory and the picture 'clues' to retell the story. Most children write, or attempt to write, their name in the cursive script promoted by the school because they have opportunities to practise this skill every day. Those who can write their name are very proud of the fact. As part of a literacy lesson they learned to write lists of things to take to hospital. This activity was too directed by the teacher for all children to get full benefit from the well-planned and humorous teacher input. Teaching and learning are good for reading and writing because they are well planned. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy guidelines and these skills are developed quite quickly through a series of structured activities, like letter sound of the week, writing practice and group reading. Early letters and their sounds are taught effectively through practical activities and children recognise these in their early attempts at reading. The teaching of speaking and listening skills is less well planned. Insufficient time is given over to developing the children's speaking skills, even though these are recognised from initial assessment as being weak. Staff display a positive attitude towards reading and books and

make careful choices of books to read to the class so that children's interest is stimulated. Children are encouraged to take books home and share them with parents.

Mathematical development

86. Children join in with number songs and rhymes with great enthusiasm. Most count reliably to ten and higher attaining children can go up to 30, and occasionally beyond. Most children recognise the numbers to five and have started to write them using worksheets. A few are less confident in writing numerals correctly. Children often point when counting, thus showing that they have a good idea of matching one-to-one. In song and during questioning the children are starting to explore 'one more than' and are very pleased when they regularly get it right. Knowledge of the simple flat shapes is good and children use this knowledge well to relate to solid shapes. Higher attaining children in one class are already sorting these shapes well and using the correct words for them. Many children are less secure naming three dimensional shapes. Teaching and learning are good for number and satisfactory for other elements of mathematical development. Teachers use the national guidelines for mathematics well to prepare stimulating activities for the children. The quality of teacher explanations to children is variable. In the best examples, teachers explain very clearly and use stimulating relevant language and expect the children to use it too. For instance, children selected a solid shape from a 'feely bag' and gave the rest of the class clues using correct mathematical terms so they could guess what it was. Other explanations, despite using good resources, leave the children wondering what they have learned and what they have to do. Teachers use praise well and children are eager to be involved in tasks and increase their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

87. All of the children are enthusiastic and curious about the world around them. They really enjoy their walks around the school to 'discover' solid shapes in the environment or to observe the leaves on the trees and the mini-beasts below. Through a range of stimulating activities children develop their senses of smell and touch. They like the feel of the slime in the water tray and recognise it is soft and bubbly. Children describe the texture and taste of vegetables before cooking and especially appreciate the appetising smell of the vegetable soup. They use simple words and short sentences to describe what they have experienced. These skills are extended as children start to classify objects by their properties, like 'can roll' and 'cannot roll'. Children confidently use the computers and listen to recorded tapes well. They use a mouse with growing accuracy and quickly realise when their headphones are not plugged in and solve the problem. Teaching and learning are good. All staff use correct language and provide stimulating activities for the children. There are opportunities for children to start asking their own questions about the world around them. There are plenty of visits, for instance to Ince Woods, which give the children greater first hand experience and engage their interest and excitement.

Creative development

88. Opportunities to take part in role-play areas are imaginative. The school has good resources to stimulate children's interest and to link with current classroom themes. Children enjoy playing in the role-play 'hospital'. They take on different jobs like doctor, patient and nurse and there is usually some discussion between them. This improves when staff are available to promote general talking and correct vocabulary. The children like to dress up and they generally play with improving co-operation. A few find it difficult to share and this leads to minor squabbles when adult supervision is not at hand. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A few tasks are too repetitive and not sufficiently challenging. For example, all of the children make a very similar penguin and Christmas stocking or draw around the same templates to create a Christmas picture. This over-direction inhibits children's opportunities to use their imagination, though it was suitable for the beautiful Chinese dragon made for the Chinese New Year celebration. Creative

activities are planned well but the desire to produce a recognisable end product often overrides the need to allow children to experiment and explore for themselves.

Physical development

89. Children have satisfactory skills with pencils, crayons and small tools, which are generally held correctly and used accurately. Children work with a sound range of jigsaws, construction toys and malleable materials, like play dough, with enjoyment and skill. They handle the tiny joining pieces of a construction kit very capably. In physical education lessons the children show sound control of their bodies when they move over large apparatus. They are adventurous and have good concentration, being keen to show their abilities. Many balance carefully when walking up an inclined bench but others need the supporting hand of an adult. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make sound progress. Teachers use the resources available well to provide stimulating activities for the children. They pay careful attention to safety when teaching physical education lessons and use demonstrations well to show the children what to do. Teachers sensitively help children with physical difficulties and they are fully involved in all activities. The tasks in lessons are often too directed for the children to use their imagination. For example, in physical education lessons teachers do not provide enough opportunities for children to explore different ways to travel and different ways to move in, over and around apparatus. Reception classes do not have their own outside play area and so children have little opportunity to extend their co-ordination through pedalling vehicles and climbing and sliding.

ENGLISH

90. By the time pupils are aged seven and 11, their attainment is above average overall. Considering pupils' attainment as they start in Year 1 their overall achievement is good. When pupils are seven years old, their skills in listening, reading and writing are above average and their skills in speaking are satisfactory. By the age of 11, pupils also have above average attainment in listening and reading. Standards in writing are satisfactory and in line with what are expected for pupils of their age. Speaking skills are satisfactory although, for many pupils, they are good. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective advice in lessons and in small withdrawal groups and this enables them to make good progress. These standards represent good overall progress from the last inspection, because of:
- the introduction and development of the National Literacy Strategy;
 - the improved confidence of the teachers to teach basic skills;
 - the focus given to teaching handwriting which is now very good;
 - more varied and relevant help for lower and higher attaining pupils, in particular.
91. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were above average in reading and confirm the inspection judgement that reading is a strength in the school. Results in writing were average because few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. Test results at the end of Year 6 were lower than previous years although were in line with the national average. Few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and the school has given due attention to raising the attainment of these pupils.

Standards in speaking and listening

92. By the age of seven, pupils listen well in lessons. They concentrate hard and follow teachers' advice carefully so that they know exactly what they have to do. For example, pupils in Year 2 know very well that they should not call out but put their hand up to answer a question. They listen to and rearrange the instructions of a recipe, for instance. When speaking, pupils have satisfactory skills in explaining what they mean, but do not often elaborate. For example, they say

that *instructions tell you how to do things* which is clear, but only higher attaining pupils speak in more detail and at greater length. They can offer new words to make their work more interesting. Lower attaining pupils are not quite so confident as most pupils. By the age of 11, it is a similar picture. Pupils listen intently, usually because teachers make lessons interesting. As a result, pupils develop good understanding. For instance, pupils in Year 6 appreciated the humour of the disasters arising from a story about someone trying to fly. Pupils listen carefully to each other and so are able to make sensible comments about each other's work. The quality of their speaking is satisfactory because pupils get their message across in simple, straightforward sentences. When talking about the person trying to fly, one pupil said, *if he tried to fly, he would fall and break his neck*. When talking about their favourite books, pupils can retell the story but find it hard to specify why they like particular books. Higher attaining pupils, however, are confident and articulate in discussions.

Standards in reading

93. Reading is good throughout the school. Nearly all pupils read as well as expected by the age of seven, and a good number of pupils make better than average progress. Pupils read familiar stories comfortably. They are not very expressive but know where to pause to make the meaning clear. They sound out the letters of a word and many are becoming good at tackling more difficult words. Lower attaining pupils rely on the recognition of words and the help of pictures, while higher attaining pupils exude confidence and are developing some expression. By the age of 11, pupils are competent readers. They read quite fluently and with reasonable expression, although sometimes this can be diluted when reading is too swift. They tackle new and complex words with increasing confidence so that they can maintain a good momentum when reading. One pupil, for example, had no problem with words like 'psychic' and 'clairvoyant'. Pupils' comprehension of texts is satisfactory. The few lower attaining pupils have similar skills but their reading is more laboured and, consequently, can be monotonous. Higher attaining pupils have the ability to bring a story alive and so intrigue anyone listening. Their understanding of what they read is good. However, very few pupils in Year 6 read books other than fiction for pleasure, such as reference books or poetry.

Standards in writing

94. By the age of seven, pupils are good writers for their age. They string simple sentences together to make coherent stories and accounts. They have a useful vocabulary. For example, they can tell a story about being lost in the jungle, equally as well as describing how the Great Fire of London spread. Their spelling is accurate enough and their punctuation of simple sentences is competent. All pupils can produce joined up handwriting, although not all are neat or consistent. Lower attaining pupils tend to produce sentences which are jumbled and unclear. Higher attaining pupils extend sentences with words like 'because' and 'while' and their handwriting is much more precise. By the age of 11, pupils write satisfactorily in a range of styles. They write a play-script about moving house, poetry about winter, an autobiography and an account of a visit to a Police Open Day. They know how to vary the length of sentences and pick vocabulary for effect. In a suspense story, one pupil wrote, *The door across the hall slammed!* They sometimes use good expression, like *the chilling wind creeps into places*, but more usually pupils express themselves more mundanely. Higher attaining pupils are expressive. One pupil described an incident at a christening when *everyone was in hysterics except the priest, who fainted*. Lower attaining pupils write more simplistically with weaker vocabulary. Pupils' basic skills are good. Punctuation, spelling, use of paragraphs and grammar are all used correctly. Virtually all pupils have very good handwriting, it is neat, fluent and joined up.

95. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and leads to effective learning. Teachers are confident when teaching basic skills. They explain new learning clearly so that pupils understand without difficulty. One teacher showed how to form adverbs from adjectives so

deliberately that most pupils could do this for themselves quickly. They insist that pupils learn new spelling regularly and test progress through short tests in dictation. They demonstrate skilfully how to produce joined up handwriting right from the start of the school and expect high standards. As a result, pupils' presentation of their work is impressive. Teachers usually ask probing questions of pupils of all abilities when teaching something new. This means that teachers can check pupils' understanding and that pupils can consolidate their learning. Teachers value and praise the contributions of pupils in lessons and this raises pupils' self-esteem. Sometimes, though, teachers ask questions too generally and rely too much on the answers of more confident pupils. Similarly, teachers do not plan systematically enough for all pupils to speak, and so pupils do not all progress as quickly as they might.

96. Teachers generate a good working atmosphere. They expect high standards of commitment from their pupils, and set a good example themselves. Consequently, pupils are well behaved and concentrate hard on their learning. Teachers structure their lessons effectively and set tight deadlines within lessons. This results in pupils working with a sense of urgency, keen to complete tasks. Teachers try to bring extra influences into lessons to inspire pupils. Pupils in Year 6, for example, responded eagerly to acting out an excerpt from *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, and also developed some good vocabulary like *dote* and *taper*. Teachers encourage pupils to write at length in geography and history. This strengthens pupils' ability to write factually and use basic research skills. Teachers do not, though, maximise opportunities to use other subjects within English lessons to put learning in context and broaden vocabulary.
97. Teachers often vary work in class to suit the needs of pupils of different abilities. This tends to benefit lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. However, they do not always expect enough from pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils. This is especially true in speaking and writing. Teachers do not match pupils' work enough to their potential and so pupils' progress is slower than it could be. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, a teacher taught all the pupils how to use semi-colons but only expected the higher attaining pupils to be able to use them. As it happened, the lower attaining pupils misunderstood and used semi-colons in their writing successfully. The teacher, though, insisted that these pupils should start again and use commas as intended.
98. Management of the subject is good. Regular observations of teaching have provided teachers with valuable advice on how to improve. As a result, the strengths in teaching are consistent throughout the school. The school has a good system of assessing how well pupil's progress through the school. Teachers analyse test results to highlight areas for development in the language. The analysis helps teachers to decide which pupils would benefit from the wide range of extra support available for lower attaining pupils. The school embraces new initiatives to help improve the subject. For example, teachers in Year 1 have introduced regular role-play activities as a prompt to improve writing. It is too early to be sure how successful this is but it is beginning to motivate pupils. Teachers set targets for pupils to help them realise what they have to do to improve. While this is good practice, many targets are too broad to be effective. The school has good resources. Information and communication technology is used to improve the final presentation of work but is not used enough to encourage the skills of drafting and editing using computers. The library is well organised, although not used frequently for independent research. There is a good number and variety of reading books for group sessions. The use of classical texts make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development and Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic about their current text, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

MATHEMATICS

99. By the ages of seven and 11 overall standards in mathematics are above average. Overall achievement is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 was average. This rise in standards is due to:
- better teaching, especially the quality of explanations and questioning;
 - much more attention given to mental mathematics;
 - higher expectations of performance, particularly for the average and lower attaining pupils;
 - very effective help to raise the attainment levels of those finding difficulty with mathematics;
 - careful tracking of pupils' progress;
 - good help for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
100. The results of seven and 11-year-olds in national tests have improved at a slightly faster rate than the national average since the last inspection. In the most recent tests the overall performance was average for both year groups but too few pupils achieved the higher levels and this reduced the school's average score. The school has identified the need to provide greater challenge for the more able and the measures taken are beginning to have an impact. Most pupils in Year 2 are currently on track to reach at least the expected level and a higher proportion than normally found is progressing beyond this. This represents good achievement from the standards that these pupils attained at the age of five. The great majority of the current 11-year-olds have a sufficiently good grounding in mathematical skills to achieve the expected level and the percentage demonstrating examples of higher-level work is similar to most schools. This is the result of good progress from the results that these pupils gained as seven-year-olds.
101. Many Year 2 pupils are very competent in sequencing numbers and are developing a sense of number patterns and place value. They can halve and double numbers. Most are confident in counting in twos, fives and tens and they can use this to calculate the total of five sets of six. A few are able to count in threes and fours. Most can handle simple money addition to one pound. Higher attainers can solve simple problems and explore what happens when number sentences are reversed. Pupils have a good appreciation of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They can gather information and present the data well in simple graphs. These skills are used effectively in other subjects so that pupils learn the practical application of their skills.
102. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure grasp of place value and of common number operations. Their good knowledge of number bonds and times tables gives them confidence in mental mathematics. The great majority of pupils have a good understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages and how these relate to each other. They apply this knowledge when calculating probability of simple events or working with metric measurements or money. They have a sound grasp of simple algebra and can, for example, produce formulae for the calculation of the perimeter and area of regular shapes. They have a satisfactory understanding of angle as a measure of turn. Pupils use their competence in collecting, presenting and interpreting data well in other subjects, for example to show the cooling of a liquid in a science experiment in graph form, to explore census data in history or climate statistics in geography.
103. Pupils are less assured in carrying out investigations to establish mathematical relationships or to put their skills into practice. Year 6 pupils do have opportunities to apply their mathematics, for example to calculate the cost of decorating a room, but these tasks are often too carefully structured by the teacher and pupils are not gaining enough experience and confidence in designing their own investigations or thinking through the procedures. Year 4 pupils look at what happens when two even or two odd numbers are added together but they do not plan the investigation. Higher attainers are not challenged to go beyond the basic exploration of a few examples to consider, *how can we prove that this must always be the case?* Year 5 pupils show that rectangles with the same perimeter can have different areas but do not pursue this to

find the relationship between the shape of the rectangle and the area or to discover the maximum and minimum areas for a given perimeter.

104. While there are differences within individual year groups between the overall attainments of boys and girls, the pattern over time shows that this is a reflection of individual abilities and both girls and boys are now making good progress. A strength of the school's approach is the attention given to improving the basic skills and confidence of pupils who find mathematics difficult. They are supported well in lessons by classroom support assistants. In the older age groups the Successmaker computer program is used effectively before school and at lunchtime to boost these pupils' mathematics skills. The school is seeking to raise the level of challenge for the higher attainers. While the overall progress for these pupils is now good, there are still occasions in some lessons when part of the work set for them is too easy.
105. The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to good learning throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teachers relied too heavily on a published scheme. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established in the school and teachers are confident in its application. Lessons are well planned and teachers have clear objectives for what they want pupils to be able to do by the end of the session. This helps both teachers and pupils to focus on the key ideas and contributes to the good progress made in many lessons and to the effective gains in knowledge and understanding over the course of a unit or topic.
106. Most lessons begin with practice in mental mathematics, and most of these sessions are conducted at a brisk pace that captures pupils' attention, and sets the tone for the lesson. Teachers select questions carefully so that all children can enjoy success but only with effort. In the better lessons pupils are challenged to explain their thinking and to share with others the mental strategies employed. Explanations of new work are usually clear, and based on good, and sometimes very good, teachers' knowledge of the subject. Good use is often made of visual aids, diagrams or models, which hold pupils' attention and help them to understand the ideas. Teachers use questions well to involve pupils in the exploration of new topics and to make them think carefully about what is being presented. The supportive atmosphere in lessons encourages pupils to participate well in discussions and to enjoy their mathematics.
107. Teachers organise lessons well and there is smooth movement between whole-class sessions and group or individual tasks. Pupils are usually given the information and resources they need so that they can settle quickly to their work. In most lessons there are different levels of tasks to cater for the range of attainment. In the better lessons the work for each group is at a suitable level. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the few pupils who already had a good grasp of the basic idea of multiplication were asked to carry out their own investigation into what happened when number sentences were changed round. In a minority of lessons, however, the work set for one group, most often the higher attainers, is not sufficiently challenging. In most lessons teachers provide good support for group work, ensuring that a brisk pace is maintained, and extending pupils' thinking through questions or further explanation as necessary. On occasions, a teacher becomes too absorbed in working with one group and does not keep sufficient check on the progress of the rest of the class and this leads to a few pupils marking time as they wait for advice.
108. The concluding part of lessons, when the class is brought back together, is usually managed effectively. Teachers use this time well to reinforce the key teaching points by exploring further examples, to tackle any weaknesses that they have identified in the group work, to share what different groups have discovered and to move the pupils' thinking forward. This helps pupils to consolidate their understanding of the topic.

109. The management of mathematics is good. The issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and good levels of resources and staff training have been provided. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning in mathematics lessons in Years 1 and 2. Year 6 pupils have used spreadsheets to produce accounts for a small shop and some pupils use the computer regularly for their individual Successmaker work. In Years 3 to 6 overall, however, information and communication technology is not used often enough to support learning in mathematics. Pupils' progress is checked carefully and regularly. Assessments are used in Years 3 to 6 to place pupils into attainment groups and tests are analysed thoroughly to see what aspects of teaching need improvement. The quality of work in the subject is monitored well and this has contributed to the progress made in teaching and learning since the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

110. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and overall achievement is good. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be average. Improvement has been brought about by:

- better teaching which has led to pupils who work hard and want to learn;
- thorough analysis of pupils' work, results and rates of progress;
- adjustments to the curriculum when a weakness is identified. A good example of this is the analysis of scientific vocabulary which some pupils used incorrectly. Teachers now emphasise this in all lessons, so pupils are better able to explain their ideas and perform well in the national tests;
- good management.

111. The latest national test results in 2002 exceeded the national average. Almost all pupils in Years 2 and 6 reached the levels expected and nearly half of the 11-year-olds managed more than this. Standards in recent years have more than kept pace with the big improvement seen nationally. Pupils are achieving well in science. This is because of a number of things that the school has done well. The curriculum is well organised, teaching is good overall and very good in Year 2. The school keeps very good records to check that pupils are learning at a fast enough rate and teachers are quick to provide extra help where needed. Lessons are interesting with plenty of practical work, which pupils enjoy and remember. The subject leader looks at work and lessons, as well as pupils' answers in the tests, this is useful in showing teachers what is working well and where improvements can be made. All of this seems to be confirmed by pupils in Year 6, who said, *The teachers are great, they make you work hard but they make it fun, so it seems easy.*

112. All pupils in Year 2 are building up a reasonable fund of scientific knowledge. Teachers explain ideas clearly and train pupils to predict, test, and draw sensible conclusions from what they see. This works well, for example in the work on light and reflection most pupils can already write their own conclusion without much help. Teachers give lots of opportunities for pupils to learn how to investigate. In one lesson in Year 2 the pupils asked their own questions and devised tests to answer them. *I would like to find out if I can make the shadow bigger* or *"I want to see if the shadow always moves the same way as you."* Teachers use consistent methods to help the pupils record what they do and this enhances their numeracy skills. As a result, pupils of all abilities can make their own charts, sketches and labels to explain what they have done. There are good examples of this in the work on magnetism, or when they study forces with cars on ramps.

113. Pupils in Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. Teachers introduce this knowledge thoroughly and bring science to life with practical experiments. The pupils' skills in carrying out investigations are satisfactory, but they do not build sufficiently on the good start made in Years 1 and 2. This is because in some lessons the teaching is over-prescriptive, pupils do not have enough chances to think for themselves and make decisions. When they are given an opportunity, they show that they can work together well, handle equipment carefully and present their findings accurately. Teachers insist on high standards of recording, for example in a Year 6 lesson the teacher was quick to challenge incorrect terminology, or a diagram with the thermometer drawn in the wrong place. This sort of care helps pupils to think clearly about their science, for example when Year 4 give good clear answers to *Why do you think the filter times vary?* and Year 5 can explain *What do I know about evaporation?* The pupils' writing shows that they understand the basic ideas in a range of scientific topics, they can collect and evaluate evidence, make predictions and keep an open mind about the results. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote *I think our water should be 90% clean now, although I am not certain yet.*
114. Teachers take great care to see that the less able pupils, and those with special educational needs, take a full part in the lessons. They make sure that everyone is included in the discussions and give advice where it is needed. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to this support. These pupils make good progress in science, in fact nearly all reach the expected level by the time they are 11 years old. More able pupils also do well, but in many lessons they could do even more and move ahead of the level expected for the whole class. One example of this was in Year 6, where a group was not happy with their data from a dissolving experiment. They were allowed to repeat the test at the end of the lesson, but were capable of collecting much more evidence in the time available and so coming to a more satisfying conclusion.
115. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and there are several strengths to the teaching. Teachers know their subject and explain clearly. They prepare lessons very well and ask good questions which make pupils think. For example, in Year 6 the teacher asks *How could we improve this next time?* Activities are enjoyable, well organised, and teachers make good links to everyday situations. As a result, pupils listen carefully, grasp ideas quickly, work hard and behave well. Where the teaching is very good, for example in the Year 2 work on sound, pupils are given time to explore and solve problems in their own way. All teachers give guidance on how to record what has been done in lessons, overall the standard of presentation is good. However, despite the evidence that pupils can do their own recording confidently, some teachers still provide notes to be copied. This slows pupils' learning in how to interpret and explain.
116. The main weakness in the teaching is that some teachers do not give enough responsibility for pupils to organise and carry out their experiments. They are understandably anxious that the lessons go well, but, in some work, pupils learn well from their mistakes, for example when Year 4 pupils are asked, *How far can we trust these results?* Lesson planning does not always make sufficient allowance for pupils' developing ability to plan and organise themselves. For example, in some of the lessons in Years 5 and 6, the experiment is planned by the teacher, each pupil in the group is given their task and there is no time given for further tests when the results appear faulty. As a result, some pupils have a minor role in the work, particularly when groups are too large, and so they do not learn as much as they should.
117. There are links with mathematics lessons in the presentation of data, for example, pupils construct graphs and charts to show their results. More could be done in the analysis of these results and there is little evidence of pupils looking for patterns or using the figures to make further predictions. There are few opportunities for pupils to support their studies in science with

information and communication technology. For example, in Year 6, pupils were given a prepared graph on paper to plot their results, although most of them knew how to do this themselves on a computer.

118. The subject is effectively managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in science. This has led to the status of science being improved in the school. For example, as part of Science Year some very good investigations in all classes were conducted and these have been collected to help give teachers more confidence in this area.

ART AND DESIGN

119. Standards in Year 2 are in line with those expected for this age and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 are above average and achievement is good. The school has made a significant improvement since the last inspection because:

- the co-ordinator has encouraged staff to be more adventurous during lessons and then fully supported them;
- relevant resources in suitable quantities have been purchased to give pupils high quality materials;
- the Arts Week really stimulated pupils' interest in all kinds of art work;
- high quality displays around the school provides pupils and staff with a wonderful environment in which to work and high standards to strive for.

120. By the age of seven, pupils have made sea collages that incorporate pastel shaded backgrounds. The foregrounds are fish or boats and pupils know why they used different papers for different effects. Their observational drawings are showing maturity and better form. Icicles are well made and though the templates are broadly similar pupils have selected slightly different shapes and materials to make them 'sparkle'. They know the story of the 'Willow Pattern Plates' and have made good attempts at recreating the effect without actually copying the original. Younger pupils have used computers to colour Elmer the elephant. Higher attaining pupils experimented with colours and their effects and one produced Elmer with horizontal stripes, which was very effective. Pupils are at the early stages of evaluating their work and offering simple suggestions on how to improve it.

121. By the age of 11, pupils have experience of a very wide range of media and techniques and use them well. In Year 6, they use tones and hatching to represent light and dark on an object very effectively. Year 5 pupils recall a very good range of techniques like padding, plaiting and pleating to use with textiles when working on a history project. Pupils use smudging techniques with chalk and pastel well to get movement into pictures. They look at and evaluate the work of many famous artists and many well-known cultures, like Aboriginal art, Indonesian batik and African masks. They try to match the colours in Van Gogh's work and they work using collage in the 'jazz' style of Matisse. The photomontages in the style of David Hockney are of high quality and show good co-operation among pupils. Work in sculpture and clay tie in with a history study on Ancient Greece when pupils make and decorate Grecian goblets in the style of the time. Some use is made of computers and the work in the style of Kandinsky's abstracts is effective. By Year 6 observational drawing is of a high standard, as in the still life work on plants. Pupils look at and comment on their own work and the work of others and consider its merits in quite a sophisticated way.

122. Pupils with special educational needs are given every opportunity to succeed like all the other pupils. Their difficulties are often associated with learning English so the freedom to express

themselves through art enables them to succeed at their own level. The visually impaired pupils achieve very well through good teacher support.

123. Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6. These were not observed in Years 1 and 2 because the classes were studying design and technology this half term. There is a comprehensive plan for each year group, including relevant skills, media and styles, which help teachers, plan their lessons. The good quality resources are used very well. They allow pupils to experiment with different effects. Teachers occasionally draw pupils' attention to small details. In a Year 6 lesson working in the style of Matisse, pupils were reminded that a background of small sections of colour could hide the detail of their picture. A group of pupils were well aware of this and solved it by making their detail larger than their background! Techniques in all media and technical vocabulary are taught well and pupils are very comfortable when using them. Pupils really enjoy art, sustain concentration very well and support each other when help is required. They really want to be part of the art movement in the school. Pupils' comments are generally positive with helpful hints. Teachers do not always allow pupils enough time to offer comments during the conclusion of lessons.
124. The management of this subject is good and has raised standards significantly, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Good advice is provided to colleagues and has led to their growing in confidence to try more imaginative techniques. For instance, when Year 6 created the movement pictures additional support from the co-ordinator led to changes by smudging the background and this gave the impression of movement. Good quality resources have been purchased and these have enabled staff and pupils to undertake more adventurous projects in textiles and sculpture rather than just painting. The Art Week, in which pupils experienced a good range of media and worked with resident artists, was a great success both in terms of the pupils' high quality work and their exposure to a variety of cultures

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. The attainment of pupils is below average throughout the school and pupils of all abilities are underachieving. The school has introduced a new plan of work to try to improve the below average attainment seen in the last inspection. However, too little attention has been given to improving the skills and confidence of teachers. As a result, the quality of pupils' work is still not as good as it should be.
126. By the age of seven, pupils have limited experience in designing and making simple objects. They assemble drinking straws using adhesive tape to make house frames. Pupils draw pictures of a piece of playground equipment they would like to see, such as a ladybird-shaped roundabout. However, pupils do not label the pictures with details of resources and there is little evidence that pupils have any concept of how to make them. In a study of sandwiches, pupils can say what their favourite filling is but find it more difficult to explain their preference. There was limited evidence of pupils selecting tools, having a range of skills or planning and evaluating their work.
127. By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment remains below expected levels. It was not possible to see design and technology taught in Year 6 because of the organisation of the timetable. Discussions with pupils show purses have been made and pupils recalled making a design and listing required resources. However, the choice of material was limited and pupils had limited evaluative comment about their finished purses. Pupils were not allowed to stitch up the purses themselves. Pupils in Year 4 appreciate how packaging is made by opening up commercial packets to identify its original shape. They can suggest and make preliminary designs of their own but they are all very similar and show little individual creativity. Pupils in Year 5 have produced torches from toilet rolls and an electrical circuit. Again, pupils had little free rein to

explore individual designs and come up with interesting variations. Throughout the school, pupils do not design objects systematically by drawing realistic pictures and listing instructions. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work but there is very little evidence that this significantly influences their finished articles.

128. Although the teaching and learning observed was satisfactory, the overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to acquire enough basic skills and progress to explore increasingly complex designs. Pupils' work shows a very limited range of tools is used. Teachers offer too much help and expectations are not high enough. For example, in Year 2 when pupils struggled to use the butter knife to spread sandwiches, the teacher intervened to do it for them. Too much time is spent on simplistic activities, such as comparing the toast for different shades of brown. Teachers plan lessons carefully and lessons are well organised and run smoothly. However, during lessons teachers do not encourage pupils to be imaginative enough and guide pupils too much. Therefore, pupils' work is far too similar and not really thought through. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 spent too much time drawing and the focus and the relevance of the design to the finished product was lost. In a good lesson seen in Year 2 the teacher had prepared a variety of resources to encourage investigation of sandwich fillings and this instantly captured pupils' enthusiasm. The introduction encouraged discussion and pupils quickly learnt the need for basic hygiene when preparing food. Management was very effective and so pupils behaved sensibly even when tasting food which they disliked. However, opportunities were missed to broaden pupils' experiences because pupils did not taste all samples and this restricted their ability to compare which was their favourite. It was a weakness that every sample was a processed food, mainly familiar to the pupils. There were no fresh, healthy choices or new ingredients to give pupils new and different tastes and textures. As a result, most pupils tasted the ones they liked and a really good learning opportunity was lost.
129. Leadership of the subject has been ineffective in promoting this subject since the last inspection. A new subject leader took up post in September 2002. The school has introduced more detailed planning guidelines but insufficient attention has been given to monitoring the effect these are having on standards. There are now plans to improve the situation but there is still not enough whole school impetus to guarantee its success.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Standards in geography are above average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. These good levels of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection. Classes alternate topics which have a main geography focus with history topics. Factors which contribute to pupils' continuing good achievements include:
- the strong emphasis on developing key skills;
 - the good opportunities for personal research;
 - the interesting programme of fieldwork;
 - the good quality case studies on local environmental issues.
131. Pupils in Year 2 have a good appreciation of the area around the school, including types of housing, shops and amenities. They explain how their home village fits into the city of Liverpool and they can set this within the context of the countries of the United Kingdom. They can draw and interpret simple maps. In describing a contrasting area they identify the key features and forms of transport and discuss the similarities with, and differences from, their own locality.
132. Year 6 pupils show a good knowledge of the places and themes they have studied in previous years. When discussing St Lucia, they relate the physical features and climate to the life-styles

of the people. They show a good appreciation of both the benefits and adverse effects that tourism has brought to the island. They can describe the general features of rivers confidently within the context of the individual studies they have conducted of their selected rivers. They have drawn on a range of sources, including reference books, CD ROMs, the Internet and tourist bureaux or personal visits, and talk knowledgeably about the main sources of pollution and about the impact of their rivers on the cities through which they flow. During a topic on transport in Merseyside, they have considered the environmental and planning issues in creating a road spur and are able to talk with good understanding about the different points of view that those involved might hold. Year 5 pupils show a good awareness of the detail that they might find in maps of different scales. They are able to use the key on a map confidently to identify quickly the main features of an area. It is clear from pupils' responses that they have been enthused by the work set for them and this has led to some individual projects of high quality.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers focus well on the key objectives for the lessons. They explain points clearly so that all the children understand and make good use of technical terms. They use questioning effectively to involve all the pupils and to check understanding. Lessons contain a good range of activities that interest both boys and girls. Teachers take good account of differing attainment levels, interests and needs, and enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, to make good progress. At times a teacher is slow to intervene when a group involved in an independent task slackens its work rate or pupils spend too long on illustrating the work. In most cases, however, the work is well organised and a good pace is maintained. The interest and pride that pupils develop in their work contribute to good learning.

134. Management of the subject is good. The experienced co-ordinator provides clear and detailed guidance for colleagues. The school's scheme for geography draws on national guidelines but also makes use of some very good local resources. The topics are planned on a well considered two-year cycle so that the National Curriculum requirements are met and pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology for research but no computers were used to support learning during any of the lessons seen. Guidance is provided for teachers on the levels of work that might be expected in each unit but there is no agreed system of formal assessment and there is little formal monitoring of teaching and learning. The geography projects make a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills and the use of statistics enables pupils to practise data handling. The understanding that pupils gain about other countries and ways of life makes a strong contribution to their personal development

HISTORY

135. As at the time of the previous inspection attainment in history is above average for both seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds. The good progress made by pupils is promoted by:

- knowledgeable teachers communicating their enthusiasm for the subject;
- the use of a wide range of interesting resources;
- the challenging nature of much of the work.

136. By the age of seven children have a confident knowledge of some events in the past, such as the Great Fire of London. They show a good appreciation of the lives and achievements of a range of personalities, including Grace Darling, Samuel Pepys, Florence Nightingale and Amy Johnson. They understand how toys have changed over time and can describe how holidays in Victorian times were in some ways the same as, but in other ways very different from, holidays today.

137. Pupils build well on these skills in Years 3 to 6, as they study periods of British history, local history and other civilisations. They develop good historical enquiry skills as they draw on both primary and secondary sources, using pictures, text, artefacts, the Internet and other information such as census returns. A strength of their learning is the way they are able to think themselves into the roles of people from a different age, such as Tudor England, and show a good understanding of what life must have been like for them. By the age of 11, pupils can use their good knowledge of the Victorian Age to participate very effectively in discussions about the influences that the railways would have exerted on people's lives. They identify the impact on the food markets, on seaside holiday resorts and on the coach and canal companies, and appreciate how increased travel opportunities would have broadened people's understanding of the world.
138. Such discussions promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well. This approach to history also increases pupils' social awareness and makes them consider the moral implications of changing situations. The insights they gain into historical periods and other civilisations, together with the associated visits to places of historical interest, make a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. The research that pupils undertake into history topics enhances their reading and reference skills and they gain valuable practice in using CD ROMs and the Internet. Individual projects provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills.
139. Boys and girls are equally interested in history and their good learning reflects the efforts they make. Teachers plan activities well so that all pupils can work productively at their own level. In Year 2, for example, some pupils are given sentences to sequence, while higher attainers are expected to produce their own writing. The good support for those with special educational needs continues in Years 3 to 6 and higher attainers are challenged by the demands of the projects. This enables all pupils to achieve well.
140. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers share their enthusiasm for history and this leads to good learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of the topics and are able to introduce a lot of additional background details which give pupils a deeper understanding of the periods they are studying. They use a wide range of resources very imaginatively to capture pupils' interest and to help them to gain a real insight into life in earlier times. For example, the display of Victorian items in Year 6 includes a very attractive harvest basket showing how people at that time collected natural berries and leaves. A strength of the teaching is the quality of the questioning, which prompts pupils to think through their answers, to see cause and effect and to appreciate that there is usually more than one point of view. Lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace, so that a good amount of work is completed, though on occasions a lesson is overlong and the pace of group work slackens a little. There is a very supportive atmosphere in lessons which encourages pupils to participate well and to contribute ideas.
141. The subject is managed effectively. The two-year cycle of topics provides good coverage of the National Curriculum. There is good advice for teachers in the form of topic information, and resource boxes. There is no systematic assessment of pupils but guidance is provided on how to develop pupils' historical skills and how this should be reflected in the levels of work within a topic.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards in Years 2 and 6 match those expected for this age range. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Though this appears to be the same standards as at the last inspection provision has improved because:

- the complete curriculum, including control technology, is now taught;
- teachers have attended training, which has improved their confidence and subject knowledge;
- the computer suite, together with its interactive white board, has improved resources, particularly for Years 3 to 6.

143. By the age of seven, pupils are confident users of the computer and other technology, like tape recorders and cameras. In Year 2, they use word processing well to manipulate text on Samuel Pepys for a history project and also use facilities like 'WordArt' to create the effect in a title they want. They explore the facilities of a painting program to create works in the style of Mondrian to colour fill Elmer pictures in Year 1. Pupils retrieve and store their work confidently and use mathematics worksheets, created by Year 2 teachers, including drop down menus well to improve their understanding of multiplication. Most use a programmable toy with sound skill, directing its movements and sometimes entering a whole series of instructions. The computers in the infant building are not yet connected to the Internet consequently the pupils have no experience of using this facility for research.
144. By the age of 11, pupils use computers for a suitable range of purposes. They use a spreadsheet package competently to analyse information, create rainfall graphs in Year 6. When given the opportunity pupils are confident to use word processing although they do not always get enough opportunity to practise their skills. In a good lesson in Year 5 the teacher taught literacy in the information and communication technology suite and pupils used computers to help them create a play script typing ideas straight onto the screen, revising them as necessary and using colours, fonts and styles for a purpose. Good links with the local high school enable pupils to use the school's equipment to study temperature change and in another section of control technology pupils build and operate a traffic light and other devices. Pupils confidently use the Internet to find out information and occasionally import it into their work. They understand how to use a 'projector presentation' program to show others their work and have helped in the building of the school's web site.
145. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in this subject because teachers, classroom assistants and classmates help them in their work. Teachers carefully set up pair work in Years 1 and 2 so one pupil supports another. In Years 3 to 6 working in the computer suite, pupils are generally helpful and caring to one another and often help up if somebody is stuck.
146. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There were few opportunities to see lessons and in those few that were observed, mainly in Years 4 and 5, teaching and learning were good. Pupils are highly motivated by work at the computer or tape recorder. They concentrate for longer periods than usual and take care of the machines. Teachers have more confidence teaching information and communication technology following their training and benefit from the expertise of a parent. They plan activities well but occasionally spend too long on explanations. They offer pupils good technical support but do not teach them to solve problems involving loading files for themselves. The whiteboard is used skilfully to demonstrate skills and techniques to the class. The lack of resources in classrooms restricts the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. For example, in English pupils use computers to word process their work to make the final presentation attractive but do not use them regularly to plan, write and edit their work. This was observed in English in Year 6 when pupils were writing newspaper headlines and a good opportunity was missed for the pupils to practise changing size and style of letters to make their headlines more realistic. The available resources are not always in use, for instance laptop computers are not taken to class to use there. Consequently, pupils do not get enough time to practise the skills taught in the information and communication technology suite.

147. Information and communication technology is used to help the less able pupils quite regularly. Trained classroom assistants provide support with mathematics, letter sounds and spelling programs, which have helped these pupils improve the standard of their work.
148. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A complete audit of teaching and resources has been completed. Based on this audit a very useful action plan has been written and some aspects of it already completed. For instance, the purchase of headphones has enabled pupils in Years 1 and 2 to learn from a greater range of programs in the classroom without disturbing the rest of the class. The computer suite is quite small for whole-class groups and is only available to Years 3 to 6. Both of these factors inhibit the further progress pupils could make in this subject.

MUSIC

149. Standards in Year 2 are above those expected for pupils of this age and achievement is good. In Year 6, pupils reach the level expected for their age and they achieve satisfactorily. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. It is better in Years 1 and 2 because these pupils benefit from the expert teaching of a specialist teacher and this has led to standards and achievement improving. Although pupils in Years 3 to 6 also receive teaching from a visiting specialist this has been more variable because of staffing changes. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities and make the same progress as other pupils.
150. Pupils in Year 2, listen carefully and are skilled clapping a given rhythm. They understand louder and quieter and identify a phrase is repeated but the second phrase is lower. Singing is tuneful and pupils understand different moods can be represented in music. For example, they sing an African greeting, *zenwa da dende* and then move enthusiastically to marching music. Pupils are effectively introduced to writing their own music. In Year 2 pupils suggest different vocals and percussion instruments to represent the sequence of events in a story. Pupils use different symbols to represent these sounds and are very proud performing their simple composition. They show an understanding of exploring ways sounds can be combined to create an imaginative picture for the audience. For example, using their voice to represent an aeroplane and percussion instruments to show a person in the story climbing stairs. Pupils understand the need to evaluate their ideas and in the lesson observed they changed some sounds to avoid them being too similar to other parts of the story.
151. Pupils in Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age. Progress is not as fast as in the infants because of the limited time available in lessons for pupils to fully extend their learning. As a result, composition is not receiving enough attention and pupils had limited recall of this skill. Teachers' planning includes this aspect of the curriculum but the limited time available in lessons make it difficult for teachers to include this as a regular feature in music. For example, in Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of lyrics and enjoy writing their own to a given tune. However, the lack of time meant the pupils could not take these skills the next step to writing music to match their lyrics. Pupils enjoy the practical aspect of lessons and have a good understanding of different types of music. They understand music plays an important part in daily life and know that the *John Brown's Body* was an important battle hymn in America. Pupils successfully compare this with the tranquil mood of the *Skye Boat Song* and relate this to the rowing of a boat.
152. In assemblies pupils sing tunefully and pupils appreciate the sensitivity of the words in the Christmas hymns they are practising. For example, in the infants pupils sang *Mary had a baby* very gently and in the juniors sing *Come and Join our Celebration* with gusto. Singing develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is a very positive feature of the school.

153. Teaching and learning are good overall. The school invests in the support of music specialists and this works very effectively to enhance both the skills of the pupils and the confidence of class teachers who play a supporting role in the lessons. In these lessons the teaching is good and often very good in the infants. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This is very evident in their use of musical terminology and pupils are growing in confidence using these terms in their responses. For example, pupils in Year 2 were challenged to repeat *crescendo* and through the careful clapping of the syllables quickly grasped the meaning of this word. Expectations of the specialist music teachers are high and tasks are challenging. This was good in Year 5 when pupils had to repeat a pattern and then add their own lyrics. A few found this difficult but were encouraged by the teacher's enthusiasm and much new learning took place. Lessons are brisk and include opportunities for singing, listening and playing instruments and this maintains pupils' interest and leads to much new learning. Management of lessons is good and pupils handle instruments respectfully and lessons run smoothly.
154. The headteacher is currently leading the subject and does this effectively because of her detailed knowledge of teaching throughout the school. Planning has improved with more detailed guidelines and this includes assessment of progress at the need of each unit of work. The sharing of teaching has been good staff development and teachers are growing in confidence to build on the lessons led by the music specialist. This has more impact on standards in Years 1 and 2 where more time is available for the subject. Resources were unsatisfactory in the juniors at the time of the previous inspection and the school has improved these and they are now good. The difficulty arises sharing the resources between the two sites but this is usually carefully planned so that maximum use is made of all resources.
155. The subject extends pupils' cultural development as they often open lessons with an African welcome as they sing *nanumah* and learn about the wider range of music styles. The formal curriculum is extended by the choir which performs locally and has sung with the police band and the Philharmonic orchestra. The school concert held for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is a popular event and enables pupils to grow in confidence as they perform in front of an audience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. In Year 2, standards in dance are above the level expected for this age. No lessons were seen in gymnastics or games, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement, or to compare with the previous report when standards were above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils do not achieve the same high standards that they did at the time of the previous inspection, although they are typical for their age. There are some weaknesses in the teaching in the junior classes, although no lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching in the infant classes is good.
157. In dance, pupils in Years 1 and 2 can move with good balance and control. They use space well and change speed, direction and weight to match the story or the music. Pupils listen to suggestions and interpret these in an imaginative way, for example when they bring their robots to life. Pupils in these classes work very well in small groups, for example when sharing their ideas or moving in a small space.
158. Year 6 pupils enjoy dance and show style and agility in interpreting music. They share ideas on a sequence, repeat it and improve it. However, in one lesson a significant number showed a limited range of movement and did not extend themselves. This was partly due to the slow pace at the beginning of the lesson. In gymnastics, Year 5 pupils are able to set out apparatus safely and work out a synchronised sequence together. In this work, the teacher did not insist enough on sufficient accuracy or control, and so the standard was no more than satisfactory. In games, pupils in Year 5 show good ball control and many can maintain this at running speed.

159. Teachers work to ensure that pupils of all abilities take a full part in the lessons. Those with special educational needs are helped very well when necessary. A few pupils are working at a very high level because of lessons at home, their talents are used well in some lessons to demonstrate or to lead groups. Boys and girls both respond well in most lessons, but a small number of boys in Years 5 and 6 are not always fully involved. Pupils with physical difficulties play a full part in lessons and clubs, the other pupils are always very supportive.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are some strengths to the teaching, particularly in the younger classes, but some weaknesses mean that pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable. In Years 1, 2 and 3, teachers enjoy a good relationship with their classes, they give clear and enthusiastic explanations and so the pupils' response and behaviour is always good. Teachers in all parts of the school use well-chosen demonstrations to raise standards, but in some lessons they are not firm enough when a few pupils become competitive and loud, so quality is lost. Another weakness in the teaching is that the pace of some lessons is too slow to involve and inspire pupils. Even in an otherwise good lesson, the teacher stopped the class too often and restricted the flow of their ideas.
161. There is a new subject leader for physical education who has not yet had time to make an impact. The curriculum is well organised and pupils are taught all aspects of the National Curriculum. All pupils can swim. There is a good range of clubs that extend pupils' physical and social skills. Some visiting experts come regularly to share their skills, for example in tennis, judo and hockey. A manageable system has been agreed to record what pupils know and can do, this is not fully in place. Plans for improvement are appropriate, the subject has been chosen as a priority for 2003, with monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff.