

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST WERBURGH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105091

Headteacher: Mr Geoff Kelly

Reporting inspector: Mr John Heap
18824

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 246442

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

© 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 SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Grove Whetstone Lane Birkenhead Wirral
Postcode:	CH41 2TD
Telephone number:	0151 647 8404
Fax number:	0151 647 7348
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Ireland
Date of previous inspection:	24 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18824	John Heap	Registered inspector	English History Physical education	What sort of school is it? The schools results and pupils achievements How well are pupils taught?
19342	Thomas Heavey	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents
20794	Gordon Alston	Team inspector	Mathematics Design & technology Geography Foundation stage Special educational needs	Assessment
5902	Michael Harrison	Team inspector	Science Art and design Information and communication technology Music Educational inclusion English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JH

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	7
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?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Werburgh's is a Roman Catholic primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated close to the centre of Birkenhead. This is a below average-sized primary school in England with 166 pupils on the roll of the main school: 67 boys and 99 girls. In the nursery, 21 boys and 17 girls attend part-time. The roll has fluctuated in recent years. Children arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels but overall, the attainment on entry is well below average. Pupils are organised into seven classes. The pupils come from a large, inner-city catchment area which has very significant signs of deprivation. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private dwellings. It is also an area of high mobility, for example, about nine per cent of the pupils moved in, or out, in the last year. The majority of pupils are white, and a small minority come from Bangladeshi, Black-Caribbean and mixed-race backgrounds. Nine pupils (five per cent) are learning English as an additional language and all are at an early stage of acquiring English. These figures are higher than most schools. There are 74 pupils (46 per cent) entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. Thirty-eight pupils (23 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, the majority have moderate learning difficulties. This is above the national average. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is in line with the national average. The most significant change since the last inspection is the re-building of the school and development of the overall premises.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that enables pupils to achieve well in academic and personal development. Its strengths outweigh the areas for development. Attainment on entry to the school is low; nevertheless standards are average by the time pupils are 11. Pupils enjoy school, have very good attitudes to work and behave very well. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Leadership is good, but there are areas of management that need to be improved. Overall, the school ensures that pupils benefit equally from the provision. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievement is good, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. Personal development is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The headteacher provides good leadership.

What could be improved

- By the age of 11, standards in writing and mental mathematics are lower than they ought to be.
- Pupils' independent learning skills in English, mathematics and science are below expectations.
- The judging of pupils' levels of attainment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is unsatisfactory.
- Strengthen the role of subject co-ordinators.
- Rates of attendance are well below average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. There has been good improvement since that time. Standards at the age of 11 are higher, the quality of teaching is better and the provision and standards in information and communication technology have improved well. The accommodation is very much better than it was at the last inspection. Requirements are now met regarding sex education. In addition, the strengths identified last time have been maintained. In relation to the key issues identified:

- there has been a satisfactory increase in the amount of extended and independent writing. However, there is still some way to go with this;
- standards in information and communication technology are better than they were;
- there has been a good improvement in the quality of play equipment for the nursery and Reception children.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	E	D	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	C	E	B	
science	D	D	E	C	

Standards for 11 year olds in the 2002 national tests were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science when compared to all schools nationally. However, when comparisons are made with similar schools the picture is much better with well above average standards in English, above average standards in mathematics and average standards in science. Trends in results are generally below average, including the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher than average Level 5. Boys do better than girls in English and mathematics, but there is no significant difference in science.

Standards for seven year olds in the 2002 national tests were low. Trends are below average, including the rate of pupils achieving the higher than average Level 3. Boys are doing better than girls, particularly in reading. Although results have been consistently below average, there are signs of improvement.

In relation to work seen during the inspection, children in the nursery and reception have standards that are well below average. However, they achieve well in response to the good teaching and general provision they receive. By the end of Year 2, standards are below national expectations, particularly in English and mathematics. Stronger attainment is found in music and physical education. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations and this confirms the similar school judgement in the 2002 national tests. Standards are still below expectations in English, where writing remains the weakness. Other areas for improvement are in pupils' library skills, mental/oral skills in mathematics and in designing their own experiments in science. Overall, pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Across the school, standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations and this is better than at the last inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and interested. They show high levels of concentration and perseverance.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This is an orderly school, with a calm but busy way of working. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils form very good relationships with adults and peers. They are polite and respectful. Improvements are needed in helping pupils become more independent in their learning
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The rate is well below the national average. Levels of unauthorised absence are broadly average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching is good. Almost all lessons were at least satisfactory and there was a much higher proportion of good, or better, teaching than at the time of the last inspection. In the Reception Year the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The overall strengths are teachers' very good use of resources and their very strong emphasis on the basic skills. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of English and mathematics is good because the teachers are implementing the national strategies well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for extended writing. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of subjects. In the best lessons, questioning by the teacher and management and control are very good. This leads to pupils achieving well because they produce plenty of work and at a brisk pace. The main strengths in Years 3 to 6 are the very effective management of pupils and the generally effective planning, knowledge of subjects and high expectations. Pupils learn well because they are interested in what they do and generally make a lot of effort. However, in writing the expectations are not as high as they ought to be and pupils achieve less. Across the school, teaching is good in mathematics and physical education and satisfactory in geography and information and communication technology. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in English and history and satisfactory in science. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory in English and history and good in science. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement in art and design, design and technology and music.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language is good, overall. Their needs are met well, mainly because the match of task to individual is usually effective. They make good progress in relation to their prior learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Arrangements meet statutory requirements. Good range of activities outside lessons. Provision for personal, social and health education is effective. Area for improvement is the development of opportunities to increase independent learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Close liaison between coordinator and class teachers leads to greater understanding of the needs of individual pupils. Specific support is effective and as a result pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported, either through classroom assistance or by specialist teaching. An area for improvement is the closer liaison between specialist teacher and class teacher so that classroom needs are more closely identified.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Strong Catholic values are evident and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Collective worship is very effective. Pupils are taught to be very aware of the less fortunate and find ways to support them. Pupils are relaxed in the multicultural setting.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Child protection procedures are very strong. Good procedures for monitoring attendance, behaviour and health and safety matters. Procedures for judging pupils' levels of attainment are best in English, mathematics and science. However, these procedures are lacking in most other subjects.
Partnership with parents	Good. Very good level of communication, including annual reports of pupil's progress. Parents have positive views about the school and make a sound contribution.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Leadership is effective and stronger than management. A significant area for improvement is the delegation of responsibility to subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Fully meet their responsibilities, but they do not always follow-up decisions that have been made. The chair is kept well-informed about developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The aims of the school are a comprehensive statement about the school's priorities and form a sound basis for evaluation. Much of the work is done successfully by the headteacher and standards have risen.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Specific grants are used appropriately. The school has been successful in attracting funds from a variety of sources and this has meant that provision for the pupils has benefited. The school has adequate arrangements and practices to ensure that value for money is achieved in the purchasing of supplies and services.

The accommodation is now very good. The match of staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Learning resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress that their children are making. • Behaviour in the school. • The quality of teaching. • The approachability of the school. • The expectations the school places on pupils of hard work and achievement. • Leadership and management. • The way the school is helping their children become more mature. 	<p><i>There are no significant issues the parents wish the school to deal with.</i></p>

Inspectors agree with the vast majority of positive comments. In relation to the school's role in helping pupils become more mature, it is clear that inspectors agree in relation to personality, but not fully, because there are areas for improvement in the development of independent learning skills. Furthermore, leadership is stronger than management.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, standards are at the expected level and pupils' achievement is good. The early judgements of children's levels of attainment show that they enter the nursery with well-below average attainment. By the end of the Reception Year, the children achieve well, but they do not reach the levels expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. However, they achieve the expected level in personal, social and emotional development.
2. Standards at the age of seven in 2002 are well below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics when compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, writing and mathematics results are low and reading is below average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, is low in reading and mathematics and below average in writing and science. Over three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. The results in 2002 show a worsening picture, particularly in mathematics. The attainment of boys and girls shows some differences. Boys are generally performing better than girls, particularly in reading. Results have been consistently below the average, but improving. Writing results look to be the most vulnerable.
3. Results for the 11 year olds were well below average in 2002 in mathematics and science and below average in English when compared with national averages. In comparison with similar schools, English results are well above average, mathematics are above average and science are average. Overall, results are well below average in comparison to all schools and average when compared with similar schools. Pupils attaining the higher Level 5, is below average in English, and well below average in mathematics and science. Over 3 years, results are below average in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in science. Boys are doing much better in English and mathematics. The overall trend in results is below the national one, with 1999 as a significant high point.
4. Overall, standards of work seen during the inspection by the age of 11 are at the nationally expected level. These standards are due to good achievement by pupils. However, standards are lower than expected in writing and above expectations in art and design and music. Although no overall judgement in standards is possible in physical education, standards are above expectations in the aspects observed, namely gymnastics, dance and swimming.
5. Overall, by the age of seven, standards of work seen during the inspection are below the nationally expected level, mainly because standards in English and mathematics are below expectations. The majority of the other subjects meet national expectations, except in music and dance where standards are above expectations. Overall, pupils achieve well.
6. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their previous learning.

7. In English, at the ages of seven and 11, overall standards are below national expectations. This judgement includes standards at the expected level in speaking, listening and reading, but below expected levels in writing. Throughout the school, listening skills are good and pupils' speaking grows increasingly confident over time. Overall, pupils' basic reading skills are strong, and most pupils understand the books that they read. However, library and information gathering skills are not as good as they should be. Writing skills are not high enough, particularly at the age of 11. There are shortcomings in:
- the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation;
 - the quality of extended writing, even though it is better than at the time of the last inspection.
8. In mathematics, attainment at the age of seven is below national expectations and by the age of 11 it is in line with national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. Seven-year-olds have sound number skills, knowledge and understanding. They recognise many two-dimensional shapes and know how to calculate with coins. Mental arithmetic and problem solving skills are not as good as their number calculations. At the age of 11, pupils have soundly built on and improved their skills, knowledge and understanding of number. Furthermore, their knowledge of shapes and use of measures are good. Data handling skills are sound. Higher attaining pupils understand the technical language of probability, such as mean, median and mode. There are shortcomings in:
- the application of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to everyday practical problems;
 - the speed of mental calculations.
9. In science, seven-year-olds have levels of understanding which match national expectations in materials, plant life, animal life and forces. Most pupils know what makes a test fair and the highest attaining pupils predict the consequences of any unfairness in the testing. Eleven-year-olds build successfully on previous learning and they reach nationally expected levels in their work on forces, food chains and the effects of space on the earth. Pupils have adequate measuring and recording skills and know how to control a fair test. However, pupils have too few opportunities to devise their own experiments and investigations.
10. In information and communication technology, standards match national expectations and achievement is sound. By the age of seven, pupils have adequate knowledge of art and word processing programs, and they are developing their skills with these programs in other subjects. By the age of 11, pupils consolidate their learning well. They expand their word processing capabilities, so that higher attaining pupils improve their paragraphing and layout. Information gathering skills are also developing well and pupils are beginning to find out facts they need and are interested in them.
11. Across the school, literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding are used and developed adequately. There have been satisfactory developments since the last inspection in the use of extended and independent writing, particularly in subjects other than English. For example:
- in history, Year 5 pupils write well about life on board a Tudor ship; the Spanish Armada and Henry VIII's wives;
 - in religious education, Year 6 pupils write good pieces about Islam, the Last Supper and St Paul;
 - in design and technology, Year 5 pupils read, and highlight, the important parts of a range of recipes.
- Numeracy skills are also used and developed soundly in other subjects, such as:

- timelines in history;
 - co-ordinates and scales in geography;
 - data gathering and recording through graphs in science.
12. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. All pupils on the special needs register have individual plans that include their specific targets. Class teachers assess pupils needs and progress, they discuss this with the special needs co-ordinator who plans and monitors the individual educational plans. This close co-operation and frequent review of pupils' targets contributes significantly to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The very high standards in this area of school life have been sustained, and in some respects improved since the previous Inspection. Pupils' very positive attitudes, relationships and personal development, supported by their very good behaviour make a major contribution to their education, and are a strength of the school. This judgement is supported by the overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They declare that their children like coming to school, that they behave well, and that they are becoming more mature and responsible with the school's help. Such very high standards derive from the school's strong Catholic ethos.
14. The very positive attitudes are evident in the eagerness that children show in arriving punctually at school, and parents responding to the questionnaire were almost unanimous in declaring that their children like coming to school. Pupils respond very well to the good teaching, applying themselves with interest to their work and showing high levels of concentration and perseverance in classroom tasks. In a Year 5 art lesson on the Aztecs, for example, they showed high levels of creativity and determination in painting the pots that they had themselves fashioned at an earlier lesson. Such was their level of concentration and co-operation that they worked without direct supervision, sharing resources and exchanging ideas to complete their works of art. Such very positive attitudes enhance their learning experience.
15. Behaviour is very good. This judgement is supported unanimously by parents responding to the survey conducted prior to the inspection. Entry to the school and movement between activities are very orderly. During the inspection there was no evidence of unruly or aggressive behaviour, and there have been no exclusions from the school in the period since the previous Inspection. In such a very orderly school community noise levels are low, resulting in a calm and industrious atmosphere that helps to secure good learning. The children show great respect both to one another and to adults and this is a sign of the very good relationships throughout the school. In the relaxed atmosphere of the dining room pupils show consideration for others by keeping their voices low so that all might carry on a normal conversation.
16. The very good personal development of pupils throughout the school provides a solid platform for learning and is acknowledged by the great majority of parents responding to the questionnaire. Pupils have a strong sense of duty and personal responsibility for their actions. They act very responsibly, for example:
- within and outside the classroom, without any obvious inducement other than that they themselves were involved in formulating the school's code of conduct;
 - they are eager to be chosen to undertake responsibilities such as taking the register to the office, clearing away the utensils and wiping the tables after lunch,

operating the overhead projector for singing in assembly, tidying their work station after lessons, or 'buddying' their peers on the adventure play equipment to ensure that nobody is hurt;

- the School Council represents the interests and views of their peers relating to the daily life of the school, for instance, they suggested having a mirror in the toilets to prompt children to look after their appearance and to dress tidily.

Pupils' respect for the views of others is demonstrated by their growing sense of citizenship and their care for the disadvantaged in society by raising considerable sums of money for their chosen charities.

17. Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. They relate well to adults and as a consequence gain in confidence and make good progress.
18. The attendance rate of 93.1 per cent for the last full reporting year is unsatisfactory and well below the national average. This constitutes a fall in attendance since the previous inspection and, in particular, over the last three years, with consequent adverse effects on pupils' education. Nevertheless, as a result of the concerted efforts of the school's managers in partnership with the education welfare service it achieves better attendance levels than others in this area of high social disadvantage. In addition, levels of unauthorised absence are broadly in line with the national average, while absences authorised by the school are confined to a small number of pupils who are frequently absent and who are now being targeted by the authorities. The registration procedures comply fully with legal requirements at both morning and afternoon sessions, and pupils arrive punctually at school. The brisk and orderly movement between activities means that little time is lost.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and this leads to good achievement overall. All but one of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory. The standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the amount of good and better teaching has increased significantly. This confirms the positive views expressed by parents at their pre-inspection meeting with inspectors, and in the returned questionnaires.
20. In the nursery and Reception, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The strongest practice is in the nursery, where teaching is judged to be very good. Particular strengths include:
 - the very good understanding of how children learn is crucial to the effective development of their basic skill;
 - the very good planning and management of the children ensure that time is well spent and profitable;
 - the effective partnership between teacher, nursery nurse and student fosters a happy working atmosphere and an enthusiasm for learning.
21. In Reception, teaching is satisfactory overall. Although areas of strength are similar to the nursery, there are areas for improvement, for example:
 - in a creative development lesson, the children have too few opportunities to work independently on their Mother's Day card because too much was done by the adults and the limited range of resources did not allow them to experiment in colour and style;
 - in an information and technology lesson, some children lost interest in working with the roamer because the task went on too long and there was insufficient challenge.

22. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. The vast majority of lessons are good and better and one lesson in Year 1 was judged to be excellent. The particularly strong aspects in the teaching are:
- the very good teaching of basic skills. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the pupils were taught to listen for individual letter sounds throughout words, such as - team; speak; town. Pupils develop good skills that will help them in their reading and spelling;
 - teaching methods that challenge pupils. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher got the pupils to break down extremely long dinosaur names into syllables and then re-build the name. Pupils began to read successfully the long names and this is a useful skill for independent learning;
 - very good pupil management. For instance, in a Year 2 dance lesson, pupils were able to respond well to clear instructions and interpret expressively the rhythm and pace of a cat's movement.

There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching. Teachers make adequate use of homework and the judgements of pupils' level of attainment to plan and check on their work.

23. Overall, teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good. The lessons observed range from very good to a single unsatisfactory lesson. The strongest teaching was seen in Year 5, where all of the lessons were good and better and almost half of them were very good. In the best lessons, the teacher's planning clearly links with previous work and sets out unambiguous intentions for pupils' future learning. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson the teacher asked the pupils "What have we used spreadsheets for?" and then introduced a challenging task that involved comparing currencies for a holiday. In addition, common strengths in these lessons are:
- high expectations; Year 5 pupils successfully made a presentation to explain photosynthesis to the rest of the class;
 - the wide variety of teaching methods; for instance, in a Year 6 art lesson, the teacher paired pupils, showed them a method of drawing, used video and CD ROMs to emphasise teaching points.

The majority of lessons were judged to be good or better and there are no significant weaknesses in the teaching. Homework is adequate. The quality of marking is generally sound, but is better in Years 5 and 6 where the comments are helpful and challenging. In the single unsatisfactory lesson in Year 6, the whole class was given a difficult reading comprehension to complete. Clearly, the content of the lesson was too difficult for a large proportion of the pupils, particularly in relation to their ability to infer meaning from the text. Consequently, only the highest attaining pupils produced coherent answers. There was little learning elsewhere. Opportunities were missed to:

- demonstrate good practice;
- give practise in building up an answer from start to finish.

However, it needs to be noted that the same teacher taught mainly good, and better, lessons and was strong in other lessons in the points that were weaknesses in the unsatisfactory one.

24. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented soundly. Overall, the planning is faithful to the national guidelines, but improvements are needed in:
- the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation;
 - the teaching of pupils' mental and investigative mathematics skills;
 - pupils' library skills.
25. Throughout the school, teaching is good in mathematics and physical education and satisfactory in geography and information and communication technology. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in English and history. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good in

science and satisfactory in English and history. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in art and design, design and technology and music.

26. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and is generally undertaken by the class teachers with the support of the special needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistants. Small numbers in classes help teachers to support these pupils well. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow correct procedures. Targets are specific and teaching is appropriately focused. The teaching assistants who work with pupils who have special educational needs have very good relationships with the pupils and teachers. They are able to work in conjunction with the teachers to raise standards and to ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons.
27. In the nursery and Reception classes, a bi-lingual assistant is able to translate where necessary for those young children whose grasp of English is poor or who have no English at all. Specialist teachers work with children as they grow in their acquisition of the language, although only four hours per week of such support is available and the effect of such provision is only marginal. However, within the main school small class sizes, good class organisation and considered use of teaching assistants results in good progress made by pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils are frequently given modified work, or have additional explanations given to them and work with groups of pupils who help them. Such pupils are well integrated into their classes, at playtimes and lunchtime and this leads to rapid acquisition of English giving them full access to the curriculum.

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

28. Overall, the curriculum is sound and provides pupils with appropriate breadth and balance in their studies. The curriculum:
- provides pupils with knowledge and understanding in academic subjects;
 - supports very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
 - is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and activities provided outside lessons.
29. The curriculum has improved since the time of the previous inspection, for instance:
- information technology is now used to a greater extent to support learning in other subjects;
 - there is an appropriate sex education policy adhered to by staff;
 - there are good resources for physical development in the nursery and Reception classes.

However the curriculum still needs improvement. It does not sufficiently help pupils to develop independent learning skills and to use these skills in a variety of contexts. In particular:

- there are currently too few opportunities for pupils to design their own investigation and exploration in science and to decide how to report their findings;
- there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent writing skills across a range of subjects, which was also a finding of the previous inspection;
- there are not enough opportunities to consolidate the use of oral and mental mathematical skills and apply mathematics skills in everyday situations.

The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and each subject is assigned to a member of staff to check on its development. Sound implementation of key elements within the national numeracy and literacy strategies has led to good achievement. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of

scientific facts and principles and pupils are taught how to conduct teacher-led experiments and record results on prepared worksheets. But again, opportunities for independent learning, where pupils devise their own investigations to test their own ideas, need further development.

30. Pupils have good equality of access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed. Teachers' plans appropriately detail what it is intended for pupils to learn and progressively build each year upon knowledge and skills gained in the last. Guidance in subjects other than mathematics and English, comes from whole-school schemes of work which are mostly derived from local guidelines linked to national recommendations. These are frequently implemented through commercial schemes that are well understood by the teachers. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils who have special educational needs. The special needs co-ordinator takes overall responsibility for the individual educational plans. The plans are stringently reviewed and this means that targets are always specific and relevant. Pupils benefit from the close liaison between the co-ordinator and their class teachers. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection

31. The school ensures that those pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported through adult intervention. These pupils comprise around eight per cent of the school's population although the number who are in an early stage of acquisition, generally those in the nursery and Reception classes, is far fewer. All pupils are given good access to the curriculum through:
 - working in groups with other pupils;
 - providing specialist teaching.These features, along with generally small classes, good levels of co-operation and teamwork between pupils and good levels of teaching assistance particularly in the classes for younger pupils, contribute to the good progress made by these pupils. Currently there is very little teaching outside the classroom but there are plans to do this in the future. The external support staff who have responsibility for English as an additional language do not have their teaching and planning monitored by the school and, therefore, liaison with classteachers is not as thorough as it ought to be.

32. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons, including sport, languages and music which, combined with local educational visits, enrich and enliven the curriculum. In keeping with the school's values and philosophy pupils also have the opportunity to join a prayer group which meets regularly. Year 6 pupils elected to the School Council meet with the deputy head teacher to discuss matters affecting the school as a whole. The school also invites visitors whose presence encourages pupils to engage with the curriculum. As well as events featuring members of the fire service, the school nurse, community police and local artists, classroom lessons have been enriched by a visit from actors playing Henry VIII and, more recently, Tim the Ostler who features in a poem being studied by Year 5 pupils.

33. Personal social and health education is good and the work is covered mainly through science and religious education. Wirral Christian Agency provides support in teaching about drugs awareness, domestic violence and alcohol abuse. The school also benefits from other good links with the community. Groundwork Wirral, the community police, the parish priest and local Imam are frequently involved with the school and good relationships have been developed with partner institutions. Liverpool Hope University College, and John Moores University work soundly with the school, to provide initial teacher training. Caldby Grammar School and Plessington Catholic High School

have assisted the school in mathematics and science projects and in beginning to make provision for gifted and talented pupils.

34. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents a strength of the school that has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents are appreciative of the values that the school promotes, and there are good levels of harmony, very good relationships and much respect for all in the school community. Daily acts of collective worship meet legal requirements and their quality is high.
35. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Acts of collective worship provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have heard and seen. For example, a whole-school period of worship opened with a period of thought about:
- good thoughts for the week;
 - helping with others' problems.
- Clearly these acts of worship are special occasions and the physical 'setting up' of an altar reinforces this view. Importantly, religious symbols are also given prominence in worship and in the weekly prayer club. For example:
- altars have a cross, lighted candles, flowers, crucifix;
 - a golden box is highlighted, so that good thoughts can be saved.
- Music makes a good contribution to spiritual experience in worship. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to speak about a range of topics, ranging from religions and the Iraq War to supporting young people less fortunate than themselves. These thoughts are often expressed in prayer and in collective worship pupils contribute to these prayers by making appropriate ritual responses. Overall, the school very successfully fosters the importance of Catholic values.
36. Very good provision is made for moral development. Teachers promote a supportive atmosphere and this is properly underpinned by an effective moral code. Pupils are aware of the boundaries set for them and appreciate the clear framework which values mutual respect for all. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. They like and respect the system in place to reward good behaviour, good work and helpful attitudes. They also recognise that sanctions are fair and, on occasion, necessary. Adult role-models are good and, in general, the calm atmosphere provides an accurate reflection of an orderly society.
37. The provision for social development is very good. At the core of this work are the very good relationships that are fostered by all. This is seen most clearly in the way that the school staff value:
- the importance of giving praise;
 - the need to resolve challenges in a positive way;
 - the development of pupils' self-esteem.
- These important values successfully develop a sense of duty and personal responsibility amongst the pupils. The result is a good and measured response to:
- raising money for charities, at home and abroad;
 - involvement with the community, as young citizens;
 - understanding and respecting cultural diversity.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to work with a partner or in larger groups and in some lessons, older pupils act as a spokesperson for their group. Pupils take on responsibility willingly.
38. The provision for cultural development is very good. Opportunities are regularly prepared for pupils to learn about local culture, mainly in history, geography and religious education. The headteacher is clear that the focus for this area of work is the promotion of 'global citizenship' and to this end he is fostering close relationships with

the local Imam who ministers to the Bangladeshi community. Furthermore, this has led to helpful initiatives, such as:

- the Imam attending a school collective worship;
- the setting up of a Bangladeshi day, where important cultural symbols were celebrated, for instance, food, dress and dancing.

The school has good links established in Africa, through support for charitable causes, for example, in Uganda and Zambia.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. As noted at the previous inspection a major strength of this school lies in the effectiveness of its procedures for promoting the health, safety and well-being of those in its care. Such high standards of pastoral care reflect the school's strong Catholic ethos and result in an atmosphere of security and well-being that sets a secure platform for learning. Parents, at their meeting with the inspectors, variously described the school as: 'lovely', 'happy', 'encouraging', 'a school that makes our children feel that they belong, and wants them to do well'.
40. The very good procedures for child protection are well rehearsed and fully comply with the guidelines issued by the area child protection committee. The inspectors saw evidence of a good working relationship between the school and the other agencies involved in such matters. The headteacher is the 'designated person' for child protection, and as well as ensuring that all adults in the school have a good working knowledge of the procedures and maintain a high level of alertness, he has appointed a colleague to deputise for him in his absence. Relevant files are stored separately and securely to ensure confidentiality.
41. The very careful arrangements for the safety and personal care of pupils start in the school grounds where effective provision is made for the segregation of vehicles from pedestrians. The very efficient first aid arrangements include a nominated person supported by the school secretary as the first point of contact.
42. The detailed range of policies and procedures relating to health and safety complies fully with legal requirements. Proper arrangements for personal security are in place both in and around the school premises. Termly fire drills and weekly testing of alarms ensure that safe exit procedures are well rehearsed. Annual risk assessments by the local education authority are supported by the school's own risk assessment programme, and by its procedures for reporting and recording hazards.
43. Despite the difficult social circumstances within its catchment area the school's good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance have ensured that unauthorised absence is slightly better than the national average, and that overall attendance is better than that seen at other schools in the area. A good working partnership with the education welfare officer has resulted in a joint strategy to improve attendance by identifying patterns of absence and effecting early follow-up, though the small amount of time allocated to the school reduces the effectiveness of this strategy.

44. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. The code of conduct is drawn up in consultation with pupils who themselves subscribe to the high standards it demands. The procedures and the strong influence of the school's Catholic ethos result in the very good behaviour reported by the inspectors. It places the highest expectations at every level of school and parish life and is well supported by parents, who themselves come under its influence. The result is a climate of calm and orderliness that greatly promotes learning. Any isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with to the satisfaction of most parents.
45. The school's good procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development have attracted strong support from parents, 95 per cent of them declaring that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The inspectors support that view and suggest that the success of the school's efforts lies not only in the good quality of its relevant policies and procedures but also in the dedication of adults in the school who lead the pupils by example. They secure the respect of pupils and provide them with positive role models that promote self-esteem, responsibility and maturity as they progress through the school. Personal growth and self knowledge are effectively promoted through events, such as:
- the very good acts of collective worship;
 - the circle time (whole-class discussions);
 - the School Council;
 - the 'buddying' initiative.
- It is that knowledge of self that prompted a Year 5 pupil (when asked by the Inspector how she could possibly pick out her own Aztec pot from all the others that looked so similar) to reply: "I can see myself in it."
46. Overall, the testing and recording procedures of what pupils know, understand and can do are satisfactory. The procedures for children under six years of age are sound and used effectively to plan work to meet the their needs. Pupils are regularly tested in English, mathematics and science. Information gained from testing is used appropriately either to plan work for groups of differing levels of attainment or to identify the right group for individual pupils. Systems of testing and record keeping are not in place in most other subjects, the exception being information and communication technology. In this subject, the records reflect what pupils have learnt in their lessons based on the intentions the teacher set. Consequently, information about individual pupil's achievements is sufficiently detailed and easily accessible to teachers. As a result, teachers have a clear picture of what pupils know and understand and of the skills they have in these subjects. This helps teachers in planning the next stage of learning by building on the work pupils have learnt in the previous lessons. The school has plans to develop this practice into all subjects in a planned programme of curricular development.
47. The school effectively carries out national testing when pupils are aged seven and 11 and successfully carries out analyses of these results. This information has been used to identify areas for improvement, for example:
- in English, writing was identified as an area for improvement;
 - in mathematics, pupils' skills in solving problems.
- As a result, planned programmes of improvement are being introduced. Pupils are tested each year in Years 3,4 and 5 using commercial tests and the results are used to track individual pupil progress. However, this information is not used sufficiently well for example, in setting group or individual targets for pupils. Test results when children first enter the school are carefully analysed and used effectively to plan sessions to meet the needs of all children. However, recording of what children achieve throughout the nursery and Reception classes lacks detail in most aspects of children's development.

The school is aware of this and is an area planned for development. Teachers use appropriate marking procedures. Work is regularly marked; teachers give constructive comments and suggest ways in which work can be improved.

48. The school uses appropriate procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers judge pupils' progress and if there is need for intervention from an outside agency, the special needs co-ordinator is able to contact the appropriate agency for more specialist support. The co-operative approach in meeting pupils' special needs is a positive feature of the school provision, contributing well to the academic and personal development of these pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The good links between home and school have been sustained in the period since the previous Inspection, and have made a good contribution to raising standards.
50. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire, or attending the meeting with the inspectors, agree that their children like coming to school, that they behave well and that they make good progress. More than 90 per cent of parents say that the teaching is good, that the school expects their children to work hard, that it helps them become mature, and that it is well managed. Parents' positive views of the school are enhanced by their shared Catholic values.
51. The quality of information provided by the school is very good, and gives parents every opportunity to involve themselves in their children's learning. As well as complying with legal requirements the prospectus and the governors' report to parents are clear and informative documents. These are supported by two parents' evenings.
52. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved with the special needs process. Parents are asked to attend review meetings and kept fully informed about their child's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. Overall, leadership and management are good. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous inspection. Effective leadership has helped the school to adapt well to changing circumstances and improved provision, successfully addressing issues identified in the previous inspection and implementing National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies adequately. However, leadership is more effective than management. Delegation to those with subject responsibilities is unsatisfactory.
54. The headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other well and have made a positive impact on the quality of learning and consequently on the good achievement of pupils. The headteacher's faith, energy, enthusiasm and commitment make a strong contribution to the life of the school and provide a very good model to those around him. He has successfully ensured that the Christian foundation of the school is reflected in all aspects of its work. He has consistently promoted and achieved high standards of behaviour and personal and social responsibility in pupils. He has been particularly effective in delivering his vision of a much needed safe and caring environment in which pupils feel secure and can therefore grow spiritually and academically.
55. In pursuit of the school's aim for high standards the headteacher has developed the school's provision effectively by evaluating teachers' planning and closely monitoring teaching, through his scrutiny of pupils' work, and analysis of data from judgements of

pupils' levels of attainment. As a result he is able to offer good advice to teaching staff and has an accurate and considered view of many of the school's needs. This approach has been effective in improving teaching and learning in the school. The school has the capacity to improve further through the development of a climate of shared responsibility in order to raise the quality of teaching of all to that of the best.

56. The school development plan is a sound tool for managing the school's strategy and clearly reflects the school's aims and values and the headteacher's priorities. It highlights appropriate issues for the school. The plan ensures a unified approach to the achievement of the identified issues and informs a system for managing staff performance, training for teaching and non-teaching staff, and defines the school's priorities for spending. This is a key document in delivering the school's intentions. However, although well informed through the headteacher's analysis, the plan does not benefit from the perceptions of other staff, particularly those with subject management roles.
57. The current role of subject co-ordinators is unsatisfactory. They have insufficient delegated responsibility and are not being held accountable for the work in their subjects. For example, co-ordinators do not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in other classrooms and consequently they do not know the strengths and weaknesses within their subjects. Self evaluation within subjects is weak and hence co-ordinators are not able to make effective contributions to the development plan. Consequently, they are unable to address deficiencies effectively, nor fully to exploit the strengths within their subjects. Shortcomings in delegation mean that much subject expertise within the teaching staff remains untapped.
58. Overall, the work of the governors is sound. They fully meet their statutory responsibilities and have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The chair of governors is well informed about financial and curriculum developments and other school initiatives through visits, reports and regular committee meetings. Literacy, numeracy and special needs governors have been appointed and receive reports on developments in their areas of interest. Governors have high expectations of the school and whilst challenging everyone to do their best provide the encouragement needed to support staff in their endeavours. In addition, the governors and head teacher have recently worked well together to minimise the effect of the deficit budget. They have created a sound plan which will involve running an agreed and reducing deficit over the next three years to clear the overspend. However, on occasions, challenge and support have not always led to effective action. For example, two years ago it was the declared intention of the governors to support the headteacher to fulfil an increasingly strategic role through progressive delegation of management responsibilities to key subject co-ordinators. As noted elsewhere within the report, this has not yet been achieved.
59. The head is very busy and successful pursuing improvements in provision, including the design of the new building. In order to provide additional classroom help he has appropriately involved the school in a work-based initial teaching programme and has also sought and gained funding in order that pupils benefit from a variety of features of additional support. For example, a 'surestart' grant has been won to fund a strong initiative to ensure bi-lingual support in the nursery and Reception classes and strengthen links with Bangladeshi families. Overall, good use is made of teaching assistants who benefit from vocational training arranged by the school. These staff assist pupils well, particularly those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This, alongside the generally small classes, are significant reasons why these pupils make good progress. The information and

communication technology teaching assistant is well deployed and used to support the curriculum, which allows maximum use to be made of the small computer suite which can only accommodate a few pupils at a time. The school's heavy involvement in various forms of traditional initial teacher training again adds to the number and variety of adults who interact with the pupils and this contributes to pupil's learning. The school is aware that they need to develop closer monitoring of trainees especially when they are in charge of whole classes for extended periods in order to preserve these advantages for pupils.

60. Resources are adequate to support the curriculum and are well used. Through debate, discussion and good monitoring of prices the school is soundly seeking ways of ensuring that they obtain best value for money. Specific grants and additional funding are wisely targeted to maximise the benefit for pupils. Effective new technology is well used for school administration purposes by staff trained to make best use of these facilities. The teaching and external accommodation are much improved since the last inspection by the new building and overall site improvements. Light, spacious and well-ventilated classrooms, along with corridor areas, are well used, the latter frequently for withdrawal and other small group activities. The site manager and his staff ensure that the school is clean and at a temperature appropriate for pupils to be comfortable and to work efficiently.
61. The management of the provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is experienced and liaises closely with the class teachers and teaching assistants to give pupils the extra assistance required for them to make progress and be fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs receive their entitlement to extra support. The administrative work is up to date and monitored regularly by the co-ordinator. However, the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs in the classroom. As a result, she lacks a clear picture of the strengths of the provision and where there are any areas for improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To further improve this effective school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in writing and mathematics by:
 - developing a consistent approach to the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation;
 - improving the quality of teaching of pupils' mental skills at the start of the mathematics lesson;(Paragraphs: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 24, 29, 47, 72, 77, 79, 84)

- (2) Increase opportunities for pupils to learn independently by:
 - improving pupils' library skills;
 - increasing the amount of investigative work and problem-solving in mathematics;
 - improving the pupils' involvement in designing, setting and carrying out investigations in science.(Paragraphs: 7, 8, 9, 24, 29, 47, 76, 84, 92)

- (3) Extend to all subjects and improve the sound practice in judging pupils' levels of attainment that are found in English, mathematics and science.
(Paragraphs: 46, 47, 111, 117, 122)

- (4) Improve the leadership and management of subjects by:
 - providing comprehensive training for co-ordinators in lesson observation, analysis of pupils' work and data analysis;
 - providing sufficient time for co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning;
 - developing action plans that will fully contribute to the school development plan.(Paragraphs: 56, 57, 82, 89, 97, 102, 106, 111, 117)

- (5) Improve attendance by:
 - raising targets further;
 - further improving relationships with parents.(Paragraph: 18)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	27	15	1	0	0
Percentage	2	16	54	27	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	166
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	38

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	5	8
	Girls	11	11	9
	Total	19	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (87)	64 (87)	68 (87)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	9	10
	Girls	11	9	11
	Total	16	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (87)	72 (83)	84 (91)
	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	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	9	10	12
	Total	21	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (67)	76 (78)	83 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	10	12	12
	Total	21	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72(61)	83 (78)	86 (83)
	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	126	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	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	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

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

	£
Total income	463,455
Total expenditure	449,887
Expenditure per pupil	2,238
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,352
Balance carried forward to next year	13,568

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	185
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	30	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	33	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	49	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	43	10	5	11
The teaching is good.	56	44	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	34	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	23	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	28	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	56	33	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	46	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	34	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	30	15	0	15

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

63. The school provides a good start to children's education. The overall quality of the teaching is good, with very good practice seen in the nursery. The strengths in the provision are:

- good planning of the relevant curriculum;
- effective adult support;
- the improved facilities for indoor and outdoor provision;
- good opportunities for independent learning in the nursery.

This helps the children learn effectively in the nursery and Reception classes and shows an improvement in the provision for young children since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement are

- the further development of procedures for judging children's levels of attainment;

64. Children enter the 52 place nursery when they are three years old and move into the Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. During the inspection there were 24 children of Reception class age attending full time and 39 of nursery age attending part time. When they join the school most children have a range of skills well below that expected for their age in all areas of learning. Although they make good progress by the time they leave the Reception class, they will still not have reached the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning but will have achieved them in their personal and social and emotional development. Teachers have a good understanding of how young pupils learn, particularly in the nursery. They plan and manage the children very well and provide a wide range of interesting activities. The effective liaison between the teachers and the conscientious support staff is beneficial to all children. As a result, the children are happy and enthusiastic, concentrate well and work with interest. They play happily both indoors and outdoors, co-operate sensibly when sharing equipment and are well motivated. Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good support from the teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants. As a result, they make good gains in their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Overall, the teaching in this area of learning is good. Teachers are effective in nurturing all pupils' personal and social skills. Children enter both classes confidently and adapt quickly to the routines. The children are quickly occupied by a wide range of quality, 'free choice' activities, both indoors and outdoors, which builds their confidence, helps them to make decisions and to organise their own time. The classroom organisation provides good opportunities for independence, particularly in the nursery. For example, there is self-registration on entry to the nursery class. The resources are appropriate and are well matched to individual children's abilities. The children concentrate and persevere without supervision for lengthy periods of time. Reception children also use outdoor equipment and large sized equipment with enjoyment and take turns, showing developing respect for one another. Activities during lessons are generally well thought out, but in some lessons seen, opportunities to make choices and take decisions were limited, particularly in the Reception class. In the nursery, the respect and care that the

children receive contributes well to their spiritual development and children respond very well by being polite, kind and helpful to others.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Overall, teaching of language and literacy skills is good in the nursery and Reception classes. The staff constantly talk to children to introduce new words and vocabulary for them to use to clarify their thoughts, ideas and feelings. As a result, they achieve well in lessons and make sound gains in their learning. Speaking and listening skills are taught well through songs, jingles, games, tapes, stories, questioning and answering sessions and the use of the relevant vocabulary throughout all activities. In a few Reception lessons there is an over emphasis on listening skills, when children are required to sit and listen to adults talking for an inappropriate amount of time, This was the case in a knowledge and understanding lesson. The children became restless and some were not fully involved in the answering opportunities. Occasionally, the questions required only a short answer, with little opportunity for children to talk at length.
67. Children in both classes listen attentively to stories. In the nursery, for example, children enjoy listening to 'One, Two, Three off to the Sea'. They listen on their own to interactive stories and reading games and enjoy looking at books in the library corner. Reception children are beginning to recognise a range of simple words that occur frequently and most can identify the initial sounds of common words. When reading, pupils enjoy the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and read words with the teacher with expression. Children are given many formal opportunities to develop their writing skills. The incidental opportunities to develop spontaneously their creative writing are less evident. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers draw children's attention to the correct formation of letters and consequently the children are developing sound pencil control. Nursery children are starting to make sound attempts at early writing, while children in the Reception class write letters correctly on most occasions, either copying or writing their own sentences, for example, 'She ate the bear's porridge'. Most children write simple words and their forename unaided and many of the letters are well formed.

Mathematical development

68. Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching seen in the nursery. In both classes, teaching ensures that children are given many opportunities to develop mathematical skills through the effective use of practical activities, number rhymes, games and songs. Children use mathematical vocabulary of number, time, shape, pattern and measurement appropriately. Through constructional play, children show an interest in shape and space and begin to talk about shapes in the world around them. In the Reception class, many count reliably to 10, some to 20 and beyond in ones. They sort and use numbers to at least nine and are beginning to count backwards in ones from six, some using fingers. Puppets are used to enhance mathematical skills. For example, nursery children watched quietly and attentively while 'Cody' selected and counted six pieces of apple and joined in the counting with enjoyment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Overall, teaching is good in the nursery and Reception classes. This area is successfully promoted through well-planned themes, such as 'Materials', 'Habitats', and 'Forces'. There are many opportunities for children to learn about the world around them during lessons, outdoor activities and on visits to the local area. They are encouraged to find out about, and identify, features of living things and to investigate

and question why things happen. Nursery children for example, use a wide range of resources to discover facts about animals and plants and the changes that occur over time. This knowledge is built upon effectively when Reception children discover what animals and insects live around the school. All children gain a sense of the passing of time through the regular use of significant times of the day, days of the week and daily routines. Children learn about significant events in the calendar year and the church year, such as 'Easter' and 'Christmas'. All children learn to shape, assemble and join construction pieces together such as the attractive 'creatures around the playground' made by the Reception children from recycled materials. In the Reception lesson seen on 'Forces', progress was slower because children were not used enough to describe, question and explain what they saw, in order to strengthen their understanding. From entering school, children quickly become familiar with the computer and use a computer mouse to click on to the correct picture on the computer screen.

Physical development

70. The quality of teaching in this area is good in the nursery and Reception classes. When children enter the nursery, their manipulative skills and co-ordination are well below what is typical for their age. The children acquire satisfactory skills in movement. They have a developing sense of space and bodily awareness and are beginning to use tools and equipment with increasing skill. The facilities and equipment for outdoor play are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection; the planning for this area is structured well. Nursery children ride, pedal, steer, climb and run confidently. They use space well and learn to co-operate and work as a team. The regular supervision and purposeful intervention ensures that children move forward in developing their outdoor physical skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to develop better control and manipulative skills by using scissors, pencils, crayons and paintbrushes regularly, and these develop well in both classes.

Creative development

71. The quality of teaching in this area is good in the nursery and Reception classes. Most of the creative elements of the curriculum, including painting, drawing, role-play, sand and water are available as part of the continuous provision planned. Children explore and experiment enthusiastically using a range of media and materials. Nursery and Reception children make constructions, paintings and collages and experiment using different textures. Nursery children make number collages and learn how to hold a brush correctly when painting patterns and self-portraits. Informal singing is used well in both classes to support literacy and numeracy. In these lessons all children recognised the tunes and sang tunefully and with zest the familiar songs, nursery rhymes and jingles and happily joined in with the actions. In the nursery, children concentrate well in playing percussion instruments at different intensities. There are good opportunities through role-play to explore ideas, for example, in the nursery in 'The Shoe-makers shop', and a good quantity and quality of resources stimulate children's imagination and language skills. Adults question and support children well in this area, but adult attention is less prominent in the 'Launderette' in the Reception class

ENGLISH

72. Overall, standards are below expectations at ages seven and 11. These standards for seven year olds are better than those attained in the 2002 national tests and that is

because there are no pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 2. However, the standards for 11 year olds match the 2002 national test results, but lag behind the results compared to similar schools. This is because the present Year 6 pupils are doing less well in their writing, particularly the use and development of basic skills. Standards are better in reading, speaking and listening than they are in writing. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in the work seen.

73. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The evidence from the analysis of pupils' work is that pupils' writing makes steady gains from Year 1 to Year 5, particularly in the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. However, Year 6 pupils have weaker basic skills and their standards are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6.
74. These findings are broadly similar to those of the previous inspection. However, the rate of achievement is better and the school has made important gains in relation to writing, even though there is some way to go. The quality of teaching is better in Years 1 and 2 and similar in Years 3 to 6.
75. By the ages of seven and 11, overall standards in speaking and listening are at the nationally expected level. As they move through the school, pupils listen with growing attention and concentration. This developing strength is seen in a variety of settings, for instance, collective worship, lessons in all subjects and in less structured situations such as the playground. The quality of their responses is testimony to the listening skills. Pupils state their opinions well and justify their opinions with growing confidence. They present their work at the end of lessons, or at collective worship to ever widening audiences. There is evidence of good growth in the use of technical language in subjects such as:
- science;
 - mathematics;
 - design and technology.
76. Standards in reading at ages seven and 11 are around the expected level. Across the school, the strengths are:
- good basic skills; pupils know letter sounds and can use these sounds to sound out words they do not know;
 - seven year olds are developing good expression in their reading and most know how to find books classified by alphabetical order;
 - eleven year olds have a wide vocabulary, understand their books and talk at length about the characters;
 - the majority of pupils have good attitudes to reading.
- Throughout the school, higher attaining pupils show very good expression when reading, particularly the direct speech. The main area for development is improving on the weaker library and information gathering skills. This shortcoming is part of a wide difficulty with independent learning skills.

77. Standards in writing at ages seven and 11 are below expectations. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have neat, legible and printed handwriting. The higher attaining pupils spell accurately and they are becoming skilled at writing contractions such as 'she'll'. However, many pupils have difficulties with spelling, but this, commendably, does not restrict their ambitious use of vocabulary, such as 'frightened'. Punctuation skills are improving. Writing style is straightforward and simple, and there is good evidence in other subjects of pupils recounting stories well; for example, in religious education, the story of Jesus and the Prodigal Son. By the age of 11, pupils' basic skills are not good enough. For example:
- handwriting is a mixture of print and joined script, often in one piece of work;
 - amongst generally accurate spelling, there are weaknesses relating to spelling rules, such as confusion of 'there/their';
 - the range of punctuation is narrow, with insufficient use of question and exclamation marks.
- The style of writing is primarily straightforward, with too little richness in the vocabulary. For example, there is a general lack of adjectives and adverbs to give colour to the writing. Better work is seen in poetry, where humour and vividness are present.
78. More impressive writing is observed in Year 5. Firstly, the range of writing is greater than in other years; pupils have, at least, satisfactory basic skills. High attaining pupils write with the audience in mind and garner the interest of the reader:
 'The highwayman trotted down the cobbled road'
 They use direct speech to derive impact and excitement from the spoken word:
 "Hey you, drop the pearls!"
 Commendably, the lower attaining pupils are developing an improved style that includes writing complex sentences, such as:
 'While the Highwayman was talking to Bess, Tim the Ostler was spying on her and him'.
79. The development of literacy skills is satisfactory, overall. This is because there is an increasing understanding that writing skills need to be developed in pupils' work in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education. The teaching of the literacy strategy is good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There are some useful pieces of work that have benefited from information and communication technology. For example, drafting and re-drafting of writing about the visit of the author Darren Shan.
80. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. However, this masks judgements of good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6. The quality of individual lessons range from good to unsatisfactory, with the majority of sessions being good. In Years 1 and 2, the strengths of teaching include:
- good development of basic skills, such as the recognition of single-letter and blended sounds in word;
 - teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding which means that pupils are presented with work that is well-matched to their levels of attainment;
 - good questioning that directs pupils to recognise sounds within words, for instance, 'What gives us the clue about the diet of this dinosaur?' Pupils are directed towards the word 'herbivore' and the key part 'herb'.
81. In Year 2, the teacher showed very good practice when she identified a common misunderstanding in pupils' work, called the group together and went over the work again. In Years 3 to 6, the best lessons have very good pace and strong use of technical vocabulary. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the lesson moved swiftly from aspect (rhythm) to aspect (verb) to aspect (nouns). Pupils appreciate this approach

and are fully engaged. For these strengths to be present, the teachers have to be very secure in their subject knowledge and lesson planning. In the single unsatisfactory lesson in Year 6 the planning was weak and so pupils became confused about the task and what they needed to do. Pupils learned little and their written work was not good enough.

82. Overall, management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Despite a range of strategies to check standards and improve provision, there has yet to be sufficient improvement in writing skills, particularly with the present Year 6. However, there has been satisfactory improvement in relation to the key issue from the last inspection, for increasing and improving the number of opportunities for extended writing. Resources are adequate. Procedures for judging pupils' levels of attainment are satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

83. Pupils' attainment at age seven is below the national average and close to the average by the age of 11. Pupils make good progress in the infant and junior classes. Pupils' attainment at age 11 is better than results of national tests in 2002, which were well below the national average and close to what was achieved by similar schools. About 75 per cent of pupils in the present Year 6 are on track to meet national expectations by the end of the year and a small number will exceed them.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the good planning that helps pupils develop effective skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject;
- teachers' high expectations, promoting effective learning and good achievement;
- the great enthusiasm which pupils show in their lessons.

Areas for development are:

- a stronger focus on developing pupils' mental skills at the start of lessons so that pupils can answer mental questions with greater speed, accuracy and confidence;
- providing pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in practical, problem solving situations in order to improve pupils' ability to solve written problems.

Since the last inspection, standards continue to improve. This is due to:

- the good improvements in the overall quality of the teaching;
- careful attention that is given to the analysis of test results;
- small classes which allow teachers to support pupils of all abilities well.

84. By the age of seven, pupils' skills in the key area of number are around the expected level. Pupils display sound strategies for counting on in twos, fours and fives. They demonstrate an appropriate understanding of place value, know the value of each digit in a two-digit number, for example, that 66 is made up of six tens and six units. They add and subtract two digit numbers, understand basic mathematical symbols and recognise and use coins appropriately. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of shape and identify two-dimensional shapes such as triangle, square, rectangle and circle by reference to properties, such as the number of sides and corners. Good progress is being made in number but this is less so in mental mathematics. Pupils recall of number bonds and multiplication tables is weak. Similarly, due to the limited opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in practical everyday situations their skills in solving problems and practical application are not as strong as their number skills.

85. By the age of 11, all pupils have a sound knowledge of number, including recall of multiplication tables. Their understanding of place value is secure and they add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers accurately. Pupils' knowledge of fractions is satisfactory. Most pupils understand the relationship between fractions and decimals. Pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures is good. They recognise lines of symmetry in shapes and they have a sound knowledge of the functions of a calculator. Data handling skills are sound. Pupils collect information, record it in appropriate ways including frequency charts and then use bar, line and pie graphs to display the information. Higher attaining pupils understand the terms mean, median and mode. However, pupils' skills in applying their mathematical knowledge in everyday practical situations or solving problems are weak. They do not answer mental type questions quickly or confidently.
86. Pupils achieve well in the lessons observed. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys. The progress in the pupils' learning is good overall, particularly in the development of number skills and the use of key vocabulary. The daily class sessions of mental arithmetic and problem solving activities are not always fully effective in helping all pupils to rehearse and apply knowledge and are dependent on the quality of the teaching. In discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils, they were hesitant in response to mental questions, such as add 99 and 96 together, and their explanations on how they reached their answers were not always clear or logical. The school policy for promoting equal access to all parts of provision ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress and are fully integrated into the activities of the class. However, in the oral/mental sessions there are too few opportunities through targeted questioning to meet these pupils' specific needs.
87. Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching is good. The small numbers of pupils in classes positively helps the teaching and learning. Teachers' planning and their subject knowledge are good. The qualities of the good and very good teaching are:
- what is to be learnt is clearly identified and focused and the well-planned activities enable the objectives to be realised in lessons;
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve in lessons, including their behaviour and achievements in their work;
 - lessons are well structured and achieve a good balance between direct teaching and pupils being actively engaged in activities, which are well matched to their abilities;
 - teachers use questioning techniques well to assess and develop pupils' understanding;
 - teachers use time and resources well, which has a clear impact on the good rates of learning achieved by pupils in lessons.
- As a result of the good teaching, pupils have good attitudes towards their mathematical work. They enjoy taking part in the oral and mental parts of the lesson and in other activities planned for them in lessons. Pupils work with enthusiasm and are able to sustain their concentration over long periods of time when given the too few opportunities for working independently. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of pupils' mental skills and in providing pupils with effective strategies to solve problems. This is because the quality of the oral/mental starter at the beginning of the lesson and the discussion at the end varies throughout the school. At times, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to describe and compare strategies and mental recall is restricted to too narrow a range of examples. Similarly, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the knowledge they have gained in everyday, practical, problem solving activities.

88. There is a satisfactory curriculum and mathematical skills are used and developed effectively in other areas of the curriculum. For example:
- in history; in junior classes pupils use a timeline to chronicle events and record significant changes in society;
 - in geography, the development of mapping skills to fix the position of places accurately using scale, and understanding co-ordinates is linked well to work in mathematics;
 - pupils use their information and communication technology skills to record and display data collected in surveys in a range of formats.
- The development of mathematical vocabulary in all classes makes a positive contribution to the literacy development in the school. Pupils' reading skills are used to good effect in interpreting problems.
89. The co-ordination and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. This is because there is a lack of effective monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result, the co-ordinator does not have a sufficiently clear picture as to the strengths and areas in need of improvement. There is an appropriate range of resources available to support teaching and learning across the school. The subject policy and scheme of work have been updated to meet the requirements of the national numeracy initiative in the subject. There are sound procedures in place for the judging of pupils' levels of attainment, which keep teachers and the co-ordinator well-informed and aware of how well pupils are achieving. For example, the co-ordinator monitors test results to identify the strengths and areas in need of development. Formal records of these judgements for each pupil are kept but these are not used enough, for example, to set group targets or individual targets that are shared with pupils.

SCIENCE

90. Standards in science are broadly in line with expectations by the ages of seven and 11. This represents good achievement and is similar to standards at the time of the previous inspection. Lesson observations, work examined, and records of teachers' ongoing judgements of pupils' levels of attainment demonstrate that these standards are better than those indicated by the results of last year's national tests. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, either in the 2002 national tests or in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make equally good progress.
91. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to sort materials by their properties, such as elasticity and rigidity, roughness and smoothness; describe how a bulb grows, and what are the conditions necessary for plants and animals to survive; and, can make sense of measurements made when rolling toy cars down an incline. Much of the work is oral and pupils have become quite skilled at explaining their thinking and conclusions to their teachers and other adults. Observation in lessons show that whilst nearly all pupils in this class can offer reasons why tests may be fair or unfair a few can also make predictions as to what the effect of such unfairness may have on the results.
92. By the age of 11, pupils have acquired knowledge and understanding of the key features of physical forces, the processes of life and properties of materials. Pupils' work shows that they know and understand: the effects of friction; the workings of levers, pivots and what makes balls more or less bouncy; how a food chain works around a local pond; and, how we get day and night. Some of this information has been gained through investigations and experimentation designed by the teacher and carried out by groups and individuals. Pupils have developed skills in measuring and recording results and most can explain why it is necessary to keep all other variables constant

whilst testing one at a time. However pupils do not have the skills to design their own experiments in order to test their own ideas. Thus, although work shows that several pupils do achieve at the higher than expected Level 5 in areas of knowledge and understanding, the school is not doing enough to allow a greater number of pupils to reach this standard in scientific enquiry.

93. As a result of systematic teaching and teachers' use of specific vocabulary, pupils are achieving well. They understand and can explain the key elements of their work. For example, Year 5 pupils:

- made a presentation to their class about food processes in plants;
- used terms such as 'photosynthesis' and 'chlorophyll';
- correctly described the role green plants play in the interchange between carbon dioxide and oxygen.

Year 6 pupils show their understanding of the way in which light is reflected in straight lines when explaining the results of a light box experiment and typical throughout the school are meaningful discussions between pupils and teachers on what lies behind the work they are undertaking.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The way teachers organise pupils and motivate them to participate in lessons and do their best is very effective and leads to good behaviour and good progress being made. Lessons observed during the inspection were well structured and positive outcomes resulted from good questioning and discussion. Teachers' knowledge of what needed to be taught and learned is good. Planning shows that the achievement of specific intentions for learning underpin each session and that practical work is well designed to complement the theories and presentation of facts. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils learned about the nature and function of the heart. Good teaching involved appropriate live use of an American health website to present pupils with an animation showing the details of the way this muscle worked and its importance to life. This session was followed by practical experiments where pupils measured the effect of exercise on the heart by measuring each others' pulse-rate. This was, in turn, followed by detailed questioning which challenged pupils of differing levels of attainment to rationalise what they had found. This type of good teaching, seen frequently in the school, engaged all of the pupils and produced good levels of learning. However, all such experiments as these carried out by pupils during the inspection were entirely dictated by the teacher without opportunities for pupils to set their own questions, make suggestions, or alter what was being tested. There is no room for pupils to make, and learn from, their mistakes. Tight control of the experiments also means that pupils' cannot develop their own methods of presenting the findings of their practical work or, importantly, using and developing their skills as a writer.

95. Although pupils gain from the well considered combination of presented information and practical work followed by good questioning, teaching needs to improve through greater pupil involvement in setting the question to be asked, the design of the resulting experiments and the methods of recording. Pupils do occasionally have the opportunity to learn from errors, however. In one class an unexpected result occurred when pupils measured growth rates under different conditions and found that the plant assigned to receive no water and no care outgrew the rest of the sample. The pupils investigated and uncovered the truth that this plant had in fact, been receiving special attention, and water, three times a day from a pupil who felt sorry for it.

96. Information and communication technology is not used enough to develop learning in science. Although websites are used by the teacher in Year 6 to demonstrate practical features, and Year 5 presentations were videoed so pupils could review them at a later date, very few instances of pupils' own use were evident from their work. The exception is in Year 1 where pupils use text and graphics to present and name the parts of a flower. Where opportunities did exist to use information and communication technology in other classes they were not taken, for example the use of a spreadsheet to smooth out inconsistencies in pupils' measurements of pulse-rates, or to use a computer generated graph to make clear the relationship between the distances toy cars travel on different surfaces.
97. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The need for greater numbers of pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment is not appreciated and consequently no plans exist to make this happen. Other strengths and areas for development within the subject are not properly identified as the co-ordinator has not seen any teaching and learning in other classes. She organises resources and is always available to answer any questions the teachers may have, but her expertise, developed through course attendance and acting in this role for 27 years, cannot be passed on to other staff in a practical way and is thus under-exploited. The co-ordinator has implemented a locally developed scheme of work which ensures good coverage of the National Curriculum. It benefits from clear development and tests what children know and understand at each stage. This is supported by commercial material, visits and visitors, such as Year 6 pupils' attendance at a science workshop at a local Catholic high school and the visit of the Dental Health Education Unit.

ART AND DESIGN

98. From the two lessons seen and artefacts displayed around the school it is clear that by the ages of seven and 11, standards match the expected levels. This is similar to the findings in the last inspection. There are no significant differences in the attainment of any groups, including boys and girls, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. In the work seen, it is clear that all pupils are well integrated into the class as a whole, and benefit equally from the provision.
99. By the age of seven, pupils have developed skills in mixing colours to create backgrounds, in using textiles to produce collages and in weaving. Their three-dimensional work includes the design and making of salt-dough bears as part of a story-inspired project. The work is produced to a good standard. Pupils have made deliberate choices and have taken care to produce products pleasing to the eye. They have also successfully used computer art programs to extend their skills in this area.
100. By the age of 11, pupils have learned to draw well. All can reproduce an oval person in running pose based on their detailed video observation. Most can give their outlines the appearance of movement and, when shaded in colour, pupils' pictures together are impressive and individually to a high standard. Other work on the walls showed pupils' good attempts at facial expression, and some good re-scaling work. Pupils' sketch books are of a good quality with a variety of life and still-life subjects. Other paintings and three-dimensional work in the school are of a high quality. Aztec-style pottery has been created as part of a Year 5 project. Here pupils have previously fashioned clay coil-pots and then used their knowledge of their work in history to sketch appropriate designs and consider how best to apply them to their creations. The strong primary colours chosen showed an appreciation of the principles of Aztec design and good levels of skill in making the pots to match their intentions. A recent whole-school

exhibition of every pupil's work, each framed by a local firm, with pictures sold to parents and visitors, capitalised on the high standards achieved in this subject.

101. Two lessons were observed, one each in Years 5 and 6. Here the quality of teaching and learning is very good and consequently pupils achieve very well. The teachers concerned are confident in the subject and have set out to offer pupils a range of opportunities which use other areas of the curriculum as a focus for the art. For example, some very good Tudor portraits and Mexican jewellery adorn the walls of Year 5. In a very good lesson with the Year 6 class, the teacher displayed good skills himself and was able to demonstrate the portrayal of movement using information and communication technology to help pupils check and re-check the shapes made by different parts of the body when in running pose. By carefully orchestrated discussion he was able to lead pupils to consider and try out, on paper, people running faster and faster and to show ways in which artists create the illusion of speed. Similarly in Year 5 the teacher challenged pupils to excel by giving them the confidence and techniques to be creative and to achieve many highly original designs.
102. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good level of interest in, and knowledge about, teaching art. However, she has not been able to impart that knowledge, identify and disseminate good practice and improve teaching where it is needed. This is mainly because she has not seen other teachers teach, she is unaware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and cannot make an effective contribution to the school development plan. The curriculum is satisfactory, being based upon national guidance so that all relevant areas are covered. It is enhanced by the visit of local artists, by Groundworks Wirral and Mega Art Attack. Pupils visit the Williamson Gallery. Resources of Indian, Chinese and African art are successfully used to add to pupils' understanding and cultural development. In the hall, classrooms and corridors, well presented art work contributes to an attractive and stimulating environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. By the ages of seven and 11, standards match the expected level and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Owing to timetable restrictions it was possible to see only one lesson in Year 2 and, therefore, a secure judgement on the quality of teaching could not be made.
104. In Year 1, pupils investigate how card with sliding mechanisms can make fish move successfully across a painted background. They draw their design, cut, stick, decorate and test their model confidently. They evaluate their success and suggest improvements. In Year 2, pupils design enthusiastically their own vehicle with axles and wheels. They draw labelled designs appropriately from front and side elevations, list the resources needed and formulate a plan of work. They use measuring and cutting skills competently on card and wood before assembling and testing. They are very enthusiastic in discussion about their work and show good recall of the processes used.
105. Pupils in junior classes explore a range of design and technology activities successfully. Pupils in Year 3 make strong frames from wood using triangular corner joints that they decorate to form colourful photograph frames. Pupils in Year 4 design a storybook effectively. They use paper fasteners, flaps and pockets, for instance, to make interesting and exciting things happen to the pictures in their books. In Year 5, pupils work with card and pasta enthusiastically to make Aztec jewellery. They use tools like scissors and knives safely and are aware of the need for accurate

measurement. They carry out a product analysis of different biscuits successfully and use their evaluations to design and make their own biscuits. In Year 6, pupils are challenged to design and make a wigwam from newspaper. They examine different structures in terms of their strength and gain a clear understanding of the function of the various parts. They draw an initial design accurately and list the resources before producing labelled diagrams of different stages in the production process. Having made and tested their products, they make a perceptive evaluation of their work. Pupils work in groups, collaborating successfully to make and test their products. In discussions with the inspector, they show pride in their work and are keen to explain what they had done. They display satisfactory evaluative skills and good awareness of safety aspects.

106. At present there is no permanent co-ordinator and the management of the subject is unsatisfactory. This is because there is a lack of effective monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result, the temporary co-ordinator does not have a clear picture of the strengths and areas in need of improvement. The scheme of work forms a detailed and helpful guide for teachers with clear identification of what pupils have to learn by the end of each unit of work. This provides consistency of approach in order to ensure the step-to-step development of skills. No system is in place to check on or record what pupils know, understand or can do in order to provide teachers with sufficient information to plan lessons that build securely on pupils' past learning. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop socially through practising collaborative skills in group work. Links to literacy are effective as pupils discuss, label and evaluate their work, and numeracy skills are practised in measuring and estimating. Links with information and communication technology are few, but developing.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Standards at the age of seven and 11 are at the nationally expected level, and have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
108. By the age of seven, a structured programme of geographical topics ensures that pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. Year 1 pupils make accurate observations of the characteristics of the locality and of the local buildings, such as the church, the shops, the park and the variety of housing. They use pictures successfully to record the different types of homes they observe. Year 2 pupils have an increasing awareness of different environments and how other people live as they compare the physical features and life in Birkenhead with Struay in the Hebrides. Mapping skills develop well. Year 1 pupils draw and label simple maps and routes of the local area and Year 2 pupils progress to the study of places further afield, using world maps.
109. By the age of 11, pupils have an appropriate knowledge of their own region, other countries and contrasting areas. Year 3 pupils study the climate of different places and know which are hot and cold places on a world map. Year 4 pupils are able to identify and describe different kinds of housing and the materials needed to build them. They know the different points on the compass and draw accurate plans of their classroom. Year 5 pupils, read maps effectively to locate the Gulf of Mexico and compare life in Zinacanton (a Mexican village) with their own life. By the age of 11, pupils give simple, but logical explanations of the processes of erosion and deposition. They have a good knowledge of river systems and features and understand terms, such as source and delta. Numeracy skills are appropriately linked. Year 4 pupils develop an understanding

of co-ordinates through their skills in interpreting maps and using four figure grid references.

110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good lessons are characterised by:
- clear intentions for pupils' learning;
 - good questioning and answering sessions;
 - a brisk pace and good range of resources and interesting tasks for pupils to do.
- In a Year 5 lesson, very good teacher knowledge, the use of good stimulating resources and very good relationships resulted in a high level of interest, excitement and enjoyment and good discussion. Pupils' observational skills were extended by the purposeful use of photographs of houses in Zinacanton. Pupils showed good levels of learning as they identified and named significant similarities and differences between the houses in the photographs and their own houses.
111. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. This is because there is a lack of effective checking of teaching and learning. As a result, the co-ordinator does not have a clear enough picture of the strengths and areas in need of improvement. The scheme of work forms a detailed and helpful guide for teachers with clear identification of what pupils have to learn by the end of each unit of work. This provides consistency of approach in order to ensure the step-to-step development of skills. No effective systems are in place to test what pupils know or understand in order to provide teachers with sufficient information to plan lessons and build securely on pupils' past learning. Pupils' literacy skills are further developed through the subject, as there are opportunities for extended writing and there are opportunities for reading for research. Information and communication technology is used occasionally as pupils research using the Internet. Resources are generally adequate.

HISTORY

112. By the age of seven and 11, standards are in line with national expectations, with a minority of pupils achieving standards above national expectations. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily, by improving their range, depth of knowledge and understanding of the main events and people studied. They have a sound understanding of chronology. In Years 3 to 6, in particular, pupils have too few opportunities to do independent research in the library or the Internet, for example. However, where these strategies are present they provide effective support to teachers and pupils.
113. By the age of seven, pupils accurately use terms concerned with the passing of time, order of events and objects. For example, they know that the Great Fire of London came before the Crimean War. They demonstrate a sound factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the time beyond living memory, such as the conditions that Florence Nightingale faced when she nursed in the Crimea. They answer simple questions about the past and are beginning to identify some ways in which it is represented. For instance, they make helpful comparisons between the work of the present-day fire brigade and what would have happened in the seventeenth century. They know about some of the main characters, such as Samuel Pepys and Tyhomas Farynor whose bakery was the starting place for the fire.
114. By the age of 11, they have a good factual knowledge and understanding of the main events in British history and other countries. For example, the life and times of the Victorians. In their recording they produce some useful work about being alive at the time:
- 'Hi, my name is Will. I was born in 1852.....'

- They give some of the reasons for, and results of, the main events, and why people in the past acted as they did. They know that conditions were very different in those days, particularly in terms of work, school, childhood and housing. Higher attaining pupils have written some useful pieces as if they were there. Their ability to select, combine and interpret information from more than one source is less well developed. Nevertheless, pupils have cleverly re-written songs from Victorian times.
115. Pupils' response to their work is good. They are interested in what they do, sustain concentration and generally respond readily to questions and approach work with enthusiasm. Behaviour is good and at appropriate times they relate well to other pupils and their teachers.
116. The quality of teaching and learning is at least sound and sometimes good and very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, good classroom management skills and prepare the activities well. When teaching is particularly effective, teachers' questions are probing, discussions are well led and the intentions for pupils' learning are made clear. On the whole, activities are planned well and challenge the pupils.
117. Subject management is unsatisfactory. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe teaching or analyse pupils' work and this is a source of frustration. Consequently, the co-ordinator is unsure of the standards in the school. The judging of pupils' levels of attainment is unsatisfactory. The curriculum follows national guidelines and provides the pupils with an appropriately varied and interesting programme. The influence and effect of information and communication technology are mainly seen in the word processing of pupils' writing. There is a little evidence of pupils finding information from websites. In a good Year 5 lesson, there is evidence of pupils making careful use of library books to identify Aztec artefacts and find information about them. Numeracy skills are employed in the development of timelines. Resources are generally adequate and the school makes good use of local loan facilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. By the ages of seven and 11, standards are in line with those expected of pupils of their age. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. Older pupils who have made a good start in learning English particularly benefit from working on the computer as part of a pair and can make a significant contribution to the learning of the twosome. There has been good improvement in this area since the previous inspection which reported low levels of attainment and achievement at both key stages by pupils of all abilities.
119. By the age of seven, pupils are familiar with art packages and can use them to create pleasing pictures, including some Islamic designs, as part of a religious education topic. They write extensive stories, having saved them and reactivated their work for editing at a later date. Individual files show all pupils are learning to edit and re-edit to achieve the standard of work that they want. The work in this class builds well upon earlier learning in Year 1 where pupils use 'My World' to order and arrange clothing for their Teddy Bear. They have started, through labelling pictures and diagrams, to word process simple sentences in order to explain the meaning of the pictures.

120. By the age of 11, pupils have confidence in using computers and are keen to develop their skills. They can use simulations to tackle problems and have developed the ability to work both alone and in pairs to write simple procedures to control outputs. These pupils' use of text processing is particularly good. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good use of paragraphs and very good use of fonts and layout to make their writing interesting. The use of information and communication technology in this way also helps lower attaining groups improve the quality of their writing. Other work shows some good examples of the beginnings of publishing text, and good combinations of text and pictures they have taken using a digital camera. This level of achievement is also found in other classes. Pupils approach the use of computers in a matter-of-fact way and use them sensibly.
121. Based on the achievements of pupils cited above and the range of experiences recorded on disk and on paper, the quality of teaching is good. In the few lessons seen during the inspection, good teaching was also observed and this resulted in good achievement by pupils. Year 2 pupils were introduced to the use of the Internet to find information. They were carefully guided through on-screen menus to make appropriate choices. Pupils were enthusiastic and quickly absorbed the techniques required. In another good lesson, the teaching assistant very skilfully taught Year 6 pupils to use control techniques and develop the thought processes necessary to switch on and off lifts, pulleys and escalators to solve on-screen puzzles. This work was supported in the classroom through good challenges and appropriate assistance of the class teacher who had modelled a batteries and bulb switch circuit to simulate the logic of traffic lights. The work built on skills gained earlier in the school in controlling a floor robot.
122. The school has an appropriate curriculum designed to build skills systematically and consolidate them through further practice. This is working well. The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning in other subjects is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Good examples are:
- the effective use made of the interactive white board in Year 6 to teach many subjects;
 - Year 1 use a BBC website to enhance their Victorian project;
 - Year 6 use their word processing editing skills to modify songs from 100 years ago in order to bring them up to date.
- However, except for these examples pupils do not make enough use of computers in numeracy and literacy lessons nor to record and present results of scientific enquiries. The judging of pupils' levels of attainment is very detailed, but needs to be revised so that more accurate judgements are made.
123. Management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator has drafted the school's action plan which is approved by the local education authority and attracts further support for the school. The school has two interested and committed teachers who support teachers' work in their departments. However subject management is not as secure as it should be, because:
- there is no effective monitoring of teaching or pupils' work;
 - there is no guidance provided to staff on the standards expected for different levels of attainment.
- Investment has been heavy and appropriate in the past year, but the school is aware that electronic sensing equipment is also required. During the inspection the computers in the suite were well used. Nevertheless, with the exception of the nursery, those in other areas were seldom utilized and so opportunities were lost to practise and extend skills learned. Pupils were also not encouraged to use the available machines to research classroom topics. The employment of a specialist teaching assistant who,

with appropriate training, is able to support and extend the intentions of teachers has also been well managed. This is proving to be good value for money.

MUSIC

124. On the basis of the two lessons observed, standards in singing by the ages of seven and 11 are above national expectations. More comprehensive judgements about other aspects of the subject were not possible because of insufficient evidence. It is not possible to judge improvement because the last report did not judge pupils' attainment and progress. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. A pupil learning English as an additional language was well integrated into the lesson observed. He joined in as he grew accustomed to the words and made satisfactory progress.
125. Pupils in Year 2 are able to copy rhythmic patterns successfully and they know about repeated patterns, many use the musical term - ostinato. All pupils are able to set up their own ostinato using untuned percussion instruments and they challenge others in the class to copy their pattern of beats and rests. Some are capable of creating very complex compositions and when challenged by the teacher these higher achieving pupils show they have thought these out by correctly repeating the pattern so that others can follow. Using a CD to play a melodic tune pupils were able to tap out the rhythm of 'I hear water' which they later sang as a round with a 'D' 'A' 'D' chime bar accompaniment played by several classmates.
126. Year 6 produce very tuneful and expressive singing, with clear diction and good pitch. They maintain their own part on the strength of their good listening. In the lesson observed they managed a four-part harmony of *Frère Jacques*. Everyone showed commitment to the production of a pleasing effect and some were able to make suggestions for improvement showing understanding of the process in which they were involved by using words such as phrase, shape, melody and part. Pupils respond appropriately to musical notation and begin to discuss the needs of different audiences. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress in this lesson.
127. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching is possible but in the two lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning was at least good. Both teachers have good subject knowledge which enables pupils to gain good levels of understanding. Pupils were challenged to concentrate, sing well and use expression. Teachers were very enthusiastic and managed pupils well, inspiring them to give of their best even at the end of the day. There is no music specialist on the staff so teachers are inventive and use tapes and recorded discs to make music for lessons and productions. Information and communication technology makes little impact on pupils' learning in the subject. There are no formal judgements made about individual pupils' classroom achievements in music. However, good use was made of information about previous learning in the Year 6 lesson.
128. Management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is a very good teacher of the subject although not qualified in music. Like other co-ordinators she does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. However, she does offer a valuable non-specialist view and in that way inspires staff to do their best. Her contribution also includes taking pupils to sing in the Wirral Schools Music festival, and she arranges training for staff by the music advisory teacher and liaises with Wirral Schools Music Service so that pupils can have individual tuition in brass, wind and strings at different times. Several pupils go on to take successfully the Wirral equivalent of grade examinations, for example, one pupil in Year 6 having already achieved Grade

3 violin. The school uses a locally developed scheme of work which enables all aspects of the curriculum to be developed, although the main emphasis is on singing. School clubs such as recorder and choir enrich the musical opportunities for pupils. Pupils are exposed to music from a variety of cultures including from Mexico as part of a current Year 5 topic and learning African songs in Year 2. These experiences, amongst others, contribute to pupils' cultural understanding. The school is adequately resourced with instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Owing to timetable restrictions it was not possible to observe the full range of activities. Consequently, there is no overall judgement about attainment and achievement. However, in the aspects inspected, such as gymnastics, dance and swimming, standards are above national expectations across the school. This is better than the judgement of the last inspection.
130. By the age of seven, pupils are skilful dancers. All pupils move confidently to the beat of instruments. They improvise movements well, such as the stealthy movements of a cat. Pupils connect movements seamlessly, introduce appropriate characterisation at the right time and move in concert with the pulse of the music provided. They have movements that show the cat getting tired, pace of movement slowing at the pace of the teacher's tambourine and eventually coming to rest.
131. By the age of 11, pupils dance very well. All pupils interpret music with precision, fluency and care and particularly noticeable are the changes in the music. In gymnastics, many of the skills that are apparent in dance are also strongly represented. For example, pupils develop sequences of movements on the floor and on apparatus; they respond well to being extended physically and intellectually. The vast majority of pupils:-
- perform sequences of travel, jump, balance and rolls in accurate and precise ways;
 - develop a range of skills into fluent sequences;
 - talk knowledgeably about the effects of exercise on the body.
132. Swimming is available to pupils in Years 3 to 6. Years 5 and 6 go to the pool in the Autumn and the younger pupils go in the Spring. Arrangements are good and the vast majority of 11 year olds at least achieve the expected level, with many swimming much more than the expected 25 metres. The few swimmers who do not reach the expected standard are confident in the water and making sound gains.
133. Pupils enjoy physical education. They work hard, perform well and concentrate for long periods. Many also play a range of sports at playtimes and this has had a positive impact on their attainment.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Throughout the school, teachers interpret well the useful curriculum plans that come from the local authority scheme and a complementary commercial scheme. In general, warm-ups are vigorously successful. Pupils are managed very well and know what is expected from them. Expectations are high, for example, in a Year 6 gymnastics lesson pairs of pupils were asked to synchronise their work out sequences. In the course of the lesson, greater challenge was brought about by the introduction of apparatus such as benches. Swimming tuition is good, with plenty of activity and a good pace to the session. The teaching of dance is enhanced by the thoughtful choice of music and the regular use of pupils as exemplars of good practice.

135. Overall, management of the subject is good. the strengths are:
- experienced, skilful and enthusiastic co-ordinator who gives a lot of his time to activities outside lessons. This has proven to be very successful in relation to the school's successful engagement in competitive sports. The school also benefits from the assistance of a wide-range of staff in running these activities, including non-teaching staff;
 - good curricular guidance;
 - informal monitoring of standards.
- An area for development is the provision of time for the coordinator to observe lessons and provide guidance. The school has a good range of resources.