

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 131314

Headteacher: Mrs K Hutchings

Reporting inspector: Mr T W M Comer
15109

Dates of inspection: 30 June – 4 July 2003

Inspection number: 248834

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Butler Street
Liverpool

Postcode: L6 9EU

Telephone number: 0151 2634447

Fax number: 0151 2609493

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Turnbull

Date of previous inspection: March 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15109	Mr T Comer	Registered inspector	Design & Technology Information and Communication Technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9928	Mr A Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Special educational needs	
23081	Mrs C Waine	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious Education	The curriculum Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
29504	Mrs S Herring	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and Design Music Physical Education	
32831	Mr T Walker	Team inspector	Science Geography History	

The inspection contractor was:

North West Education Services
Cheshire House
164 main Road
Goostrey
Cheshire
CW4 8JP

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average primary school with 330 boys and girls on roll and another 48 children part-time in the Nursery. The school has a community playgroup. The school is situated in Kensington, Liverpool, which is amongst the poorest of English wards in terms of employment, social and economic deprivation. A very high proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. The school is in an *Educational Action Zone* and benefits from the Government's *Excellence in Cities* programme. The children begin school with very low overall attainment levels. Fourteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and a number of pupils, mostly in Year 6, have statements of need related to severe learning difficulties, dyslexia, and concentration. The school has a large number of children (61) newly arrived from overseas, mainly from Africa, and this number is rapidly increasing. The school makes these pupils very welcome and succeeds in doing all it can to help them to settle into routines. The great majority of them are at an early stage of learning English and receive special help. Their main first languages are Portugese, Malay, Arabic and Lingala. Pupil mobility is exceptionally high. 115 pupils joined the school and 75 left at other than normal times during the past school year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

New Park is a good and effective school. Parents are confident in and pleased with the school's work. The teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Standards are below national averages but they are rising and represent a good achievement for these pupils. The school is very well managed and benefits from the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who have worked very hard and successfully, together with the staff as a whole, to raise the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by the children. The school adds considerable value to the children's personal development and looks after them very well. Pupils enjoy school, have very good attitudes and behave well. The school is efficient and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher
- Good teaching and overall achievement
- Good standards in information and communication technology (ICT)
- The school looks after the pupils very well
- Pupils enjoy school, have very good attitudes and behave well
- The school teaches pupils to become responsible and sensible young people
- Very effective governing body
- Very good partnership with parents

What could be improved

- Mathematics – standards generally
- English – writing, speaking and listening
- ICT– teachers do not make enough use of the pupils' good computing skills in other subjects
- The timetable – the literacy and numeracy lessons are too long

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's improvement has been very good since the previous inspection, which took place in March, 2000. That inspection found serious weaknesses in the school's provision but this is no longer the case. The main key issues for action were to raise standards, improve teaching and improve the quality of leadership and management. Under the leadership of the headteacher, newly appointed at that time, the school has been transformed and has made very good progress with all of the points for improvement. Teaching is now consistently good throughout the school. There are now no weak subjects and standards are rising rapidly although they can still be raised further in English and mathematics.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	E	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	C
Science	D	E	E	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Note: the table and the text should be read having regard to (a) the significant and growing proportion of pupils newly arrived from overseas who speak no English and (b) the high proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than normal, e.g., half-way through Year 6. Both of these factors tend to pull down the overall results of National Curriculum tests.

Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception Classes)

The children's overall attainment when they begin school is very low. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage although overall standards are still below average overall by the time they are ready to join Year 1. The children make their quickest progress in their personal emotional and social development, and in their creative and physical development, and reach average standards in these. Although they are taught well and make good progress in literacy, mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, a significant minority of pupils do not reach the national standards in these aspects of their learning. Nevertheless, in relation to their very low starting points, the children achieve well.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

Pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are below average. Standards are below average in English, well below average in mathematics but average in science. Standards are average in all other subjects except design and technology and information and communication technology, in both of which they are above average. The results of the Year 2 pupils' National Curriculum tests in 2002 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results are rising and the rate of improvement is greater than the national trend.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 – 6)

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 – 6. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are below average but still represent a good overall achievement for these pupils. They are again below average in English, well below in mathematics but average in science. Standards are average in other subjects except information and communication technology, in which they are above average. The results of the Year 6 pupils' National Curriculum tests in 2002 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. The results did not meet the governors' targets in English or mathematics but these were very ambitious. 2003 results show that when the results of pupils at an early stage of learning English are discarded, the great majority of pupils reach the standard expected in English and nearly all of them in science. The strongest subject by the end of Year 6 is information and communication technology. There are no weak subjects but standards could still be higher in English and mathematics. Pupils cover a narrow range of work in design and technology and their design skills are a weakness.

Different groups of children

The standards achieved by boys and girls are closer than found nationally. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive special help, which enables them to make good progress; they settle in and make friends quickly and do the same work as others. Inevitably, those joining the school in the upper years do not manage to catch up fully by the time they sit the National Curriculum tests, especially in English. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and receive effective support in virtually all lessons. The school identifies its talented pupils, and some of their achievements are outstanding in music and games.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Lessons and the playground are calm and orderly. Exclusions are very rare.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop well as sensible young people. They are courteous to one another and polite to visitors. There is an absence of aggressive behaviour and bullying. Pupils from overseas quickly adjust and make friends. Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and take initiative.
Attendance	Below average overall and improving and 96 six per cent of the pupils have good attendance records. A small minority are not as punctual as they should be but the school is managing this issue sensibly.

Pupils' very good attitudes to school and their personal development are strengths of the school.

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.

The teaching is good throughout the school. It meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to learn effectively. The strengths of the teaching are the meticulous planning of lessons, the good management of pupils and high expectations of pupils' achievement. The weaker areas are that teachers do not always make the best use of lesson time, and do not harness pupils' good ICT skills in lessons. The strength of pupils' learning are their good progress, their willingness to work hard, concentrate and learn independently. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Pupils with special educational needs and those an early stage of learning English are well taught and make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum provides well for pupils of all backgrounds. Talented pupils achieve well in music and games. The teachers provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory but some of these lessons are too long and pupils lose concentration.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There has been very good improvement since the time of the previous inspection, when provision was found to be poor. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good and very well managed. This is a very important part of the school's provision. Pupils have effective help in lessons and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall and a strength of the school. Spiritual and cultural development are good and social and moral development are very good. Assemblies and arrangements for collective worship contribute substantially to pupils' spiritual development although not all pupils experience worship each day, as required by statute.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good and a strength of the school. Arrangements for pupils' welfare are very good. Pupils' attainment is assessed effectively and pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development and their academic progress are monitored effectively. The school has a very good partnership with parents and this is one of its important strengths.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent, inspired leadership which is the school's greatest asset. The headteacher has welded the teaching staff into an effective team, which has secured the rapid improvement in standards. The school is very well managed at all levels.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors work hard to support and improve the work of the school. They have an exceptionally clear view of the school's strengths and what is needed to improve further. Legal requirements are met (aside from what has been said about collective worship).
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school undertakes rigorous self-evaluation of teaching and pupils' achievement. It analyses its performance in comparison with other schools to ensure that it is competitive.
The strategic use of resources	This is an efficient school. The budget is in balance. The accommodation is old but in very good order. Resources are good and used effectively. Staff are well deployed. Money is spent wisely in pursuit of the school's aims. The principles of best value are applied effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high expectations the school has of their children • The approachability of the staff and the headteacher • The good progress their children make • The good teaching • That their children like going to school • The way their children are growing up to become sensible and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Activities outside lessons • Information on progress • Better relations between home and school

The inspectors agree wholeheartedly with all the parents' positive points but cannot agree with the points they think are in need of improvement. The setting of homework is satisfactory: pupils undertake reading, written work, spellings and learning of mathematical facts at home. The inspectors found the criticism of activities outside lessons surprising given the wide variety of school clubs available and the high take-up to these clubs. Also, unlike many primary schools, there are clubs open to pupils in Years 1 and 2. Overall the inspectors judge the provision for extra-curricular activities to be very good. The inspectors judge that the parents are kept well informed on their child's progress and that the partnership between home and school is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation Stage (children in Nursery and Reception)

1. Children make good progress throughout the Nursery and Reception classes. Although overall standards are below average by the time pupils begin Year 1, they nevertheless represent a good achievement for these pupils in relation to their very low starting points. Standards are average in personal, emotional and social development, creative development and physical development. Standards are below average in language and communication, in their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Key Stage 1 (pupils in Years 1 and 2)

2. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are below average but pupils are achieving well. Consideration of the results over the past three years indicates that girls outperform boys in writing and boys outperform girls in mathematics. The results of the reading tests show the girls marginally ahead of boys. Overall, the boys are less behind boys nationally than girls are behind girls nationally.

3. Standards are average in science, below average in English, and well below average in mathematics. Standards are above average in both design and technology and information and communication technology and pupils do better in these subjects than in others. Standards are average in all other subjects. Standards have greatly improved in information and communication technology since the time of the previous inspection when they were unsatisfactory in this subject.

4. In English, the overall standard of the Year 2 pupils' work is below average but represents a good achievement. The results of the national tests of Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well below the national average in both reading and writing. However, the results are improving faster than nationally and the results of the 2003 tests show a strong improvement on those of the previous year, particularly in reading. In comparison with those of similar schools, the results in reading were above average, and in writing they were average. No pupils exceeded the expected standard in writing but some did so in reading.

5. In mathematics, the overall standard of Year 2 pupils' work is well below average but represents a good achievement for these pupils. The National Curriculum test results for Year 2 were well below the national average in 2002 but average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards have improved since the previous inspection because of improvements in teaching.

Key Stage 2 (pupils in Years 3 – 6)

6. Pupils continue to make good overall progress and to achieve well. Overall standards are below average but are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Standards are below average in English, well below average in mathematics and average in science. They are above average in ICT and average in all other subjects. Design skills could be better in design and technology.

7. Standards of Year 6 pupils' work in English are below average but represent a good achievement and are rising. The results of the National Curriculum tests of Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well below the national average, which was also the position at the previous inspection, but the results similar to those of similar schools. The results of the 2003 national tests are much better. This is a considerable achievement in view of the high and increasing number of Year 6 pupils new to the country and who are learning English and an unusually large number of Year 6

pupils with statements of special educational need. If these pupils' results are discounted, the underlying results of other pupils are improving rapidly and 80 per cent of them reached the level expected. The school's main priority is to raise overall standards and literacy is, of course, the key to this. Written work, spelling and practice of speaking in formal situations are weaker areas throughout the school.

8. In mathematics, the standards of Year 6 pupils' work are well below average but represent a good achievement. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests were well below average although they have improved strongly and the boys' results were slightly above average. The school is still working hard to improve pupils' performance in this subject and pupils would benefit from brisker and more rigorous teaching of mathematical skills, such as recall of multiplication tables. Pupils also need more experience of open-ended work and investigations.

9. The number of pupils on the special needs register is just below the national average. More effective criteria for identifying pupils with special needs have led to a decrease in the number of pupils found to need additional help. The standards attained by pupils with special educational needs are often below, or well below those expected for their age, but they are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' identified needs and specific targets. The school's good programme of support is well organised to identify pupils who may need extra help as early as possible after they start school. This ensures they make similar good progress to their classmates. Arrangements for supporting pupils with statements of special educational needs are very effective, and ensure they attain standards that are in line with their prior achievements. The work of the teaching assistants makes a strong contribution to the learning and achievements of these pupils.

10. At the time of the previous inspection, there was only a small number of asylum seekers and a few pupils who spoke English as an additional language. This situation has changed and the school has a large and growing population of such pupils. They are mainly from the Congo or Eastern Europe and a significant number have had little or no previous experience of formal education. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language and of those who are refugees and asylum seekers is higher than the national average, and has increased rapidly over the past year. The presence of these pupils, some at an early stage of learning to speak English, lowers the overall level of the school's test results. However, the school welcomes these children, provides them with a safe, secure environment, and includes them in all activities. The longer they are in the school, the closer their attainment is to those of their English-born classmates. The provision helps them to settle quickly, and they quickly make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils' mathematical development is slightly better when they enter the school. They quickly begin to acquire language skills and the more able pupils make very good progress, and in some cases move ahead of their classmates. The school makes an immediate assessment of pupils' language needs when they enter the school. The range of different languages spoken by the pupils means that it is rarely possible to assess them in their own language. There is little specialist support available locally, so families sometimes bring their own interpreter to meetings. The school is very careful to ensure that pupils with English as an additional language are not incorrectly identified as having special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have a very positive attitude to school and their behaviour is good. Relationships and personal development are very good. All these judgements represent an improvement since the previous inspection. Attendance has recently improved but is still below that normally found in primary schools.

12. In the Foundation Stage, children behave well and develop very good attitudes to school. They trust and respect their teachers and nursery nurses, who know the children very well and provide a safe and secure environment which develops the children's confidence and self-esteem and establishes routines. The children have a sound understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They learn to work well with others and have a well-developed

capacity to carry out tasks independently by the time they begin Year 1.

13. The pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. They think it is a good school and they are proud to be there. A recent pupil survey indicated that the three things they like most about the school are lessons, teachers and friends – and this was confirmed in discussions, conversations and observations during the inspection. The pupils are very well motivated and interested in learning. Lessons are characterised by alert faces, lots of hands going up when questions are asked and a keenness to work hard. However, some lessons are too long and pupils become tired.

14. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils know that high standards are expected at all times. They understand the rules and take the gaining of awards very seriously. Classrooms are orderly with an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Behaviour at lunchtime is very good, allowing lunch to be a social occasion with noise levels that usually allow easy conversation. Movement around the school is orderly. The playgrounds have a friendly and happy atmosphere. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were observed and pupils reported no worries regarding bullying. The close and trusting relationships in the school ensure that pupils know they always have someone to talk to if they have any concerns. Exclusion is very rare: there has been one temporary exclusion this year.

15. Pupils with special educational needs generally have good attitudes to learning, behave well, and enjoy the extra help they receive from teachers and classroom assistants. They enjoy coming to school, listen well and try hard to answer questions specifically directed to them. Other pupils are supportive and work willingly with them, during art or library lessons for example. Pupils with statements of special educational needs work well, and respond to the good support they receive, particularly in one-to-one situations.

16. Relationships in the school are very good at all levels. Pupils get on well with each other and also with the headteacher, the teachers, the learning mentors and the support staff. There is a respect that permeates throughout the school. Pupils are very polite and courteous. Doors are held open and 'please' and 'thank you' are used naturally. Visitors are made to feel very welcome. When working in groups, pupils collaborate well, know how to take turns and are prepared to listen to each other's views. All pupils are supportive towards newcomers from overseas and play a useful role in helping them learn to speak English. Overall, the pupils' learning is benefiting greatly from their very positive attitudes, the good behaviour and the friendly relationships apparent throughout the school.

17. Pupils make great strides in the way they develop their personal qualities while at the school. They progressively take more responsibility in helping to run the school, for instance, running the library, helping in the dining room and older pupils looking after younger ones at playtimes. Pupils are very much involved in the way their school develops. The School Council is very effective in giving pupils a voice in future plans for instance; changes to the school uniform are currently being discussed. Recently a group of older pupils gave up half a day's holiday to be involved with staff in preparing the school development plan. School clubs are very popular and well attended. Homework is taken seriously by all pupils.

18. Attendance for the current year (2002/3) has improved significantly over the previous year, but remains below the national average for primary schools. However the basic figures mask a much more positive picture. A very small number of pupils (13) have a poor attendance record. The average attendance record of ninety six percent of the pupils is better than the national average. Unauthorised absence is similar to that normally found in primary schools. Punctuality for a significant minority of pupils is not as good as it should be, and the school is currently targeting this issue. Registration is prompt and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching was unsatisfactory overall but was good in

the Foundation Stage. Expectations in Years 1 – 6 were not high enough and the teaching of literacy and numeracy was ineffective. There was a considerable proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching was variable in quality: it was sometimes poor in science and was unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, history, information and communication technology and religious education.

20. The teaching is now good overall and has greatly improved. This judgement is consistent with what was found in 2002 by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) at the time of their last visit to the school to monitor its progress with its action plan for improvement. It is now at least satisfactory in all subjects and no lessons were found unsatisfactory in this inspection. The transformation in the quality of teaching and in pupils' learning has been secured by the determined and inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and the hard work of the teaching staff as a whole who have responded well to new demands. Nevertheless, there are still ways in which the teaching could be improved.

21. The teaching is still good in the Foundation Stage and has become equally so throughout Years 1 – 6. The strengths of the teaching are the teachers' effective lesson planning, their high expectations of achievement and their very good management of the pupils. The main area for improvement in teaching is that the teachers do not capitalise enough on the pupils' good computer skills, which are an asset and could do so much to improve pupils' learning of other subjects. Another area for improvement is that teachers do not always make the best use of lesson time. The literacy and numeracy lessons are too long and pupils' interest sometimes flags. There is also a tendency to make too much use of worksheets and to waste time with cutting, sticking and colouring, especially in English, mathematics, history and religious education. In design and technology, the teaching of design is a weakness in many classes and teachers would benefit from further training to give them more confidence to teach the subject well. There are also weaknesses in some teachers' knowledge of the teaching of music.

22. Because the overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school, pupils learn effectively. They are rewarding to teach. The strengths of their learning are the rapid gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills, their willingness to work hard at the tasks set for them, and their good concentration and ability to work independently. The only weaknesses in pupils' learning are their basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which tend to hold them back in their written work in most subjects

23. Boys and girls equally make good progress in their learning throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in all lessons and this enables them to keep up with other pupils so that they make the same good progress.

24. The school caters well for the learning needs of its large and rapidly growing population of children newly arrived from overseas who are at an early stage of learning English. These pupils are supported effectively in lessons and most of them are enabled to cover similar work to that done by others; however, some pupils at a very early stage of learning English are withdrawn for special tuition every morning. Pupils generally make good progress but some children newly arrived in the country have not yet managed to catch up with their classmates, and this is inevitably reflected in the school's results in the National Tests taken at the end of Years 2 and 6.

25. It is school policy to teach pupils with special educational needs in class with their peers, and to provide the support that enables them to do so. This support is generally good in the form of learning activities planned to meet the pupils' needs and additional help from the teacher or teaching assistant. Teachers make effective use of pupils' individual education plans when planning lessons, and ensure that the work is matched to their needs and the teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to lessons. Year 6 pupils work in a smaller group each morning, with literacy and numeracy lessons carefully tailored to their individual needs, and this helps to give them confidence.

26. The school identifies a number of pupils with special talents, particularly in music and sport.

These pupils receive special teaching and some achieve outstanding success. Gifted pupils are not yet formally identified although the school plans to do so and to extend the work of such pupils further. In general, teachers should aim for more of the higher attaining pupils to reach National Curriculum levels above those expected for their age.

27. The teaching of English is good. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively to guide their lesson planning but pupils' learning targets are sometimes written in words the pupils do not understand. Lessons are varied and give pupils a wide range of experiences; teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. For the most part, lessons keep pupils actively involved with their learning although the morning lessons tend to be too long and the pace suffers because of this. Extra sessions of English take place after the literacy session but many pupils cannot sustain concentration for this length of time.

28. The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils understand clearly what they are to do. Teachers have high expectations and are attempting to increase the challenge for the more able pupils. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to undertake open-ended tasks and mathematical investigation in general. Another matter for improvement is the pace of the mental arithmetic starters to lessons, which is often too slow and does not help pupils to make progress with quick recall of facts such as multiplication tables.

29. Teaching and learning are good in science lessons throughout the school. Overall the quality of teaching has greatly improved and this has led to much higher standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils learn to use scientific vocabulary correctly. Teachers prepare lessons well, particularly for practical work. Teachers make lessons meaningful and enjoyable. In general, tasks are set at the right level for most pupils but a greater challenge for the more able pupils would enable them to reach higher levels. In the long lessons, activities are sometimes completed early and then pupils become restless.

30. At the time of the previous inspection, the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) was unsatisfactory but this is no longer the case. In fact, the teaching is now a success and enables the great majority of pupils reach expected standards. In lessons taking place in the computer suite, the teaching is consistently good and some is very good. The work set is demanding and sets high expectations for all pupils and enables them to reach or exceed standards expected for their age. However, the teachers should capitalise more on the pupils' good skills to help raise standards in literacy and numeracy and other subjects. There are exceptions: ICT skills are used well in Year 2 design and technology lessons, for example.

31. There are now no weak subjects. The teaching of design and technology is satisfactory overall and there are particular strengths in Year 2. However, design skills are taught well in only a few classes and need more attention. Skills of measuring and marking-out are undeveloped and the teachers are not adventurous enough in their choice of projects and materials.

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

32. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides a good range of learning opportunities for all pupils. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. There has been good improvement in producing new policies and schemes of work for all subjects and all now have sufficient time allocated to lessons. Arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are very good and provide very well for their education about the misuse of drugs, sex education, the importance of relationships and making the right choices in life. An equal opportunities policy is implemented very well, with no significant difference in provision because of gender, disability, race or culture and all pupils are fully included in activities.

33. Pupils with special educational needs participate in all lessons, in line with the school's

policy. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans well to match work to the pupils' needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. The special provision specified in pupils' statements is reviewed annually in line with national guidance. Older pupils with special educational needs are taught to become independent in their learning, ready for the transfer to secondary education.

34. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage curriculum is good and develops their skills, knowledge and understanding in all the recommended areas of learning. Children undertake a wide range of practical activities that meet their needs well. There is a good range of directed teaching activities and opportunities for pupils to develop independence in choosing their own activities. These are planned well so they promote progress in pupils' personal social and emotional skills as well as furthering their knowledge skills and understanding.

35. The school correctly places a strong emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and implements the national literacy and numeracy strategies well. There is a clear focus on the basic skills that pupils need to learn across the whole curriculum. However, this has resulted in some overlong lessons in the mornings, which are particularly demanding for the younger pupils. For example, pupils in all year groups have one and a half hours of English and one and a quarter hours of mathematics each day. This reduces the time available for more practical and creative subjects. Planning has improved a great deal since the previous inspection and the introduction of new schemes of work helps teachers in their planning to develop skills and knowledge progressively. The new system is used well by many teachers but not all plan independent work which interests and challenges all pupils. There are some good opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how to organise their own work and to carry out research.

36. The school makes appropriate provision for the pupils who are talented in sports, establishing links with local clubs to support their development. New links are being formed with a Beacon school to develop wider opportunities for musically talented pupils. The identification of pupils who are academically gifted is not yet as well advanced but is planned for introduction in the next school year.

37. The school fully includes pupils who speak English as an additional language in all activities. These pupils have their lessons alongside their classmates and are well taught by the teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils at an early stage of learning English may be withdrawn from class daily for short language sessions and this helps them to make good progress. They are encouraged to participate in all speaking and listening activities when they feel confident enough to do so. They are welcomed at all out of school activities held in addition to normal lessons.

38. The school enriches its curriculum by taking pupils on visits to local venues in the local area. All pupils in Years 2 to 6 have good opportunities to attend annual residential visits. The number of clubs and other activities after school is very good and gives pupils a wide range of interesting opportunities to develop their interests and skills and to take advantage of extra study facilities. Clubs are supported well and pupils are enthusiastic about them. A sound range of expert visitors and good links with the community enrich learning. For example, links with the local *Educational Action Zone* provide good opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of local business and employment at first hand.

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, overall. That for spiritual and cultural development is good and that for moral and social development is very good. This is much improved since the previous inspection when provision was unsatisfactory, particularly in spiritual and cultural development. There is a good whole school policy for the development of this aspect of pupils' learning and very clear guidance for teachers on how to plan it into lessons. It is linked to the programme for pupils' personal, social and health education and teachers provide specific lessons for pupils to learn about and discuss issues in their own lives, such as education about relationships, the misuse of drugs and sex education. The school's success in this work has been recognised by the Healthy Schools Award.

40. The provision for spiritual development is good. Teachers help pupils to raise their self-esteem through praising their efforts and successes and celebrating them in displays of work throughout the school. This is reinforced by the school's rewards system which celebrates personal achievement in a special weekly assembly. An annual awards ceremony enables parents to share in the celebration of their children's achievement. Lessons often provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings, such as their response to a piece of music. Music is sometimes used to create atmosphere in lessons or acts of worship. However, daily worship is inconsistent: some teachers make very good use of this time to reflect on issues raised by pupils; for example, a girl's plea for the safety of friends and relatives in her war-torn home country, and other pupils offered their personal prayer for these and others affected by war. However, in some other classes, there is no opportunity for prayer or worship.

41. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Teachers consistently implement the school's positive code of conduct and provide very good role models for pupils. Pupils know that they are expected to behave well and develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They know and apply the rules regarding acceptable behaviour at lunchtime, playtimes, and in lessons. They discuss moral and social issues in personal, social and health education lessons and in subjects such as literacy, when they set out the arguments for and against tuna fishing. Teachers give pupils very good opportunities to take responsibility as they grow older; for example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 elect members of the School Council, which makes important decisions in the conduct of the school. A number of Year 6 pupils attend meetings to discuss the school development plan. Pupils show commitment to the wider community, raising funds for charity; for example, Nursery children took part in a sponsored walk for Barnardos. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility for their own work and to work collaboratively in lessons. A range of visits and a range of well-supported clubs provide very good social opportunities for pupils. The residential visits to an outdoor centre foster and extend pupils' skills of independence.

42. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about a good range of the work of different artists, such as Seurat, Van Gogh and Lautrec. They listen to the music of different composers and have visits from musicians of other countries, such as an African drummer and "The Didgeridoo Man". History and music now make a better contribution to cultural development than at the time of the previous inspection, although the range of visits to cultural centres, such as art galleries, theatres and museums to bring learning to life, is limited. Pupils develop a good understanding about the cultural diversity represented by the school community through religious education lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school has very good procedures for the care and welfare of pupils. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school is a very happy and friendly community where pupils are valued and respected. The headteacher knows the pupils well; teachers and other staff provide very good role models and are well respected by the pupils; relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Supervision is effective and supportive at all times, a typical example being the way good table manners are expected and encouraged in the dining room. Parents feel that their children are in good hands, safe and secure at school and are right to do so.

44. Child protection is taken very seriously. The named person has been fully trained and all staff are familiar with the school's very good procedures. The school is proactive in its concern for pupils at risk and is prepared to challenge the outside agencies if it feels that action is too slow. Health and safety procedures are considered very important and have improved since the previous inspection. A well-experienced governor now has oversight of health, safety and welfare matters and rigorous monthly inspections take place, with records kept of the progress of all outstanding points. First aid cover is very good and accidents are correctly recorded. Fire drills are held regularly with fire marshals clearly assigned to different areas – particularly important given the many nooks and crannies within the rambling, Victorian school building.

45. The school has very good procedures for assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, which lead to action, for example, by arranging older pupils in classes by ability for mathematics. A wealth of data enables the school to monitor pupils' performance effectively in the three main subjects throughout the school, making good use of statutory and non-statutory test results and analyses. The performance of boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, and of ethnic minority pupils is regularly monitored. The senior staff and the assessment co-ordinator work as a team to review the procedures and make improvements. A lot has been done in a short time to make improvements in the system. Targets are set for all pupils in English and mathematics but the assessment system could be made even more helpful in making adjustments to the curriculum for the highest attainers at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

46. The school complies with national guidelines for pupils with special educational needs. Very good procedures identify pupils who have special educational needs as early as possible. Effective new systems and criteria for identifying pupils have been introduced by the co-ordinator. The school has introduced an additional category of special needs, class action, for pupils causing early concerns. Pupils' progress towards the targets in their individual education plans is checked each term. Teaching assistants monitor pupils' response and progress in lessons, and teachers use tracking information well to plan future work. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Occasionally, pupils make such good progress that they no longer need additional help. Assessment information is used well to determine if further help is needed from external agencies.

47. When new pupils who speak English as an additional language join the school, their class teacher carries out a basic assessment to find out what they know, can do and understand. Their progress in writing, speaking and listening, reading and mathematics is closely monitored by their class teachers. If pupils are found to need more help, extra support is directed as necessary, usually in lessons from the teaching assistants.

48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very effective. Attendance has improved significantly in the last year. Good attendance has a very high profile in the school and is widely celebrated. The names of all pupils and classes with very good attendance records are displayed in the entrance hall for parents' benefit and in the school hall for pupils to see. Awards are given to a class with 100 per cent attendance in any week and termly to all pupils who have missed no lessons. Registers are very well kept and a learning mentor is used very effectively to monitor these, for instance by following up immediately any unexplained absences. A governor takes particular interest in attendance and relations with the educational welfare service are close and effective. Punctuality is carefully monitored and parents regularly reminded of the importance of getting pupils to school on time but too many pupils arrive late. The school is aware of this and is working to improve punctuality.

49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Their success is due to a well understood, fair and consistent approach throughout the school, based on recognising and rewarding good behaviour with clear sanctions, including detentions, for inappropriate behaviour. Very good use is made of a learning mentor in behaviour management and pupils in trouble know they are always allowed to give their point of view. Pupils report that behaviour has improved significantly in the last two years and that fighting and bullying are not problems in the school. Bullying is always taken seriously and all incidents logged. The school's ethos of strong trusting relationships ensures that any pupils with concerns know who to talk to. The school has a policy for dealing with racial incidents. Racism is not tolerated and not a problem in the school.

50. The school has sound procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development although these are generally informal. Staff know the pupils well and all of their achievements both in and out of school are regularly celebrated. The sections in the pupil's annual reports on their personal qualities are of good quality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents have a high opinion of the school and report how much it has improved over the last two years. The response to both the questionnaire and the pre-inspection meeting was very supportive of the school and the headteacher.

Parents particularly like:

- The high expectations the school has of their children
- The approachability of the staff and the headteacher
- The good progress their children make
- The good teaching
- That their children like going to school
- The way their children are growing up to become sensible and responsible

The inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the parents' views on all these points.

52. A few parents have concerns about homework but the inspectors judge that the provision of homework is satisfactory. There is no fixed homework timetable but children take reading books home for supervised reading and work in mathematics and written work are given regularly. A few parents do not think that the school provides an interesting enough range of activities outside lessons. The inspectors found this comment surprising given the wide variety of school clubs available and the high take-up to these clubs. Also unlike many primary schools, there are clubs open to pupils in Years 1 and 2. Overall the inspectors judge the provision for extra-curricular activities to be very good.

53. The school is very serious about forging a strong partnership with parents and sees it as a vital ingredient to raising standards. Considerable effort is deployed to this end, with a governor, a teacher and the learning mentors all having specific responsibilities to further the effectiveness of the school's links with parents. The partnership is very effective on many levels ranging from the availability of a weekly 'drop-in' session where a parent with problems can have a supportive chat with a learning mentor, to parents attending a course on how to help their children with literacy. The school is very successful in getting parents into the school. Parents report that the open-door policy works well. During the inspection, before and after school, many parents were seen talking easily to teachers. Parents are encouraged to help in the school with the number helping having increased fivefold in the last two years. Parents are invited to share in their children's success – at the most recent awards evening, around 500 parents and friends turned up. The Parent Teachers' Association is successful in arranged social events as well as fund raising. The school is keen that parents have a say in the way the school develops. Views are sought by way of questionnaires and are taken into consideration when drawing up the school development plan. The inspectors did not agree with the few parents who thought that relations between school and home needed improving.

54. The quality of information for parents is good. The prospectus is well written and very informative. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed on the life of the school and half-termly curriculum plans of what is going to be taught allow parents to be more involved in their children's learning. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through formal termly meetings with their teacher but the open door policy means any concerns can be dealt with speedily at any time. Pupils' reports meet statutory regulations and clearly state progress. This summer's reports will include targets, both academic and personal - an improvement on previous years.

55. The parents of children who speak English as an additional language are welcomed, as are all parents and the learning mentor works with them effectively when required. Staff in the school office often assist parents, for example, to complete forms.

56. Parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved in annual review meetings. The school invites them to contribute to discussions about the continuing

needs of their child, and the progress since the previous review. The school ensures parents know if their child is placed on the register of special educational needs, and individual education plans are shared with parents, although some do not attend the parents meetings.

57. A small minority of parents feel that the partnership between school and home could be stronger. However, the effectiveness of the partnership has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Now it is very good and inspectors find that it is one of the school's strengths. Much is now in place for parents to be far more involved in their children's learning and this provides a very good basis for improving standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The previous inspection found serious weaknesses in the school's leadership and management, teaching and standards. The quality of the education provided by the school has been transformed since that time and standards have risen considerably. The school has worked closely with the local authority to secure the improvements in teaching and standards.

59. At the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher had recently been appointed and was just beginning the immense task of improving the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together very effectively to provide exceptionally clear direction for the school, working constantly to improve teaching and to raise standards. Their leadership is excellent and they put the children first in everything that the school does. The children know this and respond well to the expectations of behaviour and effort. The staff know that only their best will be good enough for their pupils. As a result, staff morale is high. Parents understand how the school has improved and are very satisfied with its work.

60. The school is very well managed. Management responsibilities are clear and delegated appropriately. The school's administration runs smoothly. Policies and documents are clear. Information for parents is comprehensive and attractively presented. The school makes effective use of modern technology. The timetable is planned to maximise time given for literacy and numeracy, which are general weaknesses in pupils' learning. However, the morning sessions for these are too long for most pupils.

61. The governors have played their part in the school's improvement and their work is very effective. They monitor the school's work closely; for example, through reports from the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Because of this, the governors have a clear understanding of the school's progress towards its targets and the objectives set out in its plan for development. Through their committee work, the governors participate in all aspects of the school's work.

62. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed and is effective. The school has a good policy in place for teaching these pupils and a particular governor has professional expertise in special education and meets the co-ordinator regularly. New systems have led to earlier and better identification of pupils' needs and the co-ordinator tracks pupils' progress very thoroughly. Funds for special educational needs are spent very effectively to provide in-class support for the pupils.

63. The management of provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. The co-ordinator has been well trained for her work. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and the teaching assistants work effectively to support them in lessons.

64. Leadership and management of the provision for the Foundation Stage and each of the other two key stages is effective. Subject management is also effective: subject co-ordinators plan the curriculum for their particular subjects effectively; they monitor lesson plans and samples of pupils' written work. The school has an effective system in place to assess and improve the performance of the teachers. The headteacher observes lessons in order to monitor the quality of teaching. This is done regularly and against clear criteria. The teachers

receive feedback after each observation.

65. The school's planning for improvement and development has greatly improved since the previous inspection. The main current priorities are correctly linked to improving teaching and learning and raising standards. The school's improvement plan is a very substantial document. It is a one-year plan, which is long enough in the school's current, developing circumstances. The plan sets out the priorities to be tackled, accountability, monitoring arrangements, time-scales and deadlines. Funding is linked clearly to each of the priorities and the school analyses its progress towards its objectives, evaluating cost in terms of the plan's success.

66. The pupil-to-teacher ratio is similar to that in most schools and the average class size is a manageable 24. Teachers and teaching assistants are well qualified and well trained. Although the external appearance of the school is dated and unattractive, internally the school is bright, clean, welcoming and in good order. The teaching accommodation is spacious and comfortable. The school has an adequate hard playground but lacks green space for play and games. Learning resources are good and the school has invested significant sums in computers and other equipment for information and communication technology.

67. The school applies the principles of best value effectively. Governors maintain an oversight of finances and ensure that money is spent wisely when placing contracts and when making major spending decisions. The quality of the school's performance data has substantially improved since the previous inspection. It is analysed to compare performance with that of other schools, both locally and nationally so that challenging targets can be set and that pupils' achievement is as good as it should be.

68. The school has an income per pupil considerably above the national average because of its special characteristics and circumstances. Its financial management is very good; the budget is balanced and governors receive regular statements so that they can monitor the school's financial position accurately. Special grants are used for their intended purposes.

69. Taking account the very unpromising context in which the school works and the very low attainment of successive intakes of pupils, their good progress throughout the school, their very good personal development, the good quality of education, the school's excellent leadership and its very good management, this is a good school which gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the school's performance still further, the governors, headteacher and staff should take the following action.

- (1) Continue to raise standards in English (in line with the school's plans),
 - improving pupils' speaking in formal situations,
 - improving spelling, and
 - improving writing*(Paragraphs 1-8,22,75,76,82-93,163)*
- (2) Continue to raise standards in mathematics (in line with the school's plans)
 - raising the pace of mental maths sessions,
 - providing more opportunities for open-ended investigation.*(Paragraphs, 1-8,22,28,45,77,94-103)*
- (3) Make better use of the pupils' good computer skills in all subjects.
(Paragraphs 30,35,91,99,110,116,123,130,137,146,163)
- (4) Consider reducing the length of the morning literacy and numeracy sessions,
 - to make these lessons brisker, and
 - to give more time and scope for creative activities, such as drama.*(Paragraphs 21,27,28,35,60)*

The governors may also wish to include the following more minor issue in their action plan.

- (5) Provide further training and advice to enable the teachers in Year 3 – 6 to teach design and technology with greater confidence, by
 - improving the teachers' understanding of the teaching of design,
 - encouraging and helping them to broaden the scope of work to encompass more projects of a mechanical and electrical nature, and
 - encouraging work with a wider range of tools and materials.*(Paragraphs 6,31,118-124)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	44	30	0	0	0
Percentage	0	16	50	34	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	330
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	223

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	50

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	59

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	115
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	76

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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	23	18	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	22
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	29	30	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (62)	73 (48)	88 (81)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	22	15
	Girls	14	13	11
	Total	31	35	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (60)	85 (79)	63 (67)
	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	18	32	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	14
	Girls	17	16	23
	Total	27	29	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (46)	58 (31)	74 (76)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	15
	Girls	19	17	24
	Total	29	30	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (48)	60 (38)	78 (67)
	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	269	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	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	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	12	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	23	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)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	547

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
	£
Total income	832238
Total expenditure	827739
Expenditure per pupil	3477
Balance brought forward from previous year	31564
Balance carried forward to next year	4454

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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)	0.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

330

Number of questionnaires returned

170

No of questionnaires received: 170 (as at 06/06/03)

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	37	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	44	8	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	39	14	3	3
The teaching is good.	56	39	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	38	14	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	0	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	35	45	14	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	51	4	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	46	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	40	11	6	11

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

Strengths

- Good teaching
- Good overall progress
- Children enjoy school
- Children make very good progress in their personal and emotional development
- Children make very good progress in early reading

Areas for improvement

- A significant minority of children do not achieve the early learning goals even though they make good progress towards them

71. The provision for the children in both the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children join the Nursery the term after their third birthday and transfer to their Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. About a quarter of those in the reception classes have not attended a nursery and others have attended different nurseries. During the inspection, there were 45 children attending part-time in the nursery and 41 in the two reception classes. The school has identified only a small group of children who have special educational needs: they are catered for well in small classes and receive much individual support. When children join the school, their attainment is very low in most aspects, including their social skills, and there is a rapidly increasing number who speak little English. These pupils receive little specialist help but are given a great deal of support by the teaching staff; they take a full part in lessons and make good progress in understanding and speaking English.

72. Teaching is good, sometimes very good and children enjoy school very much. They are enthusiastic about learning, although by the end of the day some of those in the Reception classes are very tired and find it hard to maintain concentration. Children make very good progress in the development of their personal, social and emotional skills and in early reading, physical development and creative development, and by the end of the reception year standards in these areas are broadly average. Progress is good in all other aspects of their work but overall standards are below average when children enter Year 1. By then, the majority of children have reached the levels expected for their age and a few exceed what is expected. However, there is a significant minority of children who, despite having made good progress, do not reach expected levels.

73. The school has been successful in maintaining and improving upon the good provision noted at the previous inspection. Since then the Reception classes have benefited from the good start made by children in the Nursery, which was new then. Children who have attended the Nursery join the Reception classes with much greater confidence and a better foundation of attainment. The curriculum is planned well and provides for a good range of direct teaching and free-choice activities in each class. Assessment procedures are good and new national procedures for assessing the children's attainment at the end of the Reception year are in place. Staff monitor children's progress carefully and work very well in teams to help the children to make consistently good progress. Parents are supportive, with a few helping in school, and most helping their children at home by hearing them read.

Personal, emotional and social development

74. Teaching is very good. Teachers and nursery nurses know their children very well and provide a warm and welcoming environment that gives children confidence. Staff value what children have to say and treat them with love and respect. Children settle quickly into their

classes and learn good routines to tidy up, and look after the equipment. They behave well and have a sound understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They share equipment and work well together both in the direct teaching sessions and when they choose their own activities. Children undress and dress themselves for physical activities with the minimum of help and attend to their own personal needs. From their earliest days in the Nursery, children learn skills of independence, such as by registering their own arrival by displaying their names on a board and organising their own snack time. Children build upon this well in the Reception year and when they enter Year 1, most are confident and independent, reaching the levels expected for their age. Staff celebrate children's achievements in many displays of work, which are very well presented and attractive, and which encourage self-esteem and enrich the classroom environment.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Teaching is good; it is focused well on developing the basic skills that children need to learn across the whole curriculum. Staff create a literate environment by their use of many well-written signs and labels in the classrooms and good displays of books. There is a good focus on developing children's listening and speaking skills, and listening skills are average by the end of the reception class. Children's spoken vocabulary and understanding improves but remains below average by the end of the reception year, with some children having very little spoken English. Most are confident in talking with adults and with each other but a few volunteer little in oral work. The teaching of phonics and early reading is good and most children have made a sound start on the school's reading scheme by the end of the reception year. Standards in reading are average and most children work at the level expected; an average proportion works beyond that level and a small group does not attain the level expected and has some difficulty with understanding what they read. There is a good range of reading scheme and library books and children take books home on a daily basis. Many parents support their children well in reading which helps them make very good progress from their low starting points. Most children know the sounds represented by different letters and an average proportion use this information in reading new words, but a small number lacks confidence in recognising letters or attempting new words. Children enjoy their books and many read with enthusiasm. One child bubbled over with excitement when reading, "I just love this book! I love it! I love it!" but many find it difficult to discuss the sort of books they prefer to read.

76. Children are confident in attempting their own writing but their skills are below average. On joining the Nursery, few produce any mark that resembles a letter but by the end of the Reception year most attempt at least one sentence, using letters. From their earliest days in the Nursery, staff provide daily opportunities to write in informal and formal situations. For example, there are writing tables and notepads in each of the role-play areas and children record some of their work in other subjects in their own words, for example, when those in Reception year wrote about a visit to a safari park. There are a few children who are beginning to remember to add full stops and capital letters to their writing but about a quarter of the children in reception are only just beginning to apply their knowledge of letters to their writing and many sentences are very difficult to decipher. Handwriting skills are immature and many find it difficult to form letters correctly and make their letters of similar size.

Mathematical development

77. Teaching is good and children make good progress, although standards are below average overall. Most children are on course to meet the level expected on entry to Year 1 but about a quarter are not likely to do so. Lessons begin with lively counting activities and children respond quickly in recognising numbers to ten and counting up to 100. Children begin to add and subtract numbers to 10 and a small group of higher attaining pupils begin to add to totals beyond 10. A group of lower attaining pupils or who have special educational needs are not all secure with recognising and counting accurately to 10 and some form their numbers incorrectly. Children apply their knowledge when working with coins and know that there are different ways of combining coins to make a given amount of money. Classrooms have a very good range of mathematical resources which staff use well to provide interesting practical activities so that

children learn from first-hand experiences, such as when using sand and water trays for measuring. Children learn about simple shapes and how to compare the measurements of objects. They learn an appropriate range of mathematics vocabulary, such as heavy, light, longer and shorter. Although most children develop a sound understanding of these types of comparisons about a quarter of them have some difficulty in understanding and using the terminology, which limits their progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children join the Nursery with a narrow range of experiences of the wider world but the teaching is good and most children make good progress. By the end of the Reception year the majority of children attain the level expected but a significant number do not and standards are below average when children enter Year 1. The learning experiences provided for the children are good in school but the range of visits outside school is limited, largely by cost. Those in the nursery enjoy an annual visit to a local park and those in reception visit a safari park. There are very few safe nearby local facilities that they can walk to. Staff compensate by providing a good range of experiences in school. For example, the nursery teacher brought in some snails for children to observe and they experimented to find which food snails like best. Reception children learn about healthy foods, such as fruit and fruit juices and carry out a survey on which is the favourite fruit juice in their class. In a good link with mathematics, they record their own choices on a graph and then read the graph to see which was most popular.

79. Children learn sound skills in using the computer, such as by controlling the mouse, playing games and using a graphics program to create pictures. Computers are used appropriately to support learning in literacy and numeracy. For example, children enjoy using a program linked to their reading books. They make an early start on geographical skills by drawing a simple route map and thinking about the different types of houses they live in. By observing how things grow, children gain an understanding of how things change over time and when baking they notice how ingredients change when they are mixed together and again when they are heated. Role-play areas are varied to complement the topic children are studying; for example, those in the Reception classes were set up as cafes during the inspection. Children begin to design and make simple products, such as designing a park on the computer and making simple photograph frames. They learn to respect the beliefs and customs of others when they learn about festivals such as the Buddhist *Wesak* festival.

Physical development

80. Teaching is good and children make good progress in developing physical control and awareness of space. There is a good, very well equipped outdoor area for the nursery, which is also used on a time-tabled basis by the reception class children. It provides well for a good variety of physical activities that help children improve their skills, for example by climbing, riding, balancing, throwing and catching. Children also take part in well-taught physical education lessons, such as games lessons, when they develop sound skills in controlling the direction of small equipment such as balls and beanbags. Staff set good models for children by changing and dressing appropriately for lessons and pay good attention to health and safety, for example, warming up correctly. Time is used well to provide a good range of experiences in lessons and children are enthusiastic about their learning. For example, the use of a large parachute creates excitement for children as they learn to move around underneath it with good awareness of space and co-operate to keep it aloft. The teachers develop well the pupils' ability to handle and tools and equipment, such as scissors, pencils and brushes. Most children are on course to meet the levels expected for their age. Overall, standards are average.

Creative development

81. Teaching is good and by the end of the reception year most children are likely to meet the level expected for their age. Staff make good use of role-play areas to stimulate children's imaginations and they enter into their roles happily, although the below average speaking skills mean that some children play very happily with little spoken interaction with others.

Nevertheless, they enjoy taking part in activities and act out their roles alongside others. This makes a sound contribution to their language development, as they play informally and learn to negotiate with their friends. There are many opportunities for children to learn art techniques, such as printing, and they have satisfactory opportunities to express themselves freely, such as by painting in the painting area and creating pictures on the computer. However, some other activities are somewhat over-directed and offer insufficient opportunities for children to experiment on their own. For example, collages are often filling in teacher outlines with prepared shapes, rather than allowing children opportunities to cut or tear their own. They study the work of famous artists and try to recreate pictures in their style. For example, nursery children look at Matisse's snail picture and then create their own. In music, children learn a good range of songs, many with actions and they sing enthusiastically with reasonable tunefulness and a satisfactory sense of rhythm. They use small percussion instruments to accompany their singing and most maintain a simple beat, playing loudly or softly.

ENGLISH

Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching is now good
- Good coverage of the curriculum for English
- Teachers plan lessons well
- The way standards in reading have risen

Areas for development

- Writing skills still need improvement
- Pupils' speaking skills in formal situations
- Spelling needs to be improved
- The length of lessons
- The potential of drama is insufficiently exploited

82. The overall standard of the current Year 2 pupils' work is below average. However, this represent a good achievement for these pupils. The results of national Curriculum tests are improving faster than nationally and the results of the 2003 tests show a strong improvement on those of the previous year, particularly in reading. National comparative data is not yet available. The results of the tests of Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well below the national average in both reading and writing. In comparison with those of similar schools, the results in reading were above average, and in writing they were average. No pupils exceeded the expected level in writing although some did so in reading. Girls tend to outperform boys, although by a smaller margin than nationally.

83. The overall standards of the current Year 6 pupils are below average but represent a good achievement for the pupils and standards are rising. The results of the National Curriculum tests of Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well below the national average, which was also the position at the previous inspection, and few pupils exceeded the expected level but the results were in line with those of similar schools. The results of the 2003 national tests are much better than those of the previous year, and a greater proportion of pupils exceeded the expected level. This improvement has been achieved in spite of the high and increasing proportion of pupils in Year 6 who do not speak English as their first language and the unusually large number of pupils who have statements of special educational need. If these pupils' results are discarded it is clear that the underlying results of other pupils are improving rapidly and 80 per cent of them reached the level expected.

84. The good improvement in English is due to the rigorous way the school addressed the issues arising from the previous inspection. Raising overall standards in English has been, and still is, the main priority for the school. Procedures for monitoring progress and setting targets for individual pupils have been implemented, teaching materials to support pupils needing a

boost to their performance adopted, and classes provided to help pupils prepare for National Curriculum tests. Teachers are skilled in using the National Literacy Strategy to provide pupils with a good range of learning activities covering all aspects of the English curriculum well. These measures and the overall improvement in the quality of teaching and learning have combined to lead to the good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special needs and those who are learning to speak English are now making good progress from their very low average attainment when they start school. Higher attaining pupils who have joined the school relatively recently have made very good progress in English, and in some cases have overtaken their classmates. However, overall standards could still be higher, particularly in writing, in speaking, and in spelling.

85. Standards in speaking are below average but listening skills are better. Pupils concentrate and listen well to their teachers and to each other. Pupils speak freely and clearly, individually and when in small groups. In discussions with Year 6 pupils, they spoke in a mature manner about their perceptions of the school and the activities they enjoy. However, most pupils lack confidence and speak quietly, hesitantly and briefly in formal situations, for example, when reporting back to the whole class or offering a considered opinion. In consequence, many older pupils find it difficult to organise their thoughts or to structure sentences to explain their ideas. The use of drama and role-play is part of the school's plan to improve speaking skills and could do so much, but only one example was observed during the inspection. Two Year 6 pupils took the roles of parents of a boy swept overboard and their classmates interviewed them as reporters at a press conference. Generally, there are not enough opportunities for drama and role play or for pupils to plan together to report back to the class, in order to add a wider dimension to their comprehension and use of spoken language. There is an after-school drama club, but this is only for infant pupils at present.

86. Pupils do well in reading throughout the school, and in Years 2 and 6, standards match those expected for their ages nationally. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to develop pupils' reading skills. The school has improved the overall quantity and range of reading material and each classroom now has a well-stocked book area. The spacious and well-stocked school library is used weekly by each class. The books are organised according to a local adaptation of the Dewey system. Pupils are responsible for scanning their choice into the computer. The library is also open to pupils after school, and several responsible monitors tidy and manage the book stock. By Year 3, pupils confidently select books, know where to find fiction and non-fiction material and more able pupils use the contents, glossary and index appropriately to locate specific information.

87. In Year 1, pupils held up 'Yes' or 'No' cards to show they understood written questions. More able pupils in Year 2 read accurately and recall the main points of a story well, but their narrow vocabulary hinders comprehension of words such as 'stilts'. When they meet a new word, most know how to 'sound it out' or 'break it up'. Less able pupils find this difficult, for example 'lived' becomes 'vild'. Younger pupils do not recall favourite authors or stories, but by Year 4, pupils know they enjoy reading Mick Inkpen, J K Rowling and Judy Blume. More able pupils of this age read fluently, but less able pupils still have not acquired sufficient strategies, and may simply omit an unknown word. The majority of pupils read fluently by the time they are eleven, with good regard to punctuation and speech marks. Many find it hard to predict what happens next because they do not organise their ideas well. Most pupils lack expression when reading aloud, even though teachers demonstrate this well, and hesitate over words like 'yacht'. The range of favourite authors is limited to popular modern writers, including Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson, but they recall Charles Dickens and William Shakespeare from class-work. Pupils with special educational needs read extracts from *The Suitcase Kid* by Jacqueline Wilson with good understanding and accuracy. This was due to the very good support they received from their teacher, who sensitively helped pupils use various strategies well, whilst encouraging them to develop some independence in their learning. Throughout the school, pupils show pleasure in reading, enjoy stories and books, and most read to an adult regularly at home, at school or the reading club.

88. Standards in writing are well below average in Year 2, and below average in Year 6. Action

by the school to improve pupils' writing has yet to become fully effective. The school has started to assess pupils' writing every half term, to set targets for them to improve, and guide teachers when they plan activities to enable pupils to make better progress. Overall, there have been improvements in the way pupils present their work. In Year 2, most pupils print, letters are not always a consistent size, and their work is sometimes careless. Regular handwriting practice through the school ensures good progress. By the time pupils reach Year 6, the great majority have developed a legible, well formed and mainly joined style, and present their work neatly with care. Pupils have regular spelling practice and learn spelling patterns, using the 'look', 'cover', 'write' and 'check' method. However, many Year 6 pupils still make errors when writing commonly used words, writing 'new' for 'knew' or 'band' for 'banned', and pupils' spelling is an area for improvement.

89. From the time they enter the school, pupils are encouraged to write independently, and their work shows some understanding of letter sounds, for example 'cac' for cake in Year 1. By the end of Year 1, all pupils have made good progress in writing. More able pupils write up to two pages, and create a story with a suitable ending. Teachers provide different activities appropriate to the needs of all pupils, and this helps pupils to build up their skills progressively. All pupils undertake some formal exercises as part of the school's writing programme. This ensures a sound knowledge of grammar, but pupils do not always remember to put their skills into practice. Most Year 2 pupils use some full stops and speech marks in their work. More able pupils vary the text, adding capitals, for example, 'DANGER', to make their story more exciting. However, many find it difficult to express their thoughts clearly and organise their ideas well, and their vocabulary is limited, for example 'I went to the park and I went on **things**'. Lower attaining Year 6 pupils frequently omit punctuation from their writing, although they do use paragraphs. They do not express themselves well, saying 'If I had **of** known....', and use few adjectives to make their work varied and imaginative, for example when writing a letter of complaint about a summer camp.

90. The quality of teaching is good overall. The framework of the National Literacy Strategy is now used effectively to guide teachers' planning. Lesson planning is good. The curriculum for English is covered well. Pupils experience a wide range of activities that stimulate their learning. All teachers tell their pupils what they are going to learn, and they provide varied resources that support learning well. In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. They remind pupils of their targets, give clear instructions and frequently check to ensure they understand their tasks. Pupils of all abilities are challenged, and lessons move along at a lively pace, keeping pupils actively involved and learning well. Pupils with special educational needs, and those still learning to speak English are very well provided for, and they make good progress. In other lessons, however, pupils spend too long writing out the learning objectives, and some activities are repetitive and not challenging, for example cutting out, gluing and colouring exercises. Pupils' targets may not be used, or they may be too long and written in words pupils do not understand. To help raise standards, extra sessions of English have been built into the timetable after literacy, but this makes the lessons too long for many pupils who tire and lose concentration.

91. Pupils enjoy their lessons, work eagerly, share books and materials, and behave well. Good relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils help them to learn well. Their work in English promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, particularly through literature, and when they work together in groups. Year 6 pupils empathised with the plight of evacuees after reading *Carrie's War*, and Year 4 pupils presented a balanced argument about recycling materials. They occasionally use the computer but this needs to be more frequent and systematic. Year 5 pupils printed myths and fables with a message. Pupils in Year 3 communicate with their 'e-pals' at a local school via the Internet.

92. English is well led and managed. The co-ordinator's good subject knowledge has been used well to improve the curriculum since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, pupils' books and test results. This enables her to set targets for improvement, but it is not school practice for subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in lessons. Resources are good, and are constantly updated, for example the provision

of a new scheme of reading books. Work in class is extended satisfactorily through regular homework and pupils regularly undertake reading at home, to good effect.

Basic skills – literacy across the curriculum

93. In other subjects, pupils' literacy skills are adequate to cope with the demands made on them. Pupils experience a great deal of reading and writing in literacy hours and in other English lessons but teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, and there is too much copying and filling in of worksheets. This is particularly the case in religious education and design and technology in many of the classes. In design and technology, spelling mistakes in pupils' writing are often neglected. The school has yet to consider how to harness its good equipment and pupils' good computing skills to developing literacy systematically.

MATHEMATICS

Strengths

- Good teaching
- Effective use of additional classroom support
- All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language
- Good use of practical resources to aid understanding
- Assessment procedures are good

Areas for improvement

- Standards generally
- Not enough open-ended investigation
- The slow pace of mental mathematics sessions
- The application of information and communication technology to support learning
- Many lessons are too long

94. The National Curriculum test results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were well below the national average in 2002 but average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Inspection evidence shows a similar picture for pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 nevertheless, pupils achieve well throughout the school.

95. Raising standards in mathematics was identified as a priority at the time of the previous inspection when they were very low in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. Since then, the school has worked hard to address the specific issues raised, as follows.

96. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the close monitoring of lessons have improved teaching, which is now good. Arrangements for placing Year 2 and Year 6 children in groups for English and mathematics by ability are helping to challenge the higher attaining pupils more effectively. Planning and assessment have also improved and are effective. Strong support for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language is leading to higher expectations of all pupils. Strategies for solving problems are a focus for all classes, and scrutiny of pupils' work shows this is having a degree of success. However, further improvement is needed in giving pupils more experience of open-ended investigational work. There has been satisfactory improvement in giving opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects. However, further improvement is needed, particularly when related to the use of information and communication technology.

97. All pupils achieve well because of good teaching and thorough planning which matches work well to pupils' needs. However, the high mobility in the school, with increasingly regular intakes of refugee pupils, affects the numbers reaching the nationally expected standards. Tracking of pupils' progress over the last year shows that almost ninety percent of pupils who had spent the full year in Year 2 had made average or better than average progress and in Year

6 the figure was ninety seven percent of pupils making average or better progress. There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the national level by the time they leave school, almost doubling in the previous two years.

98. By the end of Year 2, the use of number pattern and clear explanations enable most pupils to have a sound understanding of numbers to a hundred and they are competent when mentally adding and subtracting numbers to twenty. They are beginning to gain confidence when working out problems, such as finding the fewest number of coins to pay a given amount. Higher attaining pupils can explain their working, order numbers in the hundreds and work out simple multiplication and division within the lower multiplication tables, whilst lower attaining pupils are supported well by the good use of practical resources when working with numbers to twenty. All pupils have good practice using standard measures over the full range including length, weight and time and have good practical experiences to help understanding, for example testing how much sand would pass through the timer in one minute. All pupils are learning to display information on graphs, with higher attaining pupils interpreting the information to solve problems.

99. Year 6 pupils have regular opportunities to use their skills in solving problems and puzzles, such as completing a 'magic square'. They are developing a range of strategies for addition and subtraction of numbers in the thousands and understand the effect of multiplying and dividing by ten. Most pupils can identify fractions with the same value and apply this when working out percentages. Higher attaining pupils work at an increasing pace, enabling them to gain a good understanding of the value of large numbers and work out long multiplication and division using a variety of methods. When solving problems their calculations are well set out and show clear and logical methods. Lower attaining pupils are developing confidence when working with numbers less than a hundred but have difficulty with interpreting the most basic problems without support. The majority of pupils can use a range of measurements to solve problems such as calculating the mileage of a journey. Higher attaining pupils draw and measure angles with increasing accuracy and show a good understanding of the size of angles as they use an angle indicator to indicate angles of a given size. Pupils display and interpret information on a range of graphs, though insufficient use is made of information and communication technology in this area.

100. Teaching is good overall enabling pupils to learn well. Two very good lessons were observed and they related to the teaching of groups of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language in Year 2 and Year 6. In both lessons the very practical nature of the activities and the level of work suited the needs of the pupils very well. For example, older pupils looked at a range of holiday clothes to give them a good idea of how much things actually cost before working out shopping totals. Work is carefully graded to give pupils confidence to answer, with the level of difficulty increasing in achievable steps. In these very diverse groups, work is often planned on an individual basis, particularly for those pupils who have only a very early understanding of English or who have a statement of special educational needs and the high level of support enables these pupils to achieve well.

101. A strong aspect of the teaching overall is the clear explanations given to pupils to help them understand. For example, in Year 5, the teacher made good use of the laptop and projector to explain the problems and pick out key words and this had the effect of focusing pupils' attention. Pupils respond positively to high expectations of behaviour and this creates a calm working atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers are making good efforts to provide increased challenge for more able pupils, for example, Year 6 pupils calculated and compared exchange rates across the world and at different times of the year to find the best value. The skills of the high-quality classroom assistants are used effectively, not only to support groups in their tasks but also to make notes of pupils' contributions and attitudes to lessons to help assess progress. A less successful aspect of many lessons is the lack of pace in the initial mental sessions, which are often too slow, which limits pupils' progress in developing quick recall of facts, including multiplication tables. In some lessons, time was not always effectively used, for example pupils spent time cutting out problems and pasting them in their books, with

no opportunity to solve the questions posed. The subject provides good opportunities for speaking and listening as pupils explain their working. However, computers are not routinely used to support learning in mathematics lessons.

102. The subject is managed well and the provision has improved well since the previous inspection. The close monitoring of planning and pupils' work by the co-ordinator and the monitoring of lessons by senior management has helped to raise the quality of teaching with a positive effect on achievement. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the arrangements for teaching pupils in groups of similar ability in Year 2 and Year 6 is having a positive effect on the achievement for all. Good assessment procedures are being used well in lesson planning. A good start has been made on tracking pupils' progress. Test results are analysed and areas for development are identified to form a whole school focus, for example, on problem-solving. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. However, some lessons are too long and this often reduces the pace of learning, with too much time allowed for pupils to complete a task.

Basic skills – numeracy across the curriculum

103. Overall this is satisfactory. In some subjects, pupils apply their numerical skills usefully; for example, pupils use their good measuring skills regularly in science and draw graphs and charts to illustrate and present information. In art, pupils apply their knowledge of geometrical pattern. This is also the case in some design and technology lessons for younger pupils but there are some missed opportunities for practising measuring skills in design and technology. Geography lessons develop numerical skills well through applying pupils' ability to draw tally charts, graphs and Venn diagrams. Geography lessons also gave pupils opportunities to develop their understanding of scale, and the measurement of temperature.

SCIENCE

Strengths

- Very good improvement since the previous inspection
- Good achievement throughout the school
- Good teaching
- Good subject management

Areas for improvement

- The challenge for potentially higher attaining pupils
- More consistent application of ICT skills

104. Standards of the pupils currently in Year 2 are average and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. In 2002, the results of teachers' assessments indicated that the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected level for their age or higher, was well below the national average and pupils' skills in practical work, experiment and investigation were poor. The results of the teachers' assessment of Year 2 pupils in 2003 is much higher. When the work of pupils with English as an additional language is excluded the results are close to average. Although there are, as yet, no national figures for comparison, these results are likely to be close to the national average. Improved standards have been brought about by better teaching particularly in experimental and investigative work. Pupils achieve well in relation to their below average attainment at the end of the Reception year.

105. There is a similar picture in Year 6. Standards of the current Year 6 pupils' work are average. In 2002, the results of National Curriculum tests were well below the national average but average compared with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Trends over time show that the school's results are rising and the recently received results for 2003 strongly indicate that this is the case. Of the 53 pupils taking the tests 47 of them, that is 89 percent,

reached the expected level or higher. If the pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue are excluded from the calculations 94 per cent of pupils reached the expected level or higher which is likely to be well above the average. Evidence from the inspection indicates that improved standards have been brought about by improved teaching and learning and good leadership and management of the subject. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good and pupils achieve well throughout the school.

106. Overall, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because teachers focus on developing scientific skills through experiments and investigations. Pupils begin to use planning sheets which encourages them to generate questions, make predictions, carry out tasks methodically and review their results. They offer good explanations if their predictions turn out to be wrong, for example, 'it could be that someone pushed the car instead of just letting it fall'. They are encouraged to use the correct scientific vocabulary and, by the end of Year 2, some pupils are beginning to use comparisons. In a Year 2 investigation into the effect of increasing the height of a ramp on the distance travelled by a vehicle the more able pupils arrived at the conclusion that 'the higher the ramp the further the car went' and therefore 'the lower the ramp the shorter the distance'. Pupils carrying out similar investigations showed good skills in using materials and equipment. They knew what they were measuring, as when one group in year 2 explained that 'you need to measure from the bottom of the ramp to where the car stops' and did so accurately. Year 1 pupils can find sources of light, know which appliances use electricity and can identify both natural and manufactured materials. Year 2 pupils are beginning to classify animals and one child had the interesting idea of two groups - animals with ears and ones without. Classrooms in Years 1 and 2 have scientific vocabulary displayed prominently and displays are a source of interest to children and adults. One display, for example, shows experimental work done on forces with photographs of pupils taking part in a tug-o-war with both even and uneven sides.

107. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. By Year 4, pupils can understand what is meant by a fair test and plan their investigations in detail. A particularly good example of this was the write-up of an experiment to find out which material is the best insulator. In this case the conclusion was tinfoil because the heat loss was least. They can draw and label diagrams, showing the parts of a plant and explaining their function. They can recognise the terms *vertebrate* and *invertebrate*. Year 5 pupils can demonstrate day and night by shining a torch onto a rotating sphere. They understand a lunar eclipse and know that shadows change during the day. Pupils have become confident in using correct scientific vocabulary. Pupils are very good at selecting and using equipment and by teaching assistants support less able pupils well. By Year 6, pupils' scientific understanding is particularly well developed: this was seen in a very good lesson in which children investigated the effect of the length of a string on the swinging of a pendulum. Through careful and accurate experiments they conducted a series of calculations by counting the number of swings per minute for a pendulum attached to strings of various lengths. Each test was repeated several times to check on validity. Not only could they then conclude that the shorter the string the greater the number of swings but could use this to predict the number of swings at lengths they had not tested. In addition, they wrote an evaluation of their experiment and identified the factors to consider in order to improve.

108. Pupils on the register of special educational need make very good progress. Work is often modified to suit the particular needs of ability groups and those children with severe difficulties or who are in the early stages of learning English are well catered for. Pupils meet and sometimes exceed the targets in their individual education plans. All pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, are included in all the activities through the high quality classroom assistance and the watchfulness of the teachers. When the children work in mixed ability groups the less able ones are encouraged and helped by their peers.

109. Evidence from the inspection, including lesson observations and scrutiny of work, indicates that teaching and learning are good throughout the school. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory but more often good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and both teachers and pupils use scientific vocabulary well. Teachers' preparation is good, particularly for investigations, in which they make good use of very good resources. What

children are to learn is clear to them. Lessons are well planned and there is a good curriculum. Teachers have capitalised on the pupils' interest in the subject to make the lessons enjoyable. In the better lessons the pace is fast and the children learn new knowledge quickly. They can then share what they have learned with others. Tasks for each group are challenging yet achievable. On a few occasions however, activities were completed in less than the allocated time and pupils became restless. During one lesson pupils were confused about what exactly they were doing because the activity was too ambitious and involved too many variables; consequently, too much time was spent on the planning rather than on the investigation itself. Overall the quality of teaching has greatly improved since the previous inspection which means that standards in science are rising. The school should now consider ways of challenging the more able pupils to reach levels of attainment beyond those expected at the end of Year 2 and year 6.

110. Science lessons provide opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Those in Year 6, for example can find the mean of a set of results, convert a table of results into a graph and interpret the graph logically. Pupils in most year groups could measure accurately using a range of instruments such as tapes or stopwatches, could look for number patterns and draw up tables and charts. Pupils in Year 4 used their literacy skills well to carry out research from non-fiction books showing an understanding of the contents page and the index. Speaking and listening skills were used competently for oral feedback particularly in the plenary sessions. Sometimes pupils' poor literacy skills led to inaccurate spelling and untidy presentation. On only a few occasions computers were used in the classroom for children to record results on a spreadsheet. This could be developed further because children have good ICT skills.

111. Good leadership and management of the subject has helped to produce the very good improvement in science since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator knows how well pupils are progressing by monitoring their books and each teacher's planning. Systematic analysis of test results and non-statutory tests is effective in showing how standards can be raised. The co-ordinator gives written feedback of her monitoring to staff and works with them to improve their confidence. The scheme of work has been developed into units at the end of which the co-ordinator has devised a set of graded tasks to see how well the children have grasped the topic. She is aware that the application of ICT needs developing further and has recently purchased a data-logging facility, an electronic thermometer and new CD-ROMs for the computers. These are highlighted in the action plan.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths

- Effective teaching of drawing and use of sketchbooks
- The study of the work of a good range of well known artists
- Provision for pupils with a high level of special needs
- Good contribution to pupils' personal development

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities for pupils to express individual creativity
- Use of computers is underdeveloped

112. Pupils attain standards which are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the achievement of all pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory overall. This is similar to the standards found by the last inspection. A good feature is the effective support for the very small number of pupils with a high level of special needs, ensuring that they are fully included in all activities and make progress alongside their peers. Pupils' work is very well displayed in classrooms and corridors and this enhances the learning environment well, and also helps to raise pupils' self esteem.

113. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experience of using a range of different materials for their pictures including paint, pastels and pencils. Direct teaching of skills enables pupils to produce detailed drawings from close observation for example drawings of pot plants using oil pastels. Pupils also create a three-dimensional effect for a village scene using painted paper. With key suggestions from the teacher pupils look critically at the work of artists such as Monet and Van Gogh and try to reproduce a similar effect, for example pupils create their own version of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Pupils are starting to look carefully at their own work and suggest improvements; for example pupils in Year 1 think perhaps some models could have been painted a little brighter. Most artwork seen was competent and carefully done to the specific requirements; however, little evidence was seen of pupils developing or exploring their own ideas creatively.

114. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed their skills further and the work of famous artists is used effectively to stimulate interest in art and design. Pupils design and make pattern blocks following the small intricate designs used by Klimt in his work and they show good skill in regulating the amount of colour they use to produce an even coverage. Pupils use sketchbooks effectively as part of the design stage of their work, and they have also practised skills such as drafting proportions for the face and the position of eyes. However, they are not often used for pupils to experiment with different techniques and effects. Pupils can produce three-dimensional effects such as carnival masks using curled and folded paper. Their work is skilful and attractive, but again there is little evidence of pupils having the opportunity to show individual flair.

115. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons, enabling pupils to make sound progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when some lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned with work often building steadily over two or three lessons and involving good development of their skills. This was seen in Year 6 where pupils first designed then produced their printing block before finally learning how to make effective prints. Demonstrations are clear so that pupils learn new skills well, and specific advice, such as, 'Draw what you see!' helps pupils to improve their work.

116. There are good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills as they discuss and evaluate a range of work. There are developing links with other subjects and pupils use their skills to illustrate their work in other subjects such as history and science, and develop their mathematical skills when painting symmetrical patterns and butterflies. Pupils in Year 6 use the computer to design patterns but generally the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning is underdeveloped.

117. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. A new scheme of work has been successfully introduced since that time and is being used well to guide teachers' planning and this is an improvement. Pupils' work is monitored regularly and satisfactory assessment procedures are helping to track pupils' progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2
- Co-ordination of the subject and the good example set in teaching of Year 2

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' confidence to teach the subject
- The teaching of the design process
- The breadth of activities and materials
- The rigour of teachers' marking in some classes

118. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Pupils made good progress in design and making in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory progress in Years 3, 4 and 5, although they made up for lost ground to some extent in Year 6. Since that time, a new scheme of work has been put in place for Years 3 – 6 and this has led to some improvement but the teachers' planning for design needs more work still.

119. In most year groups pupils undertake three small projects each year which are planned so that each of the two classes in each year cover the same work.

120. Attainment in pupils' creative development at the beginning of Year 1 is broadly average. Pupils make good overall progress in Years 1 and 2 and, as was found at the time of the previous inspection, they reach above average standards by the end of Year 2, which is a good achievement for them. Standards in design are average; the best work is clearly drawn and labelled though there are no dimensions; the pupils' realisation of their little projects is generally good; they are well finished and pupils clearly enjoy making them. In Year 1, pupils have made attractive moving pictures from light card which incorporate simple joints and mechanisms to allow for movement, such as pivots and sliding bars. They have also produced pop-up pictures of a 'snake in my garden' which feature a coiled paper 'spring' and are also well made and decorative. Year 2 pupils have made finger puppets using paper or various fabrics, and also attractive moving pictures of a crocodile incorporating an articulated lower jaw. Some of the pupils have used computer graphics effectively, for example, in their designs for a Joseph's 'coat of many colours'. These same pupils also constructed wishing wells as part of an exploration into the operation of a windlass, which are attractive strong and mechanically sound. During the inspection, they designed and made lovely examples of Miss Muffet's Garden, which incorporated models of the spider, building on their previous work, which were mechanically operated by a windlass mechanism.

121. Pupils' progress throughout Years 3 – 6 is satisfactory. Year 3 pupils have designed and made photograph frames from card. The finished articles are attractive and have been used for their intended purpose. They have written a specification for making their favourite sandwiches and have produced some designs for packaging sweets. The design work is a weakness and pupils are working with a restricted range of materials at tasks which lack challenge or broad interest. During a Year 4 lesson observed during the inspection, pupils assembled small, wheeled vehicles intended to be propelled by a mechanism incorporating an elastic rubber band. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils discussed and evaluated a food technology project to make sweet biscuits to their own recipes, which they had done previously. Pupils also made progress

in this lesson in the design of a wrapper for the biscuits which would have visual appeal to a child. Year 6 pupils have completed a short project in connection with the choice of a fabric, following a simple worksheet. They have also completed a project to design and make a cushion and some of this work is good: the design work was clear and thorough and the finished articles were attractively presented, showing skilful use of sewing machines. Another project for Year 6 pupils involved the making of a shelter. However, the lack of suitable outdoor space restricts the possibilities for realisation of a project of this nature. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average and represent a satisfactory achievement for these pupils. Design is generally a weakness. There is a lack of measurement and, therefore, lost opportunities to develop pupils' numerical skills. Making skills are sound and sometimes good but the range of projects, tools and materials is too restricted.

122. Generally, pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well. Their skills of independent learning would be developed more effectively if less was done for them and there were fewer occasions when work of older pupils depended on the completion of a worksheet.

123. Teaching is satisfactory overall but varies from satisfactory to good and tends to be better in classes for younger pupils, particularly in Year 2, where the best teaching was seen. The main overall strength of the teaching is the good management of pupils. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching has a number of other good features - lessons are well planned, proceed at a good pace and tasks set for pupils show high expectations. In these lessons, pupils concentrate on their work for the full length of the lesson, do their best and make worthwhile gains in their knowledge and understanding of how things work and in their creative skills. Design skills are taught effectively in only a few classes. More attention needs to be given to the development of pupils' own ideas, and to drawing and redrafting, measuring and accurate marking out. Older pupils need to learn to be more critical of their work and teachers' marking of their work also needs to be more rigorous. At present there is a tendency for some teachers to praise mediocre work. Teachers need to be more adventurous in the choice of projects and materials, and could usefully involve pupils' ideas and preferences in this choice. Computers are sometimes used effectively; for example, to design pattern, though this could be more extensive.

124. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator knows the subject well and has great enthusiasm for it. However, her difficulty is that many other members of staff need further training to give them the confidence to teach children about the working of familiar mechanical things, such as aerofoils, engines, electromagnets and household electrical appliances, and to extend the range of work planned for them. The school has some small hand-tools but no workbench. Although the school has mini-benchhooks to use on tables, without a vice in which to hold resistant materials securely, younger pupils cannot cut components accurately. The teaching of design needs to be much more rigorous and demanding.

GEOGRAPHY

Strengths

- Opportunities for pupils to use their numerical skills
- Good opportunities for fieldwork

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' explanation of technical vocabulary needs to be more clear, especially to pupils who are learning English
- Some lessons are not challenging enough, especially for more able Year 6 pupils
- Computers are rarely used

125. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. They are average by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 and this represents a satisfactory achievement for these pupils.

126. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can show what they know in studies at a local scale by carrying out tasks such as a traffic survey conducted by Year 1. They can show an awareness of places beyond their locality as when Year 2 looked at the 'Journeys of Jeremy Bear' to other countries. They know that their environment may be different from others by comparing Liverpool to an imaginary place in Scotland and one in Wales. They also visited the seaside at Southport and made further comparisons with their locality. Pupils can understand that some things change over time whilst others may stay the same. They are beginning to use appropriate vocabulary as, for example, when some pupils in Year 2 talked about physical and human features. However pupils in some classes observed had difficulty in understanding the vocabulary as it was not clearly explained by the teacher.

127. Pupils in Years 3 – 6 study a wide range of topics. They know how the landscape can influence the places in which settlements are formed, they understand the water cycle and the uses of water. Older pupils know about rivers, gorges and mountains from their field visits, especially to Colomendy in North Wales. Year 4 pupils have investigated problems in the local area and extended their knowledge to a world-wide area by collecting food stuffs from local shops and plotting their countries of origin. By Year 6, pupils can use atlases and other secondary sources, they understand 4-figure grid references and know about the effects of extreme weather conditions such as flooding. Pupils have looked at life in developing countries and can explain the need for regular supplies of clean water. In one lesson observed the vocabulary was not fully explained and this inhibited progress.

128. The support for less able pupils is good. Work is well matched to their attainment and teaching assistants do their work effectively. All pupils, regardless of background are included in all the activities.

129. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. When lessons are good, what pupils are to achieve is made clear to them. Activities provide a suitable level of challenge for the ability of the pupils. In a Year 6 class, for example, a lesson about the importance of water in Africa was pitched at different levels so that the more able pupils designed their own leaflet using books for research, average attaining pupils worked with a pre-printed leaflet with headings which needed elaborating, and the less able pupils worked with a much simpler leaflet and were helped by the teaching assistant. Planning and the use of appropriate resources was also a good feature as when a Year 2 teacher had brought in some old photographs which she had purchased on holiday. All the lessons had some good features but when the activities were not sufficiently challenging, vocabulary was not clearly defined or there was a lack of pace then learning was only satisfactory. Attitudes to the subject are good and pupils behave well.

130. Geography lessons develop pupils' numerical skills through the use of graphs and charts, scale and measuring temperature. 'Big books' on topics such as rivers and volcanoes helps with reading and listening skills. and the teachers encourage the development of pupils'

persuasive writing their use of reference books for research. However, computers are rarely used in geography lessons.

131. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors the pupils' books termly and the outcomes are fed back to the teachers. However, standards are much the same as at the last inspection. Although there is evidence of good field-work there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to progress to higher levels. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, need to be given the chance to suggest geographical questions and issues to investigate.

HISTORY

Strengths

- Effective subject co-ordination has led to improved standards
- Understanding of primary and secondary sources of evidence
- Effective use of drama and role-play
- Pupils cover a wide range of topics
- Good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- Sometimes work is not well enough matched to pupils' capabilities
- Too many low-level tasks such as 'cutting and sticking'
- Use of computers

132. Standards in history are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a satisfactory achievement for these pupils and an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below average and unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6.

133. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can locate some events on a timeline covering the 20th Century. For example, Year 1 pupils can identify from photographs items connected with holidays from the past. Year 2 pupils know that some things change over time such as modes of transport. They recall events in the lives of some famous people including Christopher Columbus, Florence Nightingale and the Wright brothers, empathising with the difficulties they faced. They are beginning to use correct historical vocabulary such as then, now, Victorian and bathing machines.

134. In Years 3 – 6, pupils study a wide range of topics including the Vikings, Tudors and the ancient civilisations of Greece and Egypt. They use drama to good effect in Year 4, particularly in the study of World War 2 in role-play activities. Year 6 pupils understand the meaning of city states and can explain the main points of difference between Athens and Sparta. In their field-work, pupils had looked for the remains of Victorian Liverpool and had found terraced housing, old pubs, street furniture and different building materials such, as cobble-stones. They are aware of changes over time and can give some reasons for those changes. Pupils use time-lines well to link topics together and know the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence.

135. The special educational needs of some pupils are generally well catered for by appropriate adjustment of activities and good use of additional support helpers which ensures they make good progress. In one lesson, however, not enough care was taken to match the activities to the levels of the pupils and as a result the tasks were not sufficiently challenging. Pupils of all range of backgrounds and abilities take a full part in all lessons and other activities.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons move at a fast pace, and pupils learn quickly because they enjoy interesting and challenging tasks. However, in some lessons, tasks are not always well matched to pupils' capability and pupils undertake low-level tasks such as 'cutting and sticking'. Teachers make good use of drama to bring the subject

alive and involve members of the local community in projects, such as the Second World War, and this helps to maintain pupils' interest. Year 1 pupils responded very well when a pupil modelled an old-fashioned bathing costume in a lesson about holidays in the past. Pupils show a healthy interest in the subject and behave well.

137. History contributes to the development of literacy by improving pupils' speaking and listening, and their writing of stories, accounts and newspaper articles. They develop their numerical skills through the chronology of events. History contributes well to pupils' cultural development, for example, in the study of the civilisation of the Aztecs. History has a good impact on the pupils' social and moral development. Pupils explore how different people overcame problems and made mistakes in the past, and the reasons for war in Iraq. The use of computers in history is inconsistent.

138. The leadership and management of the subject is good and, as a result, there has been a good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has addressed the issues for action and produced a new scheme of work. Resources are sufficient to meet most of the needs of the children. The co-ordinator has spent time interviewing the pupils to find out what they know and understand and has discovered that practical history lessons are most effective. The co-ordinator monitors the pupils' work regularly and is aware of where improvement is needed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Good teaching
- Pupils achieve well
- The subject curriculum is well planned
- Very good improvement since the previous inspection

Areas for improvement

- Development of the use of computers for control in Years 3 – 6
- The application of pupils' good IT skills in other subjects
- Monitoring of individual pupils' achievement

139. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were below average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils were underachieving because the teaching was not good enough. Some good lessons took place in the computer suite but it was rare that teachers used computers in their work in other subjects because they lacked the confidence to do so.

140. Since the previous inspection, the picture has changed very much for the better. Standards are much higher and pupils now achieve well. The computer suite is used systematically for the development of pupils' skills of IT capability. The teachers have received training in the teaching of ICT and are more confident to teach the pupils than they were. However, it still remains the case that these skills are not applied enough to help to raise standards and enhance pupils' learning in other subjects.

141. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are above average and this represents a good achievement. Year 1 pupils are making rapid progress and are reaching standards close to those expected of pupils a year older. Typically, a pupil can use a computer to achieve a specific objective, such as to produce a picture of a clown's face or a picture of a seaside scene with certain characteristics. Nearly all Year 1 pupils can do this well, showing mastery of the keyboard and good understanding of the operation of the software and its limitations, though some pupils with learning difficulties accomplish their tasks with help of the teaching assistants. They can load programmes and save their work. Year 2 pupils made rapid progress with the programming language LOGO when developing their understanding of how computers can be programmed to control the

movement of an electro-mechanical device.

142. Pupils also make good progress in Years 3 – 6. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average – nearly all pupils reach the National Curriculum level expected for their age – and this represents a good overall achievement for these pupils. Year 3 pupils achieved standards above average for their age in their ability to compose, send, receive and reply to e-mail. The pupils can write, enter, edit text effectively, using the cursor and mouse to manipulate text. In Year 6, pupils were using the Internet to find information about Ancient Greek civilisation, mythology and the pantheon, using a Boolean search and search engine. In doing this, the pupils showed the ability to find specified information efficiently, and to frame specific questions carefully and accurately to enable them to do so.

143. Pupils enjoy working with computers. They have good attitudes to work and know that they are making good progress. They behave well in lessons, co-operate with their teachers and collaborate effectively with other pupils.

144. In lessons taking place in the computer suite, the teaching is generally good and some lessons are very good. The work set is demanding and sets high expectations for all pupils and enables them to reach or exceed standards expected for their age. The teachers observed all showed a good grasp of the subject and the confidence to teach the pupils well. Pupils respond well to lessons; they comply quickly with instructions and answer questions well. They concentrate well on their work, work hard and make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. They have well developed and improving IT capability and this a very great improvement since the previous inspection. However, the teachers should capitalise more on the pupils' good skills to help raise standards in literacy and numeracy and other subjects. There are exceptions: IT skills are used well in Year 2 design and technology lessons, for example.

145. The subject is managed effectively. Teachers evaluate all of their lessons and samples of the work done by a given class are assessed regularly, and this is an improvement, but individual pupils are not assessed or set targets and, in most classes, pupils do not have folios of their work. The school is well equipped. The curriculum has been planned well for the development of IT skills in lessons in the computer suite. However, there is no consistent planning for the application of skills in other subjects. This is the main area for improvement.

Basic skills – information technology across the curriculum

146. Pupils have good skills which could help to enhance their learning in all subjects. The teachers do not lack confidence to apply these skills, as was reported at the time of the previous inspection. It is a great pity, therefore, that ICT is under-used in virtually all subjects.

MUSIC

Strengths

- The subject has improved well since the previous inspection
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those who are learning English
- Good provision for talented pupils
- Effective planning of lessons
- Good contribution to cultural development

Areas for improvement

- The weak subject knowledge of some teachers
- Opportunities for pupils to compose their own music

147. Pupils attain standards which are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. There were no judgements given in the previous inspection report because few lessons could be seen. Nevertheless, there have been improvements: pupils now experience regular weekly lessons and good planning based on a new scheme of work.

148. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. A good feature is the support for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language to enable them to be fully included in lessons, so they make the same progress as their classmates. One pupil identified as a talented singer is receiving additional tuition.

149. By the end of Year 2, regular practice ensures that pupils know a good range of songs by heart and can sing tunefully. Effective strategies for teaching note recognition and technical vocabulary, for example, the picture of a tortoise to denote a slower pace, help pupils to follow simple tunes. Recording and replaying of pupils' singing enables them to evaluate their work and try to improve.

150. By the end of Year 6, pupils improve their singing to a satisfactory level through regular practice and the opportunity to evaluate their own work. Many pupils can play tuned percussion instruments and recorders and this accompaniment adds to the quality of the singing performance as they perform in parts. Skills related to pupils composing music are less well developed.

151. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. One lesson in Year 3 was very good because it inspired pupils to use their imagination and raised their level of performance. They were asked to look at a 'scary' picture to help them to think about suitably scary noises as sound effects for the song of the *Horror Hotel*. A strong characteristic of teaching is the clear introductions and explanations, which help pupils to participate and develop their skills well. In a less successful lesson, insecure subject knowledge restricted the direction given to pupils to create music from around the world; consequently the quality of the music they produced lacked form and organisation.

152. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development as they listen to a range of music and participate in workshops with visitors to school, for example, The Didgeridoo Man and a group of African drummers. Music and recorder clubs outside lesson times enhance learning opportunities.

153. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall and the introduction of a new scheme of work has improved provision since the last inspection. Monitoring and assessment of pupils' work are satisfactory in helping to track pupils' progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths

- Standards in games
- Good teaching
- Good encouragement of talented pupils
- Very good provision for extra-curricular activities
- Good management of the subject

Areas for improvement

- Outdoor, adventurous activities

154. Standards in physical education are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. A strength of older pupils' work is the good standards they achieve in games, as shown in the success the school achieves in local competitions. Only games and gymnastics lessons could be seen during the inspection but other evidence and the subject curriculum indicate that all aspects of the subject are taught. Dance was noted as a weaker area in the last inspection, but a dance club and monitoring of lesson planning to ensure that dance is taught in each class have led to good improvement and this aspect is now satisfactory. There was little provision for extra-

curricular activities when the school was last inspected, but the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator and other members of staff who give freely of their time to run clubs has led to very good improvement in this aspect and provision is now very good.

155. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Good support and the use of demonstrations ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons and so pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also achieve well. Pupils who show particular talents are encouraged and achieve well. They receive advice about coaching, for example, through the school's links with physical education departments in the local high schools and with sports clubs.

156. By the end of Year 2, pupils show a good awareness of space and are developing a sense of balance as they hold a position for an increasing amount of time. Good teaching of skills has enabled pupils to develop appropriate techniques for jumping such as bending their knees on landing. Following appropriate warm up activities pupils can explain the effect of exercise on their body. Pupils develop their evaluative skills effectively as they observe each other and make suggestions for improvement.

157. By the end of Year 6, the teaching of skills and specific coaching points enable pupils to achieve good standards in games and to apply their skills well when playing sport. Almost all pupils can swim 10 metres by the time they leave school and the majority achieves or exceeds the recognised standard of 25 metres. Pupils participate in a good range of athletics and dance in lessons and clubs to help them reach the required standard overall.

158. Teaching is good overall through the school enabling pupils to develop their skills well. One lesson observed was judged to be very good because of the strong subject knowledge of the teacher. This enabled her to make specific coaching points throughout the lesson to improve the performance of groups and individuals, for example, the need to bend the knee before shooting in netball to improve aim and power. A stronger aspect of teaching throughout the school is the good teaching of skills through demonstrating movements, and modelling appropriate actions to improve pupils' techniques well. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson when the teacher demonstrated how to bounce and catch a ball leading pupils to hit the ball straight down so it would bounce directly back. In the lesson judged to be satisfactory rather than good, too much time was spent in organising partners to practise dribbling and this broke pupils' concentration, reducing the effectiveness of the explanation previously given.

159. The subject is managed well. A clear scheme of work now provides for continuity and progression through the school and includes all the required aspects of the subject. An area for development is to make provision for outdoor and adventurous activities to further enrich the curriculum. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and talks to pupils about what they have done, enabling her to have a good awareness of standards. In addition the senior management team monitors teaching and learning in lessons and this has led to an improvement in teaching since the last inspection. The school has a good awareness of those aspects of teachers' knowledge which would benefit from extra support and has made arrangements for training in dance and gymnastics in the new term. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and this has been effective in identifying pupils who have a particular talent in the subject. The school is rightly proud of the fact that two pupils have reached a sufficiently high standard to compete in the Liverpool athletics championships.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Strengths

- Good improvement in teaching, the curriculum and standards since the previous inspection

- Good subject leadership
- Effective encouragement of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development
- Development of speaking and listening skills

Areas for improvement

- Development of writing skills
- Too much time spent copying and colouring
- Management procedures need further development
- Pupils' use of computers for recording and developing their written work

160. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were below average and unsatisfactory. Improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum since that time have brought about a considerable improvement in standards. Teachers now allocate an appropriate amount of time for the subject and there is a good programme of work based on the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus. Planning is much improved and ensures that pupils develop their knowledge and skills satisfactorily. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are average in relation to those expected in the syllabus. Assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons make an effective contribution to religious knowledge and understanding.

161. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop an understanding of the significance of festivals and days that are special to different faiths, such as Christmas, Lent and the Jewish Passover. They learn about stories from the Bible and relate their learning to issues in their own lives. For example, after hearing about the little boy who shared his packed lunch with the 5,000 listening to Jesus, pupils were encourage to think how he would feel about this and how they feel when they share with others. They understand the idea of belonging to a family and why some people are special. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the topics they study and sound knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. They are encouraged to respect and care for each other and empathise with the less fortunate. Pupils build on this work satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. They extend their knowledge and understanding of other faiths, such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

162. By the end of Year 6 begin to understand the similarities between faiths, such as special places to worship and special books such as the Bible, Torah Scrolls and Qu'ran. They understand that faiths set out rules for living and that believers try to live their lives according to these rules. Pupils understand how these relate to life in their own family and school communities; for example, when they learn about the disciples of Jesus, they consider the qualities of friendship and the importance of relationships in their own lives. Pupils' work contributes well to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills; they listen with respect but some lack the confidence and range of vocabulary to express their ideas clearly. The wide range of faiths studied is a positive feature for those who have English as an additional language; their beliefs and customs are valued and they gain confidence in sharing their knowledge.

163. The quality of teaching is satisfactory; that observed during the inspection was all satisfactory and examination of pupils' work shows that it is sometimes good. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection, when it was mostly unsatisfactory. When teaching is good, teachers plan activities that support pupils in making links between religious belief and the everyday life of believers. They encourage pupils to share their experiences with sensitivity, which contributes to raising their self-esteem, and pupils record what they have learned in their own words. There are a few examples of the good use and development of literacy skills, for example, when pupils wrote a letter to thank God for their mothers. When teaching is only satisfactory the development of writing skills is a weakness. In these lessons, tasks are often unexciting and too much time is spent copying or colouring. Some teachers make satisfactory use of computers for research in lessons but not in recording work. In many classes there is no evidence of computers being used either for research or recording. New assessment procedures, linked to the new programme of work are not yet fully implemented and work is

usually at the same levels for all pupils. Where teachers offer opportunities for discussion and research there is ample challenge for higher attaining pupils and those who are particularly interested in faiths, to make appropriate progress but in other lessons, these pupils do not make sufficient progress. Work is matched appropriately to the needs of pupils with special educational needs so that they make satisfactory progress.

164. Good leadership has secured improvements but management procedures are at an early stage of implementation. The co-ordinator has a clear view of what is being taught but examination of pupils' work and learning in lessons is only just beginning to provide a clear picture of standards. Nevertheless, there is a good action plan for improving the subject further. There is a good range of resources, still being expanded for teaching a full range of major world faiths.