

INSPECTION REPORT

**KIRKDALE ST LAWRENCE C OF E PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 132176

Acting Headteacher: Mrs J Wightman

Reporting inspector: Mr O L Thomas
16041

Dates of inspection: 24 - 27 February 2003

Inspection number: 248919

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: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fonthill Road
Liverpool

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: The Reverend M Griffin

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16041	O L Thomas	Registered inspector	Art Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19344	D W Jones	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32283	D Goodchild	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education	
32073	J Barnes	Team inspector	English Geography English as an additional language	How high are standards?
12232	D Atkinson	Team inspector	History Educational inclusion Foundation Stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities
29504	S Herring	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kirkdale St Lawrence Church of England (CE) Primary School is larger than other primary schools, with 270 boys and girls on roll plus 26 part-time and 5 full-time children in the nursery. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average at 63 per cent. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is very high. The school's catchment area is one of the most socially deprived in the country. The number of pupils from families in minority ethnic groups is very low; most pupils are of white UK heritage. There is a small number of refugee children. The attainment on entry of many pupils is well below the national average. The school receives funding as part of the Excellence in Liverpool initiative, but is not part of the local Education Action Zone. The school has suffered from significant staffing, recruitment and retention difficulties since its opening in September 2000. Kirkdale St Lawrence CofE Primary School operates in very challenging circumstances.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In the short time it has been open, Kirkdale St Lawrence CofE Primary School has come to offer its pupils an overall sound standard of education with some notable strengths. A well-ordered, calm learning environment enables the pupils to feel safe and secure. The school is rightly proud of its improvements to pupils' attitudes, personal development and behaviour, which have set the positive climate for learning. A wide range of experiences, captures the pupils' interests, making them willing and eager learners. As one child said, 'We do smashing things here, it's really good'. In spite of the school's best efforts, pupils' learning is dogged by persistent, poor attendance and significant lateness.

The governors, acting headteacher and staff recognise that in spite of the hard work already undertaken there is still much to be done in key areas. Senior staff have worked tirelessly to safeguard pupils' education, through a prolonged period of significant instability in staffing, notably in the junior classes; this has had an adverse ripple effect on already low standards and pupils' progress. Pupils do not attain as expected by the time they leave the school at age 11 but their progress, although uneven, is in the main sound, given their very low starting base. Teaching in lessons has many good features but underlying weaknesses in the use of assessment and in some teachers' subject knowledge dim the picture. The headteacher, who set the school on its present well directed course, is currently on long-term absence and the school is very ably led and managed by the acting headteacher, supported well by the governing body and the commitment of the now, stable and willing staff. Given its circumstances, income and the progress made by pupils the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and governing body supported by the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff.
- The provision and teaching to meet the needs of pupils with learning and language difficulties.
- The very good management of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspires most pupils to want to learn, resulting in their very good attitudes.
- Promotes pupils' personal skills and relationship building.
- Provides very good care and welfare to pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards and progress, most notably in English and mathematics.
- The school action plan and the role and impact of subject coordinators in meeting agreed targets.
- Teachers' professional development to ensure consistency in knowledge and expectation for high achievement.
- Whole-school curriculum planning and the planning for use of basic skills across the other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was opened in 2000 following the closure and subsequent amalgamation of two neighbouring schools. A new school was built to accommodate all of the pupils but the circumstances for growth were challenging and somewhat fragile. Pupils had many gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding, and addressing these has been stifled by recruitment difficulties. The lack of continuity in staffing created problems in establishing a team ethos and having sufficient experienced staff to lead, manage and coordinate subjects.

The headteacher, (currently absent) set the scene for improvement in partnership with the deputy headteacher, (now acting headteacher), governors and the few stable staff. The school's priorities focused on setting up effective systems and procedures, setting firm guidance for behaviour, linking with parents and encouraging a positive climate for learning.

Recruitment and retention have improved. The school has soundly taken on the strategies for literacy and numeracy and made particular gains in its provision for pupils with learning difficulties. The acting headteacher, governors and staff show a strong commitment to drive standards up and support and engage in staff development to raise teaching to the highest levels.

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	n/a	E	E	C
mathematics	n/a	E*	E	C
science	n/a	E*	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

very low E*

The well below average grades compared with national figures reflect to some extent the pupils' very low attainment on entry and the disruption which had ensued up to the age of 11. The similar schools comparison better reflects the inspection findings, that achievement is sound and progress is being made albeit slowly in science. In the tests for seven year olds,

pupils' results were average when compared with similar schools in reading, well below in writing and above in mathematics.

School targets have not been met but were unrealistic and not based on accurate assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do.

Most children enter school in the nursery with very low levels of attainment for their age. However, through the nursery and reception classes children are benefiting from recent improvements in the organisation of the teaching and learning, and the appointment of new staff. They make steady progress in their mathematical and literacy development, but most are not yet on target to reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1.

Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science and the other subjects are very variable throughout the infants and juniors but overall below nationally expected levels by the ages of seven and 11. They show some signs of improvement in lessons, now that the school has a full teaching staff. Most pupils are making steady progress, but many are still working well below expected levels, and could be attaining higher standards. This means the school needs to consider how to increase the pace of the progress being made by pupils of all abilities.

Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their targets. They are less successful if adult support is not available. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English, make satisfactory progress but this could be better if specialist support was available to them.

Overall, there is considerable potential to accelerate pupils' learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school is now well placed to do this.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Parents support the view that pupils like school. Almost all pupils show enthusiasm and interest in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and has a positive effect on learning. Play is friendly, if a little boisterous at times. Some pupils are given effective individual support to safeguard their own and others' learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall with relationships being very strong. Pupils openly but courteously share their lively characters with visitors. They are building up confidence in their own abilities and learning steadily how their actions impact on others.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and for some pupils poor. Too many parents do not meet their responsibilities in ensuring their children attend regularly and on time. There is far too much unauthorised absence and a disregard for punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good with one in five lessons showing high quality features. In the remaining one third of lessons teaching was satisfactory. There is inconsistency in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy in some year groups, which hinders progress. There is a challenge for teachers to speed up progress. This is most evident in the juniors where attainment lags behind expectations, partly due to the gaps in pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the infants. It meets requirements and is soundly planned by individual staff to provide a wide range of experiences that captures the pupils' interests making them eager to learn more. Whole-school planning to safeguard continuity has not yet come together. Delivery is currently over focused on knowledge rather than skills and inconsistencies to safeguard equality of opportunity have not been ironed out. English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not yet planned for or used to the full in the other subjects. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Staff are consistent in their early evaluations of pupils' needs and progress. Progress and action are reviewed regularly and effective action taken.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Teaching support is sound but there are no specialist support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision. Spiritual development is well supported by the school's Christian ethos. Pupils' moral and social skills reflect the good role model of staff and the caring but firm behaviour management. A comprehensive range of visits and visitors supports pupils' understanding that they are growing up in a culturally diverse society. Racial harmony is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good pastoral support for pupils' welfare and emotional needs. Procedures to assess pupils' progress in English and mathematics are good but not always used effectively to address weaknesses in individuals' learning. Assessment in the foundation subjects is embryonic. Behaviour and attendance are very effectively monitored. Improving attendance is an ongoing challenge for the school.

The very few parents who responded to enquiry view the school's work positively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher is making very good headway so far in managing the school and giving equally effective leadership. Coordinators have been effective in supporting school improvement so far but the time is right for clearer definition of their roles with specific targets to show how they will impact on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They are interested and active in shaping the school's work and are well aware of how the school has progressed and of the challenges, which lie ahead. The governors soundly apply the principles of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The plan so far has been 'spot on' to establish the aims and ethos of the school. The next step of setting and achieving very specific targets to raise standards and smooth inconsistencies in teaching and learning is pivotal to further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Accommodation is good and used well. Resources are adequate for the current curriculum with scope to improve as the curriculum is enhanced. There are sufficient teachers and support staff but a review of staff expertise and its use is needed to maximise impact.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their children like school and are making progress. - Teaching is good. - The approachability of the school. - The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. - The school's approach to homework. - The information they receive. - The range of after school activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some parents find the school does not try to work closely with them. - Some feel the amount of homework is not enough.

These are the views of a very small number of parents. Less than eight per cent returned the questionnaire and only 15 attended the pre-school meeting.

Overall the inspection agrees with the positive points but there is too much inconsistency in pupils' progress and teaching shows some wide variation. There is no reason to suggest that the school does not make every effort to involve parents in their child(ren)'s education. The homework given is relevant to support pupils' daily work and adds to their progress when it is completed appropriately.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of attainment are very variable throughout the school, but showing some signs of improvement in lessons now that the school is firmly established in a new building and has a full teaching staff. Most pupils are making steady progress, although many older ones are still working well below nationally expected levels; they suffer from the need to make up longstanding gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. This means the school needs to consider how to increase the pace of the progress being made by pupils of all abilities.
2. Most children enter school in the nursery with low levels of attainment for their age. Tests set by the local education authority (LEA) in the first term of the reception class, confirm that most pupils are still well below the expected level of attainment. However, through the nursery and reception classes that make up the Foundation Stage, children are benefiting from recent improvements in the organisation of the teaching and learning, and the appointment of new staff. However, there remains variability in their achievements. In physical, creative, and personal development most children make good progress and are set to achieve similar standards to others of their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. They make steady progress in their mathematical, literacy development and knowledge of the world, but most are not yet on target to reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. The staff have recognised where improvements need to be made, and have modified both the provision and the teaching to ensure children not only enjoy a range of practical and imaginative experiences, but also build their knowledge of letters and numbers more systematically. They already enjoy books and have a basic level of spoken language, as well as listening reasonably well. Imaginative ways are now being used to encourage pupils to develop the early skills of reading, to form letters and to write more frequently.
3. The school's English results in the 2002 national tests for seven and 11 year olds are well below the national figures, especially in writing for the younger pupils where results are in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with schools in similar circumstances, the more capable seven year olds performed very well in reading and were about average in writing. The school did not meet its targets for the subject. Staff have recognised the need to improve pupils' standards, and individually most are working well to ensure that progress is made in lessons, but the school's approach to teaching the basic skills of speaking, reading and writing need reviewing as many pupils need to make much brisker progress if they are to reach suitably high standards. Having pupils at very different stages of learning in class lessons, does not serve this purpose well as, despite careful planning, staff are rarely able to teach in a way that suits all the pupils. A broader range of strategies is needed to help raise standards.
4. Standards in mathematics are improving although still well below national expectations for seven and 11 year olds. National test results for seven year olds show a small improvement overall since last year, with the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 exceeding the national figures. The school's results are above those in similar schools. Results for 11 year olds are well below those of schools nationally, but are about average compared with similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, is well above similar schools. Test

results are improving at a better rate than other schools nationally, so the gap is gradually narrowing. In lessons, progress in both infants and juniors is steady and leading to improvements particularly in the computation of number.

5. In science, national test results are below the national figures for both age groups, although scores for 11 year olds have improved significantly since last year and progress is accelerating. In information technology, progress is also brisk, with standards of attainment meeting expectations for seven year olds, although remaining below this for older pupils. In geography, standards are also improving in lessons due mainly to good teaching, but overall remain unsatisfactory as the development of pupils' skills is neglected. In art, standards are satisfactory with some very good quality pieces produced and teaching enables brisk progress; pupils are well taught by staff who have a good knowledge of the subject. In the other subjects, pupils achieve the standards expected for their age, and progress is steady, with encouraging developments in design and technology in the infants, where standards are higher than usually found. However, in the juniors there is limited evidence of the subject to judge standards and this suggests that progress does not continue at the same good rate.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards suitably high standards. They are less successful if adult support is not available.
7. Overall, there is considerable potential to raise teachers' expectations and accelerate pupils' learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school is now well placed to do this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' attitude to their school is very good, their behaviour and their personal development and relationships are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory. These findings reflect considerable credit on the school for its commitment to, and success in creating a safe, structured and pleasant learning environment, and in raising the self-esteem of the pupils.
9. The pupils enjoy coming to school and respond well to the stimulation and challenge provided in lessons and to expectations for behaviour and conduct. They are eager to please and take pride in success which, they like to share. A significant proportion does not enjoy the benefit of support from home and the quality of their learning reflects this. They are, however, capable of improving themselves and the school is helping them to progress.
10. In a science lesson for pupils in Year 2, they were studying humans and plants as organisms, comparing similarities and noting differences. The teaching showed a good understanding of their needs. The good use of resources gained the pupils' interest and the teachers' questioning helped their thinking and supported their confidence. The pupils responded well to the brisk pace of the lesson, and although they enjoyed the good humour of the teacher, they did not overstep the mark on expectations for behaviour. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 5 were recording data on tally charts and bar charts. Good planning and the pace of the lesson kept the children motivated. They made good progress, were well behaved and eager, and worked co-operatively during the lesson.

11. There are significant levels of unsatisfactory attendance and pupils are frequently late into class. This is affecting the progress of learning for the individual and for the whole class, as lessons are interrupted and resource is directed to extra support for those whose learning is restricted. The school has made considerable effort to encourage and support attendance including support mentors, the 'Breakfast Club' and through the use of rewards and sanctions. Liaison is maintained with the 'Attendance Welfare Officer'. Despite these provisions, a significant number of parents fail in their duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time, and support neither the school nor their children's education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching seen in English and mathematics. There were also examples of high quality in art, geography, information and communication technology and science. In two out three lessons, teaching was good with one in five lessons showing high quality features. In the remaining one third of lessons teaching was satisfactory. There is inconsistency in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy in some year groups, which hinders progress. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and the very few pupils whose mother tongue is not English are being given effective additional support. In the Foundation Stage teaching is satisfactory overall because at this early stage, there is considerable inconsistency in practice although staff work hard planning together. There are a number of examples of very good teaching across the Foundation Stage with high quality interaction, which results in the child or group making very tangible progress.
13. In the better lessons throughout the school, the key strengths are:
- the very effective and at times imaginative management of pupils' behaviour which enables learning to carry on without disruption;
 - pupils are challenged to think and this accelerates their learning;
 - the relationships and climate for learning set the tone for a positive work ethic;
 - systematic, well prepared, planned and resourced teaching is designed to make clear to pupils what they have to do;
 - good expectations for the active involvement and independence of pupils in their own learning;
 - skilled use of teaching assistants.
14. In the satisfactory lessons, the positive management and relationships prevail and the structure of the lessons is sound. However, inconsistencies are evident in how well the teaching influences effectively the pupils' learning and progress. For example,
- the level of expectations and pace are at times too low and slow;
 - teachers' planning does not always show what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn from the work they do in lessons;
 - independent tasks, at times, are not suitably matched so that pupils are effectively supported, challenged and motivated to make strong progress and complete the work given;
 - accurate assessments of how well pupils have progressed are not made including marking, which although detailed, is not sharply focused on what pupils have to do to improve;
 - teaching assistant support is used to variable effect and,
 - some teachers' knowledge lacks depth in literacy and numeracy;
15. Pupils' are overall acquiring knowledge and understanding soundly overall and in some cases well. The acquisition of skills is less strong and the use of skills in daily

work is sometimes missing. Pupils concentrate well and show a lively interest in lessons. Most teaching motivates pupils to learn. Variation in teaching quality across the parallel classes makes learning uneven. Scrutiny of work confirms that there is a real and present challenge for some teachers to speed up progress. This is most evident in the juniors where attainment lags behind expectations partly due to the gaps in pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding and also due to the aspects of teaching which require further consistency and greater impact.

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

16. The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are satisfactory. The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences that capture the pupils' interest and imagination, making them want to learn more. The school ensures that they have lots of opportunities to discuss and share their feelings about what they are learning. However, the organisation of the curriculum and the resulting opportunities to develop reading, writing, mathematical and ICT skills in the context of all subjects, are not yet fully in place. As yet, there is no established curriculum map, which would enable the school to plan systematically for this. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place.
17. The curriculum for the nursery and reception classes (the Foundation Stage) is satisfactory. It is changing radically but as yet is at an early stage of development. The initial changes show that it is following national guidelines and is developing a good balance across the recognised six areas of learning. The principles of learning through first hand experience, investigation and play are beginning to underpin the teaching and learning in the reception as well as in the nursery. Staff are starting to make realistic links between areas of learning so that children's understanding is widened and enriched in a way that is relevant to this age group. As they progress from the nursery to the reception classes and their social and emotional development becomes more secure, the emphasis on reading, writing and mathematical skills takes a higher priority. The intention is that these will be developed systematically through well designed games and imaginative play, thus making them highly relevant. There are some good examples of this already happening. Reception children planted seeds and then worked enthusiastically with the teacher writing a class story about growing a seed.
18. The infant curriculum is good. All subjects are explored in some depth, in part because the school blocks time for subjects. For example, a half term of art is followed by one of design and technology. This creates sufficient opportunity to develop the subject specific skills and use them to produce well finished paintings or 'made objects'. There is evidence of English and mathematical skills being developed effectively in other subjects. Mathematical skills, especially measuring, were utilised as pupils designed and made bags and purses. Wherever possible, the school incorporates visits, which help make the subjects highly relevant to pupils.
19. The curriculum for the juniors is satisfactory. This is planned using national guidelines, which provide a useful basic structure for content. Where the school has identified a clear development of subject skills as in art, the progress from year to year is very clear and the quality of work is good. In history and geography, the attention to subject skills is uneven and less developed. As a result, although pupils may well enjoy these subjects, the progress that they make and the quality of understanding are restricted. Sadly, the good work produced by the infants in design and technology is not followed through in the juniors.

20. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy hours and in Year 6, pupils are put into two sets, reflecting their competence and ability. The numeracy hour is working more effectively than that for literacy where writing is limited and often unfinished, especially in the junior classes. However, there is limited evidence of the transference of literacy and numeracy skills to other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities to write at length for different purposes in, say, science or develop reading skills to search for information in history or geography are missed or inconsistently developed. As a result, the improvement of these literacy skills is held back. It is equally true that ICT skills are underdeveloped in literacy and numeracy sessions and mathematical skills are not always fostered in other curriculum subjects.
21. The school's provision for special educational needs is good. The adults working in the school are consistent in their early and careful evaluation of pupils' needs and progress. The staff in the nursery are particularly instrumental in this. The school follows the Code of Practice effectively. Progress and action are reviewed regularly with the full involvement of parents. Individual education plans (IEPs) are carefully written and used effectively to support a pupil's learning in class. Much of the support provided is in the classroom base so no pupil is excluded from the supportive learning environment of the class and shares equally in the content of lessons. Pupils benefit from the sensitive help of teaching assistants and nursery nurses, especially in the literacy and numeracy lessons.
22. The school works hard to achieve equality of opportunity for all and has achieved some successes but still has aspects to address. The school is careful to try to ensure that boys and girls benefit equally from the curriculum. Interest and response to subjects appear similar. There are occasions when a small group of confident pupils dominates a discussion, leaving the remainder of the class as passive listeners. This is not always picked up. Staff in parallel classes, increasingly plan together so that the range of content, activities and group tasks is theoretically the same for all pupils of the same age. Currently there is still variability in the effectiveness of this, particularly in the way in which the plans are implemented in practice. As a result, the quality of learning in two parallel class may be markedly different. The school caters very sensitively for an increasing number of refugees and pupils who may well have had no or very little experience of school in their home country. There are also more pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school has sought help with resources for particular language groups. In the Foundation Stage especially, the organisation of time and type of activities enables adults to spend quality time focusing on English acquisition in a relevant and engaging way. As a result, progress is good and as these pupils move through the school they are often working in the higher attaining groups. Teachers plan different tasks or provide additional adult support for three attainment groups within a class. Whilst this has improved the quality of learning for the higher and lower groups, those in the middle group were observed to be faring less well. They did not always make as much progress as they could have.
23. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. Staff are aware of the large numbers of pupils interested and have restricted access to particular year groups which means that over time, more pupils can enjoy the enrichment of a wider range of activities. Juniors can take part in athletics, recorders, art, and knitting. The homework club for Years 5 and 6 is held every day. It is quite rare to find clubs that cater especially for infants but here we have an art club and games club for Year 2. The club notice board advertises, 'Coming soon for Key Stage 1: a singing club, a drama club and street dancing'. The breakfast club, catering for a social need is well

patronised in the mornings. The school makes a great effort to provide further enrichment through many well thought out visits and for the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, there is a residential experience.

24. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good. The attention to personal and social education is implicit in virtually everything that the school does. The emphasis from the nursery up and the consistency with which all adults work towards common goals, ensures that good progress is made. Formal provision and policies to support these strands of education are, in several instances, very recent. This is true of the sex education policy. The School Council is a new venture and the class representatives are just discovering what this entails. The learning mentors play an invaluable part with support and guidance for those who need time away from classrooms.
25. The school endeavours to draw the community into the school to contribute to pupils' learning. The vicar and church are closely involved. As the school hall is larger than the church, more parents can share in assemblies at school than when they are church based. In the nursery and infant classes, a time is set aside once a week for parents to come into class for the last half hour of the day to share books with their children. Teachers work hard to cajole as many as possible into participating, noting with delight when a parent joins in for the first time. A number of the teaching assistants began their connections with the school as parents. The area around the school is a rich source of stimulation for the study of local history and used to good effect. The school networks effectively with schools in the area. As a result, staff enjoy an increasingly wide range of professional support and a forum in which to share educational ideas. Collaboration with a local high school has been invaluable in allowing access to ICT equipment thus allowing Kirkdale St Lawrence to undertake an aspect of work that otherwise could not have been taught.
26. The provision made by the school for this aspect of the pupils' development is good for each of the elements, spiritual, moral, social and cultural. The school's commitment to an ethos based in Christian traditions and the establishment of pastoral relationships that support the pupils' security, welfare and academic progress, are the bedrock of its success in this provision.
27. The school has close relationships with the church and the pupils have the opportunity to attend seasonal celebrations held in church and enjoy the support of clergy who lead some school assemblies. The quality of worship seen gives a clear lead to their experience of awe and wonder through the singing of hymns and the choice of prayer and their delight in music is evident. While celebrating worship, pupils in Key Stage 2 were considering the importance of feeling good about themselves. When the acting headteacher played a song, the lyrics of which linked to the theme, the pupils broke into spontaneous singing. Collective worship complies with statutory requirements. During a music lesson for pupils in Year 6 they were considering the use of music to create moods. They were able to identify aspects of music that was relaxing or energetic. Many came up with responses for how the music made them feel. The school works hard to capture the imagination of the children and this is evident in the good quality artwork displayed about the school. Their sense of wonder at the world of insects is celebrated in their display of mini-beasts on the corridor.
28. Pupils' moral values are well encouraged by the consistency of expectation across the school and are evident in the openness of their relationships. They know and understand the need for behaviour rules and they value the security and safety found

in an environment without conflict. Learning and progress derive significant benefit from the good behaviour demonstrated by the children.

29. Social development is good. The pupils are eager to be social, with each other and with adults, and they show consideration in their relationships. Older pupils are encouraged to support those who are younger and they readily accept such responsibility often without any formal direction to do so. They are happy to co-operate during lessons and work hard to support one another in completing tasks. During play no pupils were seen isolated and the view of their sociability is reinforced watching them playing team games or sharing an activity. They enjoy a number of visits to educational venues, often requiring them to travel on public transport or walking, and they operate well as a group and receive approval for their good conduct.
30. Cultural development is good. The school makes good use of the city's own rich history to support the development of the pupils' sense of cultural value and they visit many venues for educational stimulation. This includes visiting local woodland sites for science and geography projects and the Liverpool museum of life or Norton Priory for history studies. Pupils in Year 1 have visited the Maritime Museum and nursery and reception pupils have spent a day on the Mersey ferry. Some classes have had a visiting artist, and during 'Book Week' an author came to talk to the children. Religious education is well used to extend their own cultural values and in addition to Christianity, they have studied Judaism and Islam and have an annual celebration of Diwali.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school makes very good provision for child protection and to ensure the welfare and safety of its pupils.
32. The quality of pastoral relationships is very good and gives significant support to the personal security of the children and the learning environment. Relationships are caring and trusting and the children enjoy coming to school. Although the school makes very good provision to monitor and improve attendance, levels are unsatisfactory and late attending is endemic. The school has responded to this by introducing a 'Breakfast Club' and this has contributed to some improvement in overall attendance. Procedures to improve behaviour and to monitor and eliminate oppressive conduct have been effective. In order to increase their independence and provide them with a framework for informed decisions about personal health and safety, the school has introduced a lesson programme for personal and health education. Insufficient support is provided for those pupils who are persistent absentees and whose progress and learning are restricted.
33. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics, though assessment procedures in other subjects are in the early stages of development. A range of standard tests and teachers' assessments in English and mathematics enables the school to track pupils' progress methodically over time. However, the information is not used systematically to identify specific areas of weakness and to plan work which matches the needs of individuals or groups of pupils to raise their rate of progress. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils in some classes are often given similar tasks, despite their previous level of understanding and so they do not progress quickly enough. There are some examples of good practice on which the school can build, for example in the well matched tasks in Year 5 mathematics lessons, which are having a good effect on the standards achieved. Assessment information is also being used to identify pupils at

the end of Year 5 to receive Booster lessons in English and mathematics, and in the setting arrangements, though it is too soon to judge the impact on standards.

34. The school conducts a thorough analysis of the results of national tests and is starting to use this information to address general areas of weakness, for example, investigative work in science, and shape and space in mathematics are receiving additional attention this year to raise pupils' confidence in these areas. The information on the varying performance of boys and girls is clearly identified, though the reasons for any differences are not yet investigated systematically to ensure all pupils achieve as well as possible.
35. A promising initiative is the setting of targets for English and mathematics and transmitting the information to parents. These are not yet fully effective as the targets are not routinely referred to in lessons or in marking, and in many cases they are too general to focus pupils' attention on where they need to improve.
36. Good assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are used well to plan work for groups and individuals to help them good progress through the Stepping Stones for learning and also to identify children with special educational needs at an early stage. Assessments at the beginning and end of reception class show that children make good progress from a low starting point. Good use is made of the local authority profile to support the early learning of individual children and this is a significant factor in children achieving well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The school makes good provision to involve the parents in the life of the school and in the children's education. Those parents who responded to pre-inspection enquiry expressed approval for its provision.
38. Only a small percentage of parents responded to pre-inspection enquiry and this is a measure of the difficult background against which the school has made significant achievement. A small number of parents is involved in the home/school/community group providing support for the school, and the family reading session for nursery and reception pupils is receiving support. Some parents support their children's learning through the home reading diaries and attend the family assemblies and family bingo sessions. Meetings are provided each term for parents to attend for information on their children's progress and annual reports of pupils' progress are also provided. Such is the low level of much parental interest that the pupils, through their School Council, are drawing up a questionnaire for parents to assess how they may become more involved in the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The school's approach to the inspection was a positive one in that the acting headteacher, staff and governors felt the time was right to have an objective external measure of the progress in the short time since they became a team. The only regret was that the headteacher, absent on ill health, could not be present to share her role in bringing the school together in challenging circumstances. Documentation was well prepared, and gave a good basis for exploring the most important issues at pre-inspection discussions with governors and management. Staff worked openly and professionally with the inspectors to ensure evidence was broad, fair and accurate. The educational direction given to the school by the acting headteacher is very good. The partnership she and the headteacher had established early on, was evident in her

knowledge of systems, procedures and the school's direction. She is steadily building a climate of confidence in the school, motivating staff and setting up a good team spirit. Governors have considerable confidence in her.

40. The priorities for improvement in the school have been 'spot on' in ensuring the importance of the links between good behaviour, attendance, pupils' self esteem, parental confidence and staff competence. The acting headteacher's commitment is instrumental to the warm, welcoming ethos, the team spirit and steadfast determination by all staff to improve. School aims are well in place. The school plan is well supported by effective financial planning. Grants are being used effectively to give direct non-teaching assistant support. Money from the Excellence in Cities grants is providing effective learning mentors to individuals.
41. The school has been in a 'catch up' situation and it has gone a long way to addressing some key weaknesses through careful monitoring, evaluation and action. However, standards are still not yet high enough and the school recognises there is much to be done. The time is right to take a more rational view of what needs to happen next and why, and to ensure improvement in the plan is firmly focused on raising standards in English and mathematics first and foremost to meet the particular needs of the pupils in this school. Governors now need to take a stronger role in asking pertinent questions about how far targets in the plan have been met.
42. Many coordinators have made a good impression on their areas of responsibility even though some are very new to their roles. However, as yet role definitions are not sufficiently clear and some staff are over burdened, for example, the English coordinator. A clearer plan of how coordinators will attack the weaknesses in their own areas, through monitoring and, how success will be specifically measured, is needed. This is no more true than in assessment where although the systems and procedures are in place, the use of assessment is inconsistent and there is a staff development need to improve staff knowledge of the how, what and why of assessment so that it better influences the link between teaching and pupils' progress.
43. The governors use their knowledge of the school community, the local area and their own expertise well to support the work of the school. Governors are well informed about the areas for celebration and the challenges the school faces. The minutes of governors' meeting are informative and show that they play an active role in shaping the direction of the school.
44. Whilst the school's income is above average it is carefully deployed to make the best of what is available, including grant funding. The principles of best value are soundly applied. Greater focus and checking on success as to where the school sits in relation to its performance in tests are needed. As yet not all governors actively monitor the day-to-day work of the school on a regular basis. In relation to the curriculum, the governors meet soundly their responsibilities. The Foundation Stage curriculum is adequately in place with some known scope for improvement.
45. Resources and accommodation are good and well used. Staffing is now stable. High turnover in permanent staffing has had a very negative impact on pupils' achievement along with extensive supply teaching to cover for absence and staff vacancies. Although the school's income is high given the extent of the challenges it faces in terms of its very demanding social circumstances, the well below average attainment of pupils' on entry and the good progress in many areas of its work, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The governors, headteacher and staff now need to:

Improve standards and progress, most notably in English and mathematics by ensuring that:

- assessment is used carefully to match work to pupils' needs and address areas of weakness so that all are effectively supported or challenged;
- attendance levels and the significant disruptive lateness are improved;
- pupils are more actively involved in checking, assessing and improving their own work.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraphs: 1-7, 11, 33-35.

Review and restructure the school action plan and the role of subject coordinators in meeting agreed targets to ensure that:

- the focus is firmly on raising standards;
- coordinators play a stronger role in devising subject action plans with measurable success criteria to raise standards;
- a clearer evaluation cycle to check for success by senior management staff;
- there is regular reporting to governors on progress.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraphs: 41 and 42

Improve teachers' professional development to ensure consistency in knowledge and expectation for high achievement by ensuring that:

- monitoring is more rigorous to establish staff training needs;
- subject coordinators are given a greater understanding of the how, what and why of monitoring to influence classroom practice;
- the skills and best practice already within the school are shared.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraphs: 7, 14, 15, 42, 74-76

Improve whole-school curriculum planning to ensure that:

- a whole-school curriculum map is devised to secure continuity of learning;
- that subject skills are given higher profile in planning;
- the importance of speaking and listening is recognised more strongly;
- the opportunities to develop reading, writing, mathematical and ICT skills are regularly incorporated into all planning.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraphs: 16, 19, 20 and 22,

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	34	24	0	0	0
Percentage	3	19	45	33	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	270
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		172

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	1	120

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	24	11	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	13	19
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	25	22	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (65)	63 (68)	80 (74)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	19	15
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	22	28	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (68)	80 (74)	69 (74)
	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	24	17	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	13	18
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	24	20	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (51)	49 (32)	63 (53)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	21
	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	25	25	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (38)	61 (43)	76 (56)
	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	261	0	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	22.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	359

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
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	£
Total income	826,400
Total expenditure	882,300
Expenditure per pupil	2,791.89
Balance brought forward from previous year	70,000
Balance carried forward to next year	14,100

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	304
Number of questionnaires returned	25

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	20	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	48	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	32	8	0	20
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	48	8	8	0
The teaching is good.	52	40	4	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	40	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	28	4	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	52	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	32	40	12	0	16
The school is well led and managed.	40	48	8	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	68	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	44	4	8	8

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

47. Most children attend nursery on a part-time basis and enter the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. Children come into the nursery with standards that are well below those expected for their age, especially in spoken language and social and emotional maturity. A number of places are reserved for full-time attendance for children deemed to have a range of special educational needs. Increasingly children with English as an additional language are entering the Foundation Stage.
48. By the time they start in Year 1, most pupils are still below the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. All but a very small minority reach the appropriate standards in personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development. Those children who speak English as an additional language make good progress in the nursery. Those who start in the reception class make satisfactory progress and will continue to need considerable support to enable them to participate fully in all activities.
49. The Foundation Stage is experiencing big changes. It is led by a new, enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. As a result, for the first time the nursery and reception staff are working closely together as a team. The organisation of the Foundation Stage curriculum is undergoing radical change to ensure that all areas of learning are explored through first hand experience, investigation and well structured play and that skills developed in one context are applied and developed in another. This has the immediate effect of widening and deepening every experience and making everything far more relevant to the age group.
50. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. At this early stage, there is considerable inconsistency in practice although staff work hard planning together. There are a number of examples of very good teaching across the Foundation Stage with high quality interaction between adults and children, which results in the child or group making very tangible progress. The reception children now have limited but daily access to outdoor play that is purposeful and stimulating. Resources are now viewed as belonging to an early years' unit. The learning environment has considerable potential and the coordinator has a clear vision of how this can be enhanced, particularly the outdoor area.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. By the end of reception, children have made good progress and nearly all are expected to achieve the expected Early Learning Goals. Excellent relationships are developed across the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, the teacher and nursery nurse work so well together that the role of leading a session is handed back and forth between them without any obvious consultation; this provides an excellent role model for the children. When they enter the nursery many children are unused to sitting, listening, responding to adults' requests or handling and sharing equipment appropriately. They may need help with managing a tantrum. Staff handle all of these aspects very well, avoid confrontations and by example, explanation and an extremely consistent response to behaviour, move the children forward. Thus, as children move from the nursery to the reception they start here with a good understanding of

routines and expectations. Children in both reception classes joined in the role-play in their 'garden centres' extremely well, sharing equipment and taking on clearly identifiable roles. The most effective adult intervention fostered appropriate language and judiciously suggested how to overcome a keen desire by two boys to be the one to push the wheelbarrow. Whilst in the nursery a number find it hard to stay involved with a story and listen intently, on entry to reception most are totally captivated and look at the illustrations intently, listening with great care. Concentration and perseverance develop well. One of the new ways of working, linking the nursery to reception is by providing an opportunity for children in all three classroom bases to select and respond to open-ended activities. This allows the perceptive adult to join in and through a dialogue, extend the thinking further, maybe by helping the child to talk about the size and shape of three-dimensional shapes as they build together. Children can choose when they want to help themselves to snacks, which fosters their independence. There are planned observations over the week for identified children. These are then added to the LEA profile. When this is filled in regularly, it is a very valuable tool for charting progress and influences the shaping of activities and further interventions. It encourages staff to be evaluative of the learning taking place. However, there is considerable inconsistency in the quality and frequency of interactions observed and, as a result, progress for all is not as good as it could be across the whole stage.

Communication, language and literacy

52. Progress in speaking and listening is far better than in reading and writing. There is a wide range in the quality of children's language skills when they enter the nursery. Some are reluctant to speak, others are quite enthusiastic but very difficult to understand and some have a significant problem in producing specific sounds. When some reception children were exploring letters and their associated sounds they had plenty of opportunity to listen and say the sound with a happy or angry intonation. They loved it but it also provided good quality practice as they tried to shape their mouth and place their tongue as the teacher directed.
53. Most children make use of a fairly basic vocabulary. There is far more use of talk in imaginative roleplay when a perceptive adult is involved. Younger children only occasionally use language to direct their own activities or give a commentary on what they are doing. When two girls in the nursery started to talk at the easel it led to them working together on a single surface and the outcome pleased them both. In the best sessions across the Foundation Stage, adults take enormous care to introduce and encourage children to use new words. The nursery teacher made skilful use of a morning observation and a short time in the afternoon to help an additional language speaker acquire English vocabulary using the picnic basket. The wide range of experiences and the good role models provided by adults are significant factors in ensuring that all make at least satisfactory progress from a very low starting point.
54. Although the reception children have experienced a modified literacy hour for a term, the level of understanding of writing and reading is extremely variable. The approach this term seeks to provide far more 'real' situations in which to see, recognise and use simple and common words in their play. Writing too is extended and developed in a more realistic way. Thus in one class, the children tell their teacher what and how to write words to make up the class book. They handle books appropriately and the best teaching helps them to use all the cues available to predict what is going to happen next. Only about half the children in the reception classes are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals relating to aspects of early reading and writing. When reading and writing captures their imagination, children are eager to learn and put a

great deal of effort into it. Their handwriting is developing appropriately. Next year, when the new approach is in place and more systematically developed across the whole stage the rate of progress will almost certainly be far greater.

Mathematical development

55. Most of the children enter the nursery with very little awareness of number, shape, pattern or the language related to mathematics. In the nursery, adults move in to support and extend children in their play, finding many opportunities to help them count, recognise numbers, make very simple number patterns or help them develop a simple game using the number mat, for example. The profile, which charts individual progress through the stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals, supports the evidence gained by observation in the nursery. All the children enjoy number rhymes and are keen to participate. Those in the middle band and some who have been in the nursery longest, recognise numbers one to five and are beginning to use correct names to describe two-dimensional shapes. The highest attainers independently count three or four objects accurately and select the correct numeral to represent the identified group. They are beginning to order these numerals correctly. The children make good progress from a low base.
56. In the reception, there is a big difference between those who are most secure in their number knowledge and about a fifth who seem to have absolutely no idea. In one class, higher attainers confidently made number books writing the numerals in order from one to ten, using stamps to print the correct number of pictures. They quickly produced attractive zigzag books. Whilst most can count when chanting in a group, quite a few can not manage this accurately or match the number to the items when working independently. However, one child, with no help, counted the number of books in the reading diary and proudly announced "18". Real understanding is revealed when they are asked to order or manipulate numbers. When the teaching is very clear and systematic and the resources are carefully assembled, progress is good. However, there is some inconsistency in the detail and thoroughness with which activities are prepared and introduced. In the best lessons, opportunities to count are well integrated into a range of activities and this enhances progress. Children enjoyed counting the words in the sentence the teacher wrote at their direction. Mathematical language is steadily developing but the meaning of *more* and *less* caused both children and teachers some heartache. Although the 'leaves with ladybirds' were attractive, children managed better when blobs of play dough were used and they could move them about and match one to one to see which line contained 'more or less'. It is unlikely that more than three quarters of the class will achieve most of the Early Learning Goals and a few will be far behind.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. Progress is satisfactory overall in this area and where intervention and focused teaching is well thought out, it is good. A significant minority will not achieve all the Early Learning Goals. The coordinator has rethought the choice of topics, selecting more fruitful ones for this age group. The current theme is 'growing', which provides ample opportunity to investigate how things grow, take on role in the class garden centre, plant bulbs and observe carefully what happens. All adults hope something will grow! Simple stories about a small boy called Titch are but one way in which the literacy element links with and is enhanced by the scientific. Early in the year, children in both the nursery and reception thought about themselves. The focus was not quite the same but matched to what would be expected of the two age groups. The topic helped children think about families, change and the passing of time. They are

exploring their own neighbourhood. The lengthy walk to the shop provided many opportunities to stop and look carefully at what there was to see. The photographic evidence from this visit provides a rich resource for the start of mapping skills. In the nursery, the computer fascinates some children. Mouse control and an understanding of how to select and change a program vary widely. One child, with no experience of a computer at home, is supremely confident, and if allowed would spend all his time on this. For his age he is unbelievably competent. Water and sand are used constantly. They provide a rich vein for investigation and discovery. Likewise, construction equipment is varied and used frequently, often providing a rich resource for mathematical and language development. The overall quality of the learning, and the degree to which children extend their understanding, relate closely to how well the various aspects have been planned and thought through.

Physical development

58. When they start nursery, there are some aspects that children have had little experience with. Progress is good and by the time they move on from reception they will have achieved the Early Learning Goals. They love outdoor play and demonstrate a good awareness of space. However excited they are, there are very few collisions and different types of activity coexist comfortably. Although the outside space is rather bleak, the range of resources is carefully selected to stimulate. Musical instruments, role-play equipment, opportunities to paint, draw and mark make, or kick a ball are available. When the grass was sufficiently dry to be walked on, the compost, pots, rake, spade and hoe all came into their own. Several children persevered at imagining themselves gardeners. They handled the tools well. Few boys could resist crawling through the tunnels. These tunnels caused some excitement when they rolled by themselves, blown by a strong wind. The outdoor play is structured so that different skills and experiences are the focus for particular days and staff are usually skilful at moving in and helping a child extend the experience or refine a skill. Reception children were encouraged to use movements related to gardening activities when they had time in the hall.
59. The constant range and demands of the equipment in the nursery ensure that all children develop good hand eye coordination. They make good progress using tools when they participate in cooking activities, serve themselves drinks at snack time and manipulate all sorts of construction kits. This provides a good foundation for further development during the reception year where particular attention focuses on pencil control.

Creative development

60. Children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. There is plenty of room in the nursery for exploring paint and finding out how to apply it. They investigate texture and the patterns to be made in a `table top of shaving lather`. Children are encouraged to explore. Adults suggest and act as role models but do not over direct, so there is variety in what the children produce. Some of these experiences culminated in an effective display for the Chinese New Year. Gradually children become more discriminating in their selection of colour and investigate how to mix colours. Painting is a planned part of the reception day. In one class, children very confidently worked with rollers and blue paint.
61. Music both relaxes and stimulates them. Working with a specialist teacher, they quickly learnt how to use their voices to warm up. They joined in new songs, which involved, without them realising it, an increased awareness of pulse. They have sweet

voices and are able to respond well because the music teacher pitches the songs to match the range of their young voices. Right from the beginning, they are encouraged to listen to the sounds they make and to try again to achieve a different effect.

62. The coordinator understands the great value of good roleplay. The two-floored construction in the nursery has a lot of potential. Currently, it is developing as a baby clinic. One small boy enthusiastically explained each item. "This is where you have to wait. You make an appointment here. The baby gets weighed here". Although space in the reception rooms is relatively tight, the furniture has been pared down to a minimum and space used imaginatively and flexibly. Thus roleplay can develop well, involving several children in quite specific roles. All three areas extend children's self-confidence and encourage them to respond imaginatively.

ENGLISH

63. Standards of attainment in English are improving slightly, especially in reading but remain low especially in writing. The improvements are mainly due to the regular teaching of the subject with the use of national guidelines to support teachers' planning of lessons. Variability in teaching and learning between and within classes slows overall progress. The school is new and is still establishing procedures and checking progress, but has now reached the point where there is enough information available to inform decisions on how to speedily improve standards in the subject.
64. The school's overall results for English in the 2002 national tests for seven year olds, were well below the national figures for reading and in the lowest five per cent nationally for writing. Compared with other schools in similar circumstances, the results in reading were about average, but writing was below average. The higher ability pupils were more successful. Although their test results were below the national figures, results in writing were about the same as results in similar schools for writing and much better than similar schools in reading. The main weakness was that by the end of Year 2 about one in three pupils had not reached the lowest Level 1 in writing, and the position was only slightly better for reading and spelling.
65. The 2002 national test scores for 11 year olds improved from the previous year, but remained well below those of other schools nationally and lower than those of similar schools. The scores were over ten per cent below the school's target. The school's targets, agreed with the local authority were unrealistic for the cohort given the many gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The school has a number of pupils with significant special educational needs and many of these pupils make steady progress. The high rate of pupils' absence is a significant factor that affects the standards attained by pupils across the ability range, and has a negative impact on the school's national test results. Overall, standards in lessons are slightly better than those achieved in the tests, but remain low for a large number of pupils. Progress is uneven and for too many pupils is too slow.
66. Standards in speaking are, for the majority of pupils, below the expectations for their age. Almost all pupils are willing to speak with adults, and effectively use a basic vocabulary to communicate during their day-to-day activities. Their informal conversations with friends and at play times are lively and to the point, with the use of popular language and clear enjoyment of the opportunity. Most pupils can express their ideas in more formal situations, but they rarely go beyond two or three sentences without encouragement, and their vocabulary and sentence structures are basic. A small minority of pupils is much more confident, and talk knowledgeably and at length

about their work and other areas which interest them. Pupils are obviously proud of their ability to greet people and to offer help politely.

67. The school recognises that pupils' basic competence in speaking needs extending to increase the range and use of vocabulary, but does not have a clear view on how this is to happen. This restricts the further development of pupils' speaking skills and many opportunities are lost. For example, although much time is given to class discussion, in some classes the teacher is the main speaker with little chance for pupils to contribute more than a phrase or word, usually in response to a question. Pupils infrequently pose their own questions, although there are good examples of this in some lessons. In lessons where technical terminology is used, such as science, geography and ICT, the expectation that pupils need to use this vocabulary in their speech is too rarely evident in lessons.
68. Pupils are good listeners when the subject is interesting and they are not expected to listen for prolonged periods. They can be attentive and keen to gain factual information. Their ability to retain and act upon instructions is reasonable. Unless they are highly motivated, usually by good visual aids such as pictures or artefacts, pupils' attention tends to wander before the end of the teacher's initial explanation in literacy lessons. Pupils occasionally work in small discussion groups and, where these are well organised, they listen carefully to each other and many can comment sensitively on the ideas that others suggest.
69. Standards of reading are low for both infants and juniors, but the infants are slightly closer to the expectations for their age group. Almost all pupils have a well-established love of stories and books, and many are capable of using the contents and index pages as well as knowing a little about authors and illustrators. A few have favourite authors, and a very small minority is well read and can comment on different types of books and give reasons for their preferences. Most pupils can describe their favourite characters and can pick out the humour of some stories. However, for many pupils these skills are based on listening to others reading stories, rather than their own reading. By the end of the juniors, more than one in three pupils are not achieving the expected levels for their age, with many pupils not making the gains they need to improve. Most have longstanding weaknesses in their skills and knowledge, which shows when they have difficulty reading unfamiliar words. They are not confident enough in their use of phonics to break the word into sounds or syllables quickly enough to read fluently. They hesitate and lose the thread of the story or the meaning of the text. Sometimes they guess at words, and when they are not accurate they gradually lose the sense of the story and their interest wanes.
70. Alongside these pupils with low attainment are others who are doing well. This variability is a challenge for class teachers, many of whom rely mainly on the literacy hour to teach reading. The regular listening to pupils read and the guided reading sessions, which are in addition to the main literacy lessons, provide useful opportunities to recognise pupils' specific strengths and weaknesses, but these are rarely recorded. Often the comments on reading records are too vague to enable teachers to plan a suitable programme for further development. Overall, this approach to teaching reading is too narrow as it does not allow for the needs of pupils who, in every class, are at very different stages of learning to read.
71. The school is in the process of establishing a more consistent approach to teaching reading and writing. Despite recent improvements such as buying a sample of books for a new reading scheme in the infants, many of the junior pupils have difficulties relating to their previous experiences. There is some information available from

assessment about these weaknesses, but this tends to be more general and does not identify the specific difficulties for individual pupils. The school needs to recognise that the older pupils in particular, need a consistent approach to improving their reading which may not be necessary in the future but is an urgent need at present.

72. A similar situation is evident in developing pupils' writing from the present low standards in both infants and juniors. Although writing has been a school focus for improvement, standards remain weak especially at the end of the juniors where less than half the pupils achieved the standards expected for their age group in the 2002 national tests, and there appears to be a similar situation in the current Year 6. As with reading, the variability in the approach to pupils' writing begins from the time they enter school in the nursery, and lacks a consistent approach to teaching, and rigour in checking pupils' progress. Nonetheless, in most year groups there are examples of good presentation with clear handwriting, carefully formed. A minority of pupils write confidently and by Year 2, a few can write lengthy stories, with good use of language which brings life to their descriptions and captures the interest of the reader. Basic punctuation is used, and most of these pupils use their knowledge of phonics to help them spell unfamiliar words. They are less accurate when words are not spelt as they sound. In the junior classes, there is only a small minority of pupils who write very well. For example, one Year 4 pupil in a well taught lesson, used his experience of reading, theatre and personal events to write an imaginative poem, developing a fantasy theme and skilfully using simple language to create imagery such as "kingfisher blue" and "sparkling silver stars". Some classes have the benefit of teachers who are able to teach writing very effectively and to create ample opportunities for pupils to use what they have been taught. However, the writing produced in many classes during the literacy hour is incomplete or very short, and there are too few other opportunities in other subjects to write well.
73. The quality of teaching in more than half of the lessons is good. In a small number of lessons, the teaching is very good. Individual lessons are planned carefully to ensure the teacher is clear about what is being taught and has resources well prepared. In the best lessons, the teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subject, together with a high level of active participation by the pupils, maintain a brisk pace to the lesson. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher captured the interest of pupils across the ability range, and focused their attention on the need to vary their expression when reading aloud. She encouraged the class to read with a hiss or boo sound when she pointed to different characters and parts of the story the class was reading. The pupils quickly understood what was needed, even when their reading was not confident enough to read the text at the same speed as the more capable pupils.
74. The shortcomings are mainly in the linking of the teaching to pupils' progress and the use of assessments to target improvements. For example, teachers' planning is often unclear about what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn from the work they do in lessons. This makes accurate assessment of what they have achieved and what they need to do next, very difficult. As a result, teachers' marking, although detailed, is rarely focused on how the pupils can improve. At times, almost half a lesson is spent explaining a specific skill or technique to pupils, and raising questions. Although this works well for some pupils, many find it too difficult or too easy because pupils in each class are at very different stages of learning. These less strong lessons rarely provide the chance for the sustained teaching of small groups of pupils who are at similar stage.
75. The school does not yet have a clear view on how to deal with teaching the very broad range of ability and high levels of underachievement in English, particularly in the

junior year groups. Year 6 pupils have been divided into two sets, based on their competence in English. This has the advantage of reducing the difference between the highest and lowest achievers in each set. However, the range is still very wide, and a broader range of teaching strategies has not yet been fully explored to maximise pupils' progress.

76. This is a comparatively new team of teachers who work well together and are aware of many of the issues related to the low standards. However, their knowledge and expertise in teaching English shows variation and the school has not yet fully developed the professional teamwork that ensures the best expertise is shared. The subject coordinator is over-burdened, having several significant curriculum responsibilities, as well as being acting deputy headteacher, and a key stage coordinator. Nonetheless, much work has been done in moving into the new school and establishing essential basic provision for staff. The school recognises that the subject needs further development and clear leadership in order to raise standards. An action plan for English is already incorporated in the school development plan and identifies several useful areas for improvement. However, the need to improve the amount of good teaching, alongside more rigorous checks on pupils' learning, has not been identified by the current monitoring procedures. A small number of parents provide positive support for their children's reading, by listening to them regularly, making comments in their reading diaries, and, for some younger pupils, joining in family reading sessions; this is valued by the school. Plans are in hand to encourage more parents to help their children improve their work.

MATHEMATICS

77. The results of the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 show that standards are well below average and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. However, the more stable staffing situation, good teaching and the current clear focus on mathematics are showing some signs of success in that pupils in Year 1 and Year 5 are now working much closer to the required level.
78. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but varies across the ability groups. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 indicates that higher attaining pupils are achieving well. This is because the planning of lessons according to the appropriate year grouping of the National Numeracy Strategy and appropriate additional activities is suitable for their needs. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school, including over half of the pupils in the current Year 6, and these pupils are well supported by adults in group activities and in the special educational needs class. This enables them to achieve well. The pupils for whom English is an additional language are also well supported in lessons, by adults and by other pupils, enabling them to overcome language difficulties and to work at the appropriate level for their mathematical understanding. The achievement for pupils who are just below average is less marked, because work is not sufficiently planned to overcome specific gaps in their learning to enable them to achieve the required level. The school is attempting to remedy this underachievement through the provision of some booster lessons in Year 6. However, more could be done to accelerate the progress of these pupils throughout the school by making more specific use of the wealth of assessment information available to tailor lessons more closely to their individual needs.
79. Good counting activities and the good use of simple resources such as number lines and 100 square, help pupils to gain an increasing confidence with basic number skills by the age of seven. Most pupils are developing a sound understanding of tens and

units and use cubes to work out simple multiplication and division sums. Pupils enjoy counting on in a pattern and higher attaining pupils can predict the next numbers in a sequence. Lower attaining pupils are learning the meaning of division by matching a sharing activity to the written sum. The heavy reliance on worksheets in Year 2 means that pupils' ability to set out their work is developing too slowly and this limits their rate of progress.

80. Pupils continue to develop their number skills in the juniors through regular practice in the introductory mental sessions in each lesson, and extend their knowledge as they are asked to explain how they have worked things out. The majority of pupils in Year 6 are developing a sound understanding of numbers up to 1,000, including decimals, and understand the effect of multiplying or dividing a number by ten. Higher attaining pupils have developed a good recall of multiplication tables to times ten, though they have not had the practice to gain confidence in working out long multiplication and division. Lower attaining pupils are making good progress in understanding fractions through a good range of practical work. Efforts are being made to improve pupils' lack of confidence in solving problems through regular practice and challenges, though a significant number still have difficulty in interpreting questions. Many pupils now in Year 5 are already confident with rounding numbers to the nearest 100 and in identifying multiples, and this is a good base for future work in Year 6.
81. The school has identified pupils' understanding of shape and space as an area of weakness from its analysis of test results. The increased focus being given to the topic is leading to an improved understanding in the infants, and pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of the properties of common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. There is also an improvement in the juniors, with most pupils in Year 6 having a sound knowledge of different quadrilaterals and investigate the properties of a variety of shapes. Pupils' understanding of angles is less well developed. Little work was seen on right angles in Year 2 or of accurate measuring and drawing of angles in Year 6. Pupils experience a good range of practical measuring tasks through the school. By the age of seven, pupils can measure in centimetres and kilograms as appropriate and can work out the length of television programmes. Pupils continue to develop their measuring skills in the juniors and pupils in Year 6 can calculate the area and perimeter of rectangles, with higher attaining pupils using the formula to work out the area of more complex shapes. There are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their measuring skills in other subjects such as science and design and technology.
82. An area for development is the opportunity for pupils in the infants to collect information and display it in graphical form. Pupils in Year 2 make simple lists of words with a given number of letters, but the information is not grouped together to enable pupils to make comparisons. Pupils in the juniors have good opportunities to develop graphical skills. A particular strength is the use of ICT to enhance learning in this area. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 5 use the computer to draw a line graph to show the amount of water in the bath as it is filled. In Year 6, pupils understand how to create a database and to display information using a spreadsheet, and can read information from a variety of bar charts, line graphs and pie charts. Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of probability are limited.
83. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching seen in Year 1, Year 5 and with the higher attaining set of pupils in Year 6. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged to think and this accelerates their learning. This was seen in Year 1 when pupils had to devise their own way to test whether the cubes or bean bags were heavier, using a balance. In these very effective lessons, work is well matched to

pupils' previous understanding, to build on their learning, for example when reintroducing the topic of area to more able Year 6 pupils, the teacher referred to the related unit in the previous term where some pupils had experienced difficulty, and planned specific practical activities to help their understanding, whilst others in the class proceeded at a faster pace. In most lessons, clear explanations and demonstrations help pupils' understanding, particularly of the basic numeracy skills. Good direct teaching and the use of simple resources help pupils with special educational needs to make good progress, for example a "weekly circle" was used effectively to help pupils appreciate the sequence of the days of the week and their repetition. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the effective use of the school code to manage pupils' behaviour very well. This was seen in Year 4 when the school code was used very effectively to minimise any potential disruption to learning caused by the over exuberance of a small minority of boys.

84. In the lessons judged to be satisfactory, the pace of the class sessions was too slow and so pupils had insufficient time to complete their independent tasks. In these lessons, the planned activities are not sufficiently well matched to the learning needs of individuals to maximise their learning. Classroom support workers make a good contribution to pupils' learning in group tasks but they are often underused in class activities, sometimes spending long periods when they are not directly involved with helping pupils' learning. This is an inefficient use of their valuable skills. A factor inhibiting the overall learning of some pupils is irregular attendance. For example, in one mathematics lesson observed in Year 1, a whole table group of pupils was absent from the lesson and so missed a good practical activity on weighing for which additional, adult support has been made available by the school. This reduces the effectiveness of the overall good teaching and is a factor in learning being satisfactory rather than good overall.
85. The subject is well managed by a very knowledgeable coordinator who is helping to raise the profile of the subject in order to improve standards. A thorough analysis of test results is being used effectively to pinpoint general areas of weakness and adjust the curriculum accordingly, for example more attention is being given to shape and space this year. The quality of teaching and learning has been monitored in lessons though the observations have not yet been used to identify and support less effective teachers who might benefit from observing and sharing the good classroom practice in school. Whilst teachers' planning is monitored, differences across year groups are not highlighted sufficiently to ensure parity in parallel classes. There are good assessment procedures in place and these are being used consistently to track pupils' progress across the school. However, the assessment information is not used uniformly to plan work to overcome identified gaps in pupils' learning and so raise standards.

SCIENCE

86. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 overall, are below national averages. This represents an improvement on the 2002 national tests when standards were well below national averages. Pupils make sound progress within lessons and demonstrate attainment in line with expectations through their spoken response. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
87. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a sound knowledge of the components of science. In Year 1 they name and sort different materials such as plastic, metal, wood and glass. They carry out simple investigations as in a Year 1 lesson in which the pupils named or drew pictures of items that matched named characteristics. Higher and average

attaining pupils identify different light sources and know that a shiny object will require light source if it is to show. They can name some natural light sources and artificial light sources. They classify animals that walk, fly or swim. Year 2 pupils investigate health and growth and the relationship between good health and sleep, exercise and diet. Higher attaining pupils give explanations for observed phenomena, for example in making an electric circuit one pupil wrote that the bulb did not light because the wire was not 'fixed'. In work on materials, there is evidence that pupils are beginning to predict. One pupil recorded, 'I predict the water will go hard and frozen,' when writing about what would happen if water was placed in a freezer. In a Year 2 lesson they identified and named parts of a plant and compared a potted plant with a pupil identifying differences. They recorded results in prepared tables and diagrams though poor writing skills limited their written record.

88. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of physical processes, materials and their properties, life processes and living things. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have covered a range of themes. They have investigated the relationship between food, nutrition and health; how the human skeleton operates, work on friction and characteristics of materials testing them for warmth and coolness. A Year 5 class investigated the relative effectiveness of air and solids in transmitting sound. They write about their work following given headings that guide them through the scientific method. They comment on observed phenomena but are less confident in explaining why things happen in scientific terms. Work on micro-organisms in Year 6 books, show an understanding of how mould is formed and the relationship between moisture and temperature. Above average Year 6 pupils related the time it took for a spinner to descend to the amount of weight on its tail. They showed some understanding of the need to control variables in order to have a reliable test. Average and lower attaining pupils are less confident in this area. Pupils' work shows clear evidence of opportunity to take part in scientific enquiry. However, above average pupils have insufficient opportunity to make informed choices of apparatus, materials and to design their own experiments. Pupils' ability to describe their observations in scientific terms is not well developed and is further limited by poor language skills. Good use of information technology is evident in the recording of information and its representation in graphs. However, its use is as yet underdeveloped.
89. Teaching is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, with examples of good practice. In Years 3 to 6 examples of good teaching were observed. Where teaching is good it is exemplified by secure subject knowledge, good explanations and the use of precise scientific vocabulary during direct teaching. In a good Year 2 lesson, this gave the pupils the confidence to offer contributions in the construction of a table identifying the differences between animals and plants. Clear expectations of behaviour and good use of resources ensure that pupils pay attention and listen carefully. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning and they make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of plants and animals. A particular strength of good teaching is in well-led discussions and questioning at the beginning of a lesson. This consolidates previous knowledge and sets the level of information in order to build on this as the lesson progresses. This was seen to good effect in a mixed Year 3, 4, and 5 class exploring the difference between hot and cold. Discussion was generated on hot and cold climates using a bag of clothes as a stimulus. Questioning led the pupils to discover that lightweight clothing would let in cold air and cool the body down. Within Years 5 and 6 good and very good teaching is exemplified in the support provided for below average pupils through the use of classroom assistants and the provision of a framework within which to write. In a Year 5 lesson on sound, clear headings were provided against which pupils wrote up the experiment. Pupils knew what was expected and made good progress. The use of a standard format in writing up experiments is not consistent within Years 3 to 6 to support those with

weaker writing skills. In a Year 6 lesson on change in materials, good use was made of a classroom assistant. Through careful discussion she guided a group of below average pupils through the enquiry process in an experiment on solutions. In good Year 6 lessons, teachers are well prepared and the management of resources and pupil groups coupled with clear expectations of behaviour ensure pupils made sound progress.

90. The subject coordinator has been in post since September 2002. She has a good sense of the areas for development in science. Since her appointment the school has correctly identified the development of pupils' scientific enquiry skills as a priority. Evidence indicates that teachers now have a sound approach to investigative and experimental science. The school has ensured that this area of science is well resourced. She has monitored planning and considers this is now consistent across the school with activities matched to objectives. Pupils' work and teaching has begun to be monitored to inform the start of the year. A programme for monitoring is outlined in the school plan. The subject coordinator is aware of the need to develop assessment so that it more clearly informs planning and sets targets for future learning. With assessment in place and the extension of good practice in teaching, the school will be well placed to improve standards in science.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Only one lesson was observed but this, along with scrutiny of work, enables the judgement to be made that in the quality of finished work which show a broad range of techniques and use of media, pupils attain broadly in line with national expectations; they are less successful at using the language of the subject and in describing their responses and feelings. Pupils are making steady and at times good progress in the skills and techniques needed to represent their ideas and what they see.
92. Given the quality of work displayed around the school and the detail of planning, teaching must be satisfactory at least. In the lesson in Year 5, teaching was excellent. The lesson was very well planned and prepared. The teacher used illustrations very effectively to lay down the stepping stones of knowledge about the work of William Morris. Pupils' attention was grasped and they listened very attentively and reacted to questions posed by the teacher about their observations. There was very good direct teaching of sketching techniques and the intervention to aid pupils' progress sustained and improved their learning and competency. Pupils became better at using line, tone and colour as they improved their work. Behaviour management was excellent. The teacher ensured pupils of all abilities understood the task and gave additional support where some struggled for success.
93. Effective use is made of the school's environment and accommodation and resources are adequate for the delivery of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. By the age of seven, pupils are attaining standards which are above average for their age. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards for 11 year olds, though discussion with pupils and looking at the limited amount of work available, suggests that the good rate of learning does not continue at the same pace through the school.
95. Achievement is good in the infants as they are benefiting from a good range of well-planned and interesting activities, which motivate them to learn well. They experience

a wide range of construction tasks using construction kits and also discarded materials, during which they learn how to join different materials using glue or sticky tape. A strong feature is the opportunities pupils have to examine and disassemble commercial products before making their own. For example, pupils in Year 2 examine a good range of photograph frames and dismantle a wooden one to see how it all fits together before designing and making their own good quality wooden frames. Similarly they look closely at various bags, looking particularly closely at the fasteners, "to see how it worked!" before deciding on their own designs. Designs are well labelled, for example one bag design indicated a pocket for a mobile phone. After finishing their object, pupils consider carefully before deciding how they would change their ideas.

96. Insufficient work was available to enable a judgement to be made on overall standards for 11 year olds, though work on display in other junior classes showed pupils to be aware of different design features. Pupils in Year 3 learn how treat paper to produce different results, for example pupils rolled paper to create chimneys on their Tudor houses, and also looked at different commercially produced masks to investigate crucial factors in their design, including the suitability of the materials and decorations. Pupils in Year 4 extend the range of materials used, as they moulded malleable materials to fashion masks that fitted the shape of their face precisely. Discussion with older pupils shows they enjoy designing and making things but there were no specific examples of their work in school.
97. Teaching is good overall in the infants and the pupils learn well. Topics are interesting and the teachers' high expectations contribute well to the good quality of the finished product achieved by pupils. Teaching is well supported by the good quality of the curriculum and lessons are planned well to include all elements of the design process. Teachers make good connections with other subjects to enhance pupils' learning, for example pupils in Year 2 drew on their study of materials in science to discuss the suitability of ceramics, card and wood for their photograph frames, and also the appropriate use of materials for gardening or oven gloves. Good use is made of correct language such as "Product analysis," and of questioning, such as "Where would it be displayed?" This encourages pupils to think and also develops speaking and listening skills effectively. The good choice of topics motivates pupils well and develops a good attitude to learning. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching in the juniors.
98. The subject is managed satisfactorily overall. The focus so far has been on developing a good curriculum in the infants. This has been done successfully and creates a good base for development for older classes. A portfolio of pupils' work is being developed to track progress in the subject and to aid assessment of pupils' work. A good evaluation frame has been developed to help older pupils to evaluate the products they produce from this term, and so raise standards.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Geography is taught half termly in rotation with history. No lessons were observed in the infants, so a sample of pupils' books, school documentation and discussions was used as a basis for judgements.
100. Standards of attainment for pupils aged seven and 11 are below those expected for their age group. Although pupils regularly have a range of interesting experiences, which is based on the national guidelines for geography, there is not enough attention given to using these experiences to improve pupils' skills in the subject.

101. In the infants, pupils have made reasonable progress in studying the local area, and have observed various aspects such as housing and industry. Many are knowledgeable for their age about pollution and recycling. They are beginning to gain a sense of distance in relation to their own locality, for example, a Year 1 class designed and addressed a postcard as a means of communicating over distance. Year 2 pupils considered transport needs and are beginning to distinguish between human features and physical features in a locality. However, most of this work has been undertaken orally with too few opportunities to consolidate their understanding through recording information on plans or maps, or expressing their own views in writing. Visits to sites of interest, including a nature reserve, are part of the school's curriculum and photographs suggest pupils enjoy these experiences. However, there was little evidence available of fieldwork skills, such as note taking by the more capable pupils.
102. When pupils reach the juniors they often make steady or better progress in lessons, and this is improving their attainment from a low base. Their understanding of geographical terminology remains limited until the older year groups, but their discussion and research skills are encouraged by regular opportunities to work in groups. For example, a Year 3 class used photographs to identify the changes in a locality and developed this through researching their own areas. An older class was at the beginning of a topic to study a village in India and compare their findings with others areas. They began well by sharing ideas on what they would expect to find in the chosen village. They have good ideas, but language and terminology remains an issue. One pupil, eager to share an idea, struggled for simple words and eventually called a plant "that flower thing". Teacher responded well by constantly repeating geographical terminology within the natural flow of her teaching, and most pupils eventually began to use words such as climate and landscape.
103. Standards are better by Year 6 but remain below expectations for the age group. Again pupils are making at least steady and sometimes good progress in lessons, as their enthusiasm for the subject leads them to want to know more. Their overall progress through the junior year groups is slow because most pupils start from limited knowledge and skills and there is a good deal of catching up to do. However, when expectations from teachers are high, they respond well, such as those in a Year 6 class during a study of the water cycle when pupils were expected to read simple statistical data in graphical form.
104. The quality of teaching in the juniors is satisfactory overall with examples of good and very good lessons. There is considerable knowledge and expertise available among the staff. Lessons are well prepared with good resources and suitable opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. The school also has a new subject leader in place and is now well placed to plan work in line with national expectations for each year group. The school needs to decide how this accelerated learning is going to take place, using the assets of good teaching and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Some good practice is already in place for cross-curricular work, such as in a Year 5 class where pupils were studying water using an investigative approach and undertaking their written work as part of their factual writing in English.

HISTORY

105. Pupils' attainment in history at seven and 11 is similar to that expected for their age. Many pupils delight in talking about their exploration of historical periods. The history

displays around the school and in classroom, celebrating the achievements of class work are vibrant and informative. These often included opportunities for pupils to browse through related books, though none were seen to do so. This helps inform those pupils who are poor attenders and miss a significant part of a unit of work, but the gaps in their own work books are revealing. A lot of the work is approached through discussion, which enables all abilities to share ideas and elaborate on them according to their attainment.

106. Pupils experience a range of topics that include toys, Victorian life, life during World War 2, the Tudors, the ancient Greeks, ancient Egypt and the local history of Kirkdale. Only a very limited number of lessons was seen, but from these there is a clear indication that across the school not enough is done to ensure that pupils acquire the skills of historical enquiry. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of the importance of chronology. Year 2 pupils had little experience of developing and using simple time lines but were quick to grasp the idea though they had insufficient subject knowledge to work on this independently. The excellent challenge presented to Year 5 pupils to read and interpret maps from various dates, and extrapolate relevant information from other sources about the development of Kirkdale, highlighted the fact that this was not an automatic way of working. The school attempts to compensate for this lack of a systematic skill development by making very good use of an archaeologist from the museum. As a result, older pupils are able to examine and in some cases, handle relevant artefacts and are shown how to investigate and draw inferences. The school is very successful in finding high quality visitors who relate well to the pupils. In the case of World War 2, they share with classes their own first hand experiences. Keeping your hands warm in the shelter by putting them round a flowerpot containing a lighted candle clearly fascinated many. Year 3 pupils gained an enormous amount from their collection of artefacts, such as identity cards and gas-masks contributed by their families. They were fascinated by newspapers of the time and had explored these avidly.
107. The quality of written work varies considerably. Higher attainers in Year 2 made a good attempt at writing very short, simple biographies of famous people in their own words. "Grace lived in a lighthouse in the water and went with her Dad to save the people who got shipwrecked". Although there is some independent writing in each year group, the potential for undertaking lengthy extended writing for different purposes and audiences is missed. On the other hand art and music are used well to bring the subject to life.
108. The quality of the teaching seen was satisfactory overall with some good teaching. In the best, the teachers plan and present the content in a fascinating way, drawing as much information from the pupils as possible. Good lessons use historical skills and a thoughtful and evaluative approach to evidence. They demand an increasing awareness of time and an ability to sequence events. Where lessons are only satisfactory, teacher expectations are not sufficiently high. The adult does too much of the thinking and the pupils become a passive audience. There is a notable absence of a systematic attention to historical skills and processes.
109. This suggests that across the whole school, teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are not secure, that the underlying principles of the national guidelines adopted are not adequately understood. No assessment procedures are in place to monitor and record the progress made in these skills. The quality of provision is uneven but the subject manager is aware of what to tackle to move this popular subject forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. By the end of Year 2 pupils' standards are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6 pupils are working in line with expectations in some aspects. However, their skills and knowledge of using information technology to sense physical data and to control devices are less well developed. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
111. An examination of pupils' work shows that Year 2 pupils are able to access programs such as clipart. Using the mouse, they access the tool bar employing the line and fill tool to create images. Some also drag shapes in composing pictures in art. They begin to explore how ICT is used to control devices in everyday life, as in a Year 2 lesson. Through discussion many understood the links between programming a washing machine and a roaming device. They then programmed and directed the movements of a vehicle within the '2-go' programme. Year 3 pupils use the stamp tool to create patterns. They use simulations to explore similarities and differences as seen in a Year 3 lesson. Good links with numeracy were seen as they use their knowledge of coordinates to locate clues on a map. Pupils learn how to access information from different websites on the Internet as when they carried out research on the Greeks or in accessing data on current weather in South America. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 use the computer to create databases and construct graphs. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils constructed a database and developed an understanding of its purpose. Year 6 pupils learn how to enter information on spreadsheets and combined with formulae calculate perimeters and areas of rectangles. Pupils are confident in their use of computers and are able to log on to access programs, save information and log off.
112. Overall the quality of teaching in the computer suite is good. In satisfactory lessons, good management of pupils and good relationships ensure a supportive learning ethos. Good and very good lessons are exemplified by: very good teacher subject knowledge, high expectations, good demonstrations and explanations and well sequenced lessons developing pupils' skills and knowledge. In a good Year 3 lesson the teacher used the whiteboard in a clear demonstration of logging on. A very good Year 5 lesson resulted from a carefully thought out teaching sequence which developed pupils' skills and understanding of databases. In an excellent Year 6 lesson detailed planning, very good demonstration using an interactive whiteboard and the emphasising of key teaching points ensured that the pupils made very good progress. They worked independently, completed their spreadsheets and used the information to commence work on further challenging activities.
113. The school has a computer suite with 14 computers. It also contains an interactive whiteboard. Systems and a protocol are in place to safeguard pupils using the Internet. Whilst the suite is timetabled for use by all classes and is well used for the teaching of basic skills its use is less well developed in teaching other areas of the curriculum. There are occasions when it remains unoccupied.
114. The school has a knowledgeable subject coordinator in place. She has a good relationship with the Governing Body which she feels has contributed to the development of the computer suite. She has a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, recognising the impact the suite has had in developing basic skills. Resources to support teaching in other subjects are being developed and she identifies the need to further build up resources to develop the monitoring and control strands of ICT. However, some aspects of these strands will be addressed when the Year 6 pupils visit a local secondary school. Monitoring of the subject at the

moment consists of scrutiny of planning, observation of two lessons and the development of a portfolio of pupils' work. Assessment procedures are not yet fully in place.

MUSIC

115. Attainment in music is broadly in line with expectations for seven and 11 year olds. Pupils respond appropriately in their singing lessons, show sensitivity in listening to music and have opportunity to play instruments. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with some good examples.
116. During hymn practice Year 1 pupils listened carefully as phrases from a hymn were read by the teacher. They were able to match the phrase in intonation and rhythm. Miming to the words supported pupils' recall. As the pupils became familiar with the words improvement was evident as they were able to keep time with the piano. However, progress for Year 2 might have been greater had the words been displayed. When singing a more familiar hymn pupils sang with enthusiasm. They responded to the teacher's instructions to sit up straight and to sing out, but not to shout out. They sang in tune with appropriate timing and tone.
117. In hymn practice for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 some good teaching was observed though the response from the pupils was variable. A brisk start was made to the session by singing a well-known hymn so that pupils were immediately taking part. Enthusiasm displayed by the teacher and communicated to the pupils meant that the large majority joined in and sang with control, in tune and with correct phrasing. However, throughout the session, the relative position of the pianist to the Year 6 group diminished the impact of her teaching and the pupils were not sufficiently challenged. Some effective strategies were used in teaching a new hymn. Lines from the hymn were spoken with emphasis on timing and rhythm and repeated by the pupils. The teacher clapped as the phrases were spoken to ensure appropriate timing. During the lesson, pupils rehearsed each verse though use might have been made of performance by year groups to focus on good practice.
118. Examination of work and observation of a Year 6 lesson indicate they are developing sensitivity and a feeling for music. In a good Year 6 lesson pupils listened to music from Mendelssohn's, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Pupils explored links between the pace of music and mood. Good links were made to literature by reference to Shakespeare's play. Further musical extracts allowed the pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of rhythm, beat, and musical texture and how they create different personal moods. Musical terms such as 'piano' and 'forte' are used in the lesson which adds to the pupils' musical vocabulary. A good link was made with a previous lesson in which pupils composed rhythms for un-tuned instruments. This deepened the pupils' understanding of musical ideas and structures. The pace of the lesson, varied activities and good behaviour management strategies ensured that pupils remained on task and made good progress.
119. Visiting teachers provide opportunity for individual pupils to play guitar, trumpet and recorders. Pupils are encouraged to perform for school assemblies. Timetabling a visiting teacher one afternoon a week to teach year groups on a rotor basis provides wider access to musical expertise. The subject coordinator teaches all Year 2 pupils the recorder. Pupils listen to visiting musicians, have participated in instrument workshops and sang carols in the community. An understanding of the place of music in our cultural heritage and the use of information technology is less widely developed.
120. The subject coordinator monitors planning and a policy and scheme of work are in place. Assessment is built into the scheme of work but the coordinator is unclear as to how this is operating in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is not yet in place for Years 3,

4, 5 and 6. The subject coordinator recognises the need to extend the pupils' experience of performances and concerts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. It was not possible to see all aspects of physical education during the inspection. Nor was it possible to make a judgement on attainment over the full range of the curriculum. However, based on lessons seen and discussion with Year 6 pupils, attainment is in line with that expected at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6.
122. In a Year 2 lesson on gymnastics, pupils demonstrate an awareness of the need to use space to work safely. They jog in space and used 'skiing' movements to warm up. When questioned, pupils understood the purpose of the warm up activity. They explore different ways of travelling running, hopping and jumping linking these movements in short sequences. Pupils demonstrate movements and contrast changes in speed. In a mixed Years 3, 4 and 5 lesson, pupils show appropriate control and good coordination in changing position and body attitude as they explore movement. They make safe use of space and they cooperate in pairs and in small groups. In a Year 4 dance lesson pupils respond in an imaginative way to music. They change rhythm and speed as they explore and develop individual movements based on working in a factory. In response to discussion and evaluation of demonstrations, they modify their movements to improve performance. Individual movements are linked into a dance sequence. All pupils take part, are enthusiastic, enjoy the lesson and make good progress.
123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good practice. Teachers plan appropriately and have an understanding of the basic skills to be taught in a lesson. They ensure that safety issues are addressed during the lesson. Good behaviour management strategies and relationships ensure that pupils are well behaved and responsive during the lesson. In a good Year 4 dance lesson, pupils were caught up by the enthusiasm of the teacher and the effective use of music. Demonstration by teachers and pupils is used as exemplars of good practice. This was well illustrated by Year 4 pupils who modified their movements following demonstration by individuals and a well-led discussion with the teacher.
124. Scrutiny of planning, discussion with Year 6 pupils and the temporary coordinator indicate that an appropriate curriculum is in place with all aspects covered. Dance and after school clubs are identified as areas for development in the school development plan. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of physical education in terms of keeping fit and of co-operation and working together in teams. They participate in team games such as football and cricket and also in athletics. They appreciate the games played with the learning mentors at lunchtime and the extra-curricular activities of dance and athletics. All pupils have opportunity to learn to swim and to experience outdoor activities such as orienteering on a residential visit.