

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S VA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kirkdale, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 132796

Headteacher: Mrs Eileen McBirnie

Reporting inspector: Mr Frank Ravey
11371

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 July 2003

Inspection number: 249005

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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sessions Road
Kirkdale
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Postcode: L4 1SR

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Robert Gittins

Date of previous inspection: None

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11371	Frank Ravey	Registered inspector	English Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? Schools results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13450	Jenny Madden	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30243	Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs	
13110	Pat King	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Education inclusion	
18824	John Heap	Team inspector	Foundation stage Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

22482	Bruce Potter	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design History	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Primary School is a Roman Catholic, voluntary aided school that has 326 full time pupils on roll. It is bigger than most primary schools. A further 58 children attend the school's Nursery class for half-day sessions. The school is a recent amalgamation of the previous Infant and Junior schools on the present school site. It is housed in the former secondary girls' school building although plans are underway to build new accommodation on the site. The school is part of a local Education Action Zone. The large majority of pupils are White and British but a very small number are from minority ethnic groups, including the Chinese and Black African ethnic groups. These pupils are fully integrated into the work of the school. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is believed not to be English is slightly higher than in most schools. These are the children of asylum seekers and are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs is broadly average. These special needs include learning difficulties and hearing impairment. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average and the electoral ward in which the school is situated is one of the most deprived in the country. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is well below average. The school community is coming to terms with the tragic death of a popular and much respected member of its teaching staff shortly before Christmas 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School provides its pupils with a sound quality of education. It serves its local community very well. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and sometimes it is good or very good. A major strength of the school is the high quality of care it provides for its pupils and the secure and welcoming environment it successfully strives to create for them. The school's provision for ensuring that all pupils are fully included in its work is very strong with regard to care for pupils; less strong with regards to some aspects of academic work. School leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well owing to good teaching and good provision.
- Standards in art and design are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading.
- The school provides its pupils with high quality pastoral care.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good.
- Relationships in the school are very good.
- Very good provision is made overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, mathematics and science from Years 1 to 6.
- The matching of work to pupils' learning needs and the level of challenge in some lessons and subjects, and the school's systems for checking this.
- Teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6.
- Attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

St John's is a recently amalgamated school and has had no previous inspection.

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	D	E	C
mathematics	N/a	E	E	D
science	N/a	D	E	D

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

Most recent National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 show that attainment was well below average compared to schools nationally. However, comparison with similar schools nationally presents a better picture, although attainment was still below average in mathematics and science. Most recent National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 are much stronger. Although standards in the most recent tests were mostly below average when compared with all schools, they were well above average in reading and above average in mathematics when compared with similar schools. A good proportion of pupils achieved high levels in their reading and mathematics tests at Year 2 in 2002 but the proportions attaining high levels in Year 6 in any subject were low. As this is a newly amalgamated school, there is insufficient data to allow for reliable judgements to be made about trends in results over longer periods of time. By the end of the Foundation Stage, attainment this year is broadly average although this varies from year to year.

Work seen during the inspection shows that standards in reading are broadly average in the present Year 2 and Year 6 but that those in writing, mathematics and science remain below average. This represents an improvement overall on the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils in the Year 2002 national tests, and is more similar to the 2001 Year 6 results. This is due to some effective teaching (in reading) and to differences in attainment between pupils in the 2002 and 2003 year groups. Given that pupils begin school with attainment that is well below average overall, they generally make satisfactory progress during their time at St John's. An exception is in reading, where pupils make good progress. In writing, whilst pupils often make satisfactory progress in developing particular skills, overall most do not achieve as well as they should, especially in Years 3 to 6. Higher attaining pupils sometimes do not achieve the levels they should in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very well in art and design, especially those who are talented. Pupils achieve well in history from Years 1 to 6 and in geography in Years 3 to 6. They achieve satisfactorily in geography in Years 1 and 2 and in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and music in Years 1 to 6. However, in the narrow range of work seen in physical education, pupils did not achieve as well as they should. The school slightly exceeded its targets in 2002 for pupils reaching the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics. These targets were sufficiently challenging. Provisional figures for this year indicate that it has exceeded its target for English but not reached that for mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school –and sometimes they behave very well.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils show a good level of maturity. They get along well with each other and show care and respect. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Well below the national average. Despite the school's considerable efforts, attendance remains poor.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 in the Foundation Stage has a good impact upon pupils' learning, whilst in other key stages the impact of teaching on learning is mostly satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally unsatisfactory. In English, the teaching of reading is mainly good throughout the school, with well-focused sessions enabling pupils to make good progress. Teaching of writing is less effective, in part due to the lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of writing in other subjects. In this respect, teachers do not expect enough from pupils, particularly higher attainers. Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. However the picture in mathematics varies between different classes and year groups, ranging from unsatisfactory to very good.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is successful in enabling children to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and in giving them a stimulating and challenging range of learning opportunities in all areas of their learning. As a result, they progress well.

A strength of teaching in the vast majority of lessons is the high quality of relationships that teachers establish with pupils. This results in well-motivated pupils and a good learning atmosphere in most lessons. A weakness in some lessons in Years 1 to 6 is the way in which pupils are not always given work that challenges them sufficiently. This was particularly evident in some literacy, numeracy and science lessons, and especially in some lessons in Years 3 to 6. Pupils learning English as an additional language are given good specialist support but occasionally in other lessons they are not given sufficient support and hence do not achieve as well as they should. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, where pupils do not always receive sharply focused learning targets or the support they need to help them achieve well.

Children in the Foundation Stage are eager learners and persevere well in the stimulating learning activities they are given. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are largely keen to learn and settle well to their work. They mostly concentrate hard and put in good effort.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and with a good range of activities outside lessons. Strengths of the curriculum include the Foundation Stage, and Spanish in Years 5 and 6. A weakness is in the provision for developing writing skills in other subjects.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are provided with individual learning targets but these are not always well focused enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils receive very high quality pastoral support and they receive good specialist support for their learning. In other lessons, support is mostly satisfactory although occasionally weak.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This area is a major strength and contributes strongly to the school's very effective pastoral provision. Spiritual and social provision are particularly strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. This is another of its great strengths. The high quality of care provides a good foundation for learning. This also enables the school to have a very strong and effective focus on promoting racial equality, in accordance with its values for education.

The school works hard to establish a good relationship with parents. This is evident particularly in the good partnership in helping pupils to develop their reading skills.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of school leadership is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership of the pastoral aspect of pupils' education. Other senior staff support her well. There is a strong sense of commitment overall to the school's success. School management is satisfactory. A sound management structure is in place. Management procedures are being developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very strongly committed to the school's success. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and keep a satisfactory check on school performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is developing good systems to check pupils' performance although as yet its procedures for checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning are insufficiently developed.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources available to in order to aid future planning. It strives hard to achieve best value in key decisions.

The school has sufficient teachers to teach the full curriculum although the number of support assistants is low. The accommodation, whilst not ideal for a primary school, provides plenty of space for pupils to work in. Learning resources are adequate in most subjects. They are very good in ICT and good in mathematics and art and design.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The progress they make.• The quality of teaching and school leadership.• The approachability of school staff.• Standards of behaviour.• The school's success in helping their children to grow responsibly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very few parents raised issues for improvement. A small number expressed concern about activities outside lessons, homework and the information they receive about their children's progress.

Inspectors mostly agree with parents' very supportive views, and agree entirely with those expressed about the school's success in promoting personal and social development. They found that the range of activities outside lessons is good, homework is satisfactory and that the school gives parents satisfactory information about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. As a result of the school being a recent amalgamation, only two years' National Curriculum test related data is available. This means that the reliability of trends in results over time is very limited.

Standards in the Foundation Stage¹ and how well children achieve

2. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is well below average. However, they make good progress during their time in this class. The good progress continues in Reception. Overall by the end of Reception this year, the majority of children will have reached the goals for learning expected of children this age but about 20 per cent will not. Achievement for all children is good across the two years of the Foundation Stage.

National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2

3. National Curriculum test results for the past two years show that attainment has mostly been below the average when compared with all schools nationally but were mostly much better when compared with schools having a broadly similar intake of pupils, as the table below shows.

Table to show attainment in 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2

Subject	Compared with all primary schools nationally	Compared with broadly similar schools nationally
Reading	D	A
Writing	E	D
Mathematics	D	B

A = well above average; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; E = well below average

4. In reading and mathematics, pupils' performance in reaching higher than the nationally expected level was good but in writing it was below average. Girls did particularly well in reading and mathematics tests last year. Test results at the end of Year 2 in 2001 show a similar picture although slightly better in writing. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards in science indicate that, overall, pupils attainment is well below average.

Standards by Year 2 in work seen during the inspection, and how well pupils achieve

5. The test results indicate that pupils achieve very well in reading and well mathematics in Years 1 and 2 but that in other areas achievement is only satisfactory overall. Work seen during the inspection broadly confirms this picture. Standards in reading are

¹ 'Foundation Stage' in this school refers to the time children spend in the Nursery and Reception classes

average but in writing, mathematics and science they are below average. Overall, standards in literacy and numeracy are below average at the end of Year 2. No difference was evident in the standards achieved by boys and girls. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are average and pupils achieve the levels they should. In art and design, standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Standards in design and technology and geography are below average at the end of Year 2 but pupils achieve satisfactorily. In all other subjects, standards are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily except in physical education (PE), where there were weaknesses in achievement in the narrow range of activities seen during the inspection.

6. Pupils of different capabilities generally achieve the standards they should in Years 1 and 2 although in writing, higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. In reading and in art and design, pupils achieve well. In PE, pupils of all levels of attainment sometimes underachieved in the narrow range of activities seen during the inspection. Teachers were usually accurate in the levels they expected pupils to attain in their tests except in writing, where pupils did not attain as highly as teachers expected.

National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6

7. Standards as measured by National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 over the past two years have varied between below average and well below average when compared with all primary schools nationally. Last year standards were a little better when compared with similar schools, as the table below shows.

Table to show attainment in 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6

Subject	Compared with all primary schools nationally	Compared with broadly similar schools nationally
English	E	D
Mathematics	E	E
Science	E	D

8. The low percentage of pupils attaining a high level in their tests was an issue in all three subjects. Girls achieved worse than boys in all three subjects, a different picture from the national one. However, there was no evidence of such differences in attainment between girls and boys during the inspection.

Standards by Year 6 in work seen during the inspection, and how well pupils achieve

9. Standards in reading are average overall and pupils generally achieve well, although in Year 4 some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in finding and retrieving information. Standards in writing, mathematics and science are below average. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and satisfactorily overall in writing and science, although higher achieving pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Overall, standards in literacy are below average at the end of Year 6 but achievement overall is satisfactory, except in writing. The improvement in standards in work seen compared to the 2002 National Curriculum tests results in Year 6 is due to some

effective teaching of reading and to differences in the cohorts of pupils that account for some difference in standards between the two groups.

10. In art and design, pupils achieve very well and attain standards that are well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils also achieve well in geography and history, attaining above average standards in history and average standards in geography by the end of Year 6. In ICT and music, pupils achieve satisfactorily as they do overall in design and technology although in some elements of this subject they do not achieve as well as they should. Standards in these subjects are broadly average by the end of Year 6. In PE, pupils' achievement in work seen was unsatisfactory overall but an insufficiently broad range of work was seen to enable overall judgements to be made about attainment by the end of Year 6.

Factors influencing achievement in Years 1 to 6

11. The good achievement in reading is due to the school's well-planned programme for teaching basic skills and how well this is built upon through the school. In art and design, it is due to good teaching and a very good curriculum. Where teaching is less effective, for example as it sometimes is in writing, science and PE, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Where the planned programme for learning is not yet fully effective, as in writing, pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. This is particularly true for higher attaining pupils.

The school's targets for English and mathematics

	Target 2002	Actual 2002	Target 2003
English	53%	56%	70%
Mathematics	50%	54%	70%

12. The table shows the percentage of pupils reaching the expected National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 6. The school succeeded in meeting its targets for English and mathematics last year. Provisional figures for this year indicate that it has exceeded its target for English but not reached that for mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs

13. Progress for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory overall although this progress is variable in different parts of the school. Good progress is made in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, progress becomes unsatisfactory. This is because in Years 3 to 6 there is less consistency amongst teachers in providing appropriately planned activities based on the learning the needs of each pupil. As a result pupils in these year groups who have special educational needs are underachieving. All pupils on the special needs register have individual educational plans although the quality and impact of the individual targets is not consistent throughout the school. The school is vigilant in identifying when pupils encounter learning difficulties and is in the process of analysing if these difficulties are because pupils have special educational needs or if poor attendance, frequent transfers between schools, or any other issues are restricting learning.

Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language

14. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily, and where specialist support is available in lessons they achieve well. The school's strong and effective attention to care and

inclusion means that these pupils are happy in school and as a result they are ready to learn. However, support in lessons is inconsistent. Sometimes, good one-to-one support is given but at other times pupils are not provided with sufficient support by means of work that is specially tailored to their learning needs. At such times, they do not achieve satisfactorily. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups who are not at the early stages of learning English achieve at comparable levels with other pupils of similar attainments.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes to school

15. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. In the Foundation Stage, children are happy, cheerful and eager to come to school. Throughout the school, a positive and enthusiastic start is made to the day. Pupils are very keen to work and want to succeed; as a result most are attentive, listen well and are absorbed in their work. In lessons they readily answer questions and are receptive to new learning. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 5 ICT lesson when pupils achieved very well because of their response to the teacher's high expectations; they listened well and worked hard to succeed in spite of the very hot conditions in the classroom.
16. Pupils are delighted with the wide range of activities offered to them as part of the curriculum. For example, they were very excited by a visit which involved them in living life as part of the staff of a Victorian mansion and when they learned a great deal. Similarly, outside lessons are very popular and in some cases oversubscribed. These activities give pupils the opportunity to extend their skills in the arts and sport. They make a positive contribution to the development of pupils' social skills.

Behaviour

17. Overall, behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, starting in the Foundation Stage, and sometimes it is very good. In lessons, pupils respond to the purposeful working atmosphere as a result of the good management skills displayed by teachers. As a result, pupils have neither the time nor the inclination for inappropriate behaviour. A small minority of pupils can nevertheless be restless and at times disruptive, spoiling the learning opportunities of other members of the class.
18. In the playground, pupils are kind and considerate of each other. This is helped by the spacious playing grounds available to them. As a result, there are few accidents and arguments and pupils return to the classroom ready to learn. Pupils spoken to said there was little real bullying in the school although friends do fall out and arguments develop, but they were very clear that all pupils know that they have to speak to an adult or prefect if they are unhappy with the behaviour of others. As a result, pupils work in a safe, happy and supportive environment and this has positive outcomes in terms of their behaviour. One indication of this lies in the fact that there have been no exclusions in the last school year.

Personal development and relationships

19. Personal development and relationships are very good. All the pupils spoken to say that this is a very friendly school where they are happy; they like the teachers and have made good friends. In lessons, they listen to others' opinions and are quick to acknowledge each other's especially good work by spontaneous applause. Staff are aware of pupils' needs and succeed in building very positive and supportive

relationships with pupils. In lessons, pupils work very well together, as was shown in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when pupils debated in groups, coming to a joint decision as to the correct answer.

20. Pupils willingly take responsibility from Year 1, when they take a full part in the discussions of the school council. They grow in confidence as they move through the school and, as a result, the two Year 6 pupils representing the school on the Liverpool School Parliament have both been elected 'ministers' and as such are widely consulted by leaders of the community. In the playground it is especially noticeable that older pupils involve the younger ones in their activities and especially enjoy helping and supporting pupils in the separate infant playground.

Pupils with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language

21. Pupils who have special educational needs have very positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. The caring, nurturing ethos of the school and the strong emphasis on personal development and relationships is successful in boosting confidence and self-esteem so pupils feel they are all valued members of the school community and as a result are receptive to learning.

Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language

22. The school's very successful attention to creating a working environment in which all pupils feel included means that pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language have very positive attitudes to school. Those spoken to said how happy they were at the school and how much they liked their work. These pupils relate well to others and their behaviour is good. Throughout the school, there is no trace of any racial tension or harassment.

Attendance

23. Attendance at the school is poor and is getting worse despite the very good monitoring and promotion procedures put in place by the school. Attendance for the year 2001/2 was 92.9% and well below the national average but unauthorised attendance was broadly in line. Attendance in this academic year 2002/3 had fallen to 90.75% by the second week in July.
24. Punctuality is a problem, but as a result of the work of the school this is now improving. These figures are not the result of pupils' reluctance to attend school but of some parents' inability to ensure their attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. Whilst the quality of teaching from Years 1 to 6 is judged to be satisfactory overall, examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, together with some very good teaching in several year groups. The very good teaching tended to be of individual lessons rather than being a feature of a particular subject. Occasionally, teaching was less than satisfactory, largely in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching sometimes varied quite significantly between classes in the same year group. Lessons observed in the Foundation Stage were of consistently good quality.

Strengths of the teaching include:

- the very good relationships in most lessons, resulting in pupils being eager to learn;
- good management of pupils' behaviour in most lessons;
- some very good teaching of skills and good subject knowledge in some lessons.

Areas for improvement in the teaching include:

- The quality of teachers' lesson planning;
- The match of work to pupils' learning needs in some lessons;
- The teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 and, in some lessons, for those learning English as an additional language.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy

- Teaching of reading is largely good.
26. Pupils are provided with well-focused short sessions in which to work closely with teachers and support staff to develop their skills. In such sessions, work is challenging and as a result pupils make the effort that enables them to learn. Teaching of basic skills is good, especially in Years 1 and 2 but also further up through the school. Parents are very much encouraged to play an active part through helping their children practise reading at home. Occasionally, in Years 3 to 6, teaching is less effective in enabling pupils to develop the skills of using reference books to find information.
- Teaching of writing is less effective and occasionally in Years 3 to 6 it is less than satisfactory.
27. Although individual skills of writing are sometimes taught well, teachers often do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in literacy lessons or in other subjects. In science, history and geography, too extensive use of worksheets and copying in Years 3 to 6 limits pupils' opportunities to write for themselves. As a result, pupils do not always achieve the standards they should. Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectation of what pupils should achieve in handwriting and spelling.
- Teaching of numeracy is satisfactory but varies in effectiveness between year groups.
28. The most effective teaching was seen in Years 3 and 5. Good teaching is characterised by planning that meets pupils' learning needs and well-organised activities to support learning. In some other lessons, teaching lacks challenge because teachers are not as secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject; lesson planning does not best meet pupils' learning needs; and as a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is true particularly of higher attaining pupils.
29. The development of literacy and numeracy through work in other subjects is inconsistent. In writing, it is very much underdeveloped. In science, numeracy is not well used to help pupils develop their skills. Information and communication technology is sometimes used effectively in to help pupils improve their writing but this is not yet sufficiently developed. In numeracy, some successful use of ICT occurs in Year 5 but this has yet to be developed into good practice in other year groups.

Teaching in other subjects

30. Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory overall with examples of good and very good teaching but also of teaching that is less than satisfactory. Strengths include:

- In science, the encouragement by some teachers of independent writing so that pupils develop their scientific thinking more deeply;
- The very strong teaching of skills and techniques in art and design, resulting in very good achievement throughout the school.

The quality of art work on display from Foundation Stage to Year 6 provides evidence of teachers' high expectations and of their ability to help pupils develop a good 'eye' for art. Particularly good examples of this were seen in the display of African art in Reception and in the work in the style of Picasso done by pupils throughout the school.

- In many lessons, the very good relationships established by teachers and support staff and good expectations of how hard pupils should work results in pupils being eager to learn and in them concentrating hard on their work;
- The good opportunities provided for pupils to learn together.

In an effective Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to work in pairs to devise questions. They did this enthusiastically and with great sense of purpose. Lower attaining pupils were well supported by a teaching assistant so that they got the most out of the activity.

31. Weaknesses in the teaching are evident when:

- Lesson planning does not identify with sufficient clarity the expectations of what pupils of different attainment should achieve. This results in work not matched to pupils' learning needs and providing pupils with insufficient challenge to learn, for example when older pupils in Years 3 to 6 engaged in a letter writing activity that was not rigorous enough in helping them develop their skills;
- Teachers occasionally do not have sufficiently secure knowledge of a subject, as in some physical education lessons;
- The balance in lessons between listening/talking and practical activity is wrong, resulting in pupils having too little time to work independently, for example in developing their writing skills;
- Pupils are not expected to refer to and use the learning targets set for them.

The best teaching

32. During the inspection, the best teaching was characterised by:

- A lively start to the lesson, with the teacher's commitment to practical activity engaging pupils and making them very keen to explore and investigate – for example, in Year 2 and Year 6 mathematics lessons;
- very good teaching of technique allied to high expectation of what pupils should achieve – in a Year 6 art and design lesson, where pupils were developing texture in a picture; and in a Year 3 art and design lesson, where the teacher combined high expectations ('practice makes perfect!') with providing pupils with the opportunity to select resources critically;
- a high level of challenge whilst allowing pupils to develop their skills independently- in a Year 6 design and technology lesson; and in a Year 2 geography lesson , also

characterised by the teacher ensuring that all groups of pupils were able to learn very well;

- a high degree of clarity as to what is to be learned and how pupils will go about it, together with a clearly expressed view that 'we are here to learn' – for example in a Year 5 ICT lesson;
- in an excellent Spanish lesson observed, very good subject knowledge and high expectations;
- The teaching of talented pupils in art is very effective, as evidenced by the quality of their work on display in the school.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

33. The quality of teaching is consistently good, enabling children to make good progress. Teachers and support staff show a very good understanding by the staff of the children's learning needs and how to move these on step by step. This is particularly successful in enabling children to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The learning activities provided interest and made children eager to learn. This is allied to very good relationships and very good management of children's behaviour. Tasks are very well designed to help children develop specific skills. This is achieved within a broad and rich curriculum. For example, children were provided with a very good stimulus before engaging in some art work based on pictures by Monet. The quality of the teaching and support meant that children developed technique well and were happy to persevere in their task until each picture was finished. In this, as in other sessions, every opportunity is taken to develop language skills through well-focused talk about the work. All this is achieved on the basis of very good teamwork by teachers and support staff.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs

34. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and they follow the school procedures. Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is within class lessons. In English and mathematics lessons teachers usually group pupils according to ability and in the better lessons give different activities based on pupils' competence. However insufficient attention is given to those pupils for whom more focussed work is appropriate, especially in Years 3 to 6. The quality of the targets in pupils' individual educational plans (IEPs) is inconsistent and as a result these do not impact sufficiently on pupils' progress. Teachers are very sensitive to pupils' special educational needs but have not yet fully developed the skills necessary to ensure all pupils benefit fully from their teaching. Where teaching is consistently good or better, teachers give individual attention to these pupils but in other lessons the tasks are inappropriate and fail to help pupils to progress. There is a limited amount of support from classroom assistants, and though this support is effective in developing relationships and encouraging lower attaining pupils, insufficient information is available to the assistants for them to support pupils who have special educational needs effectively.

Teaching of pupils for whom English as an additional language

35. Specialist teaching for pupils at the early stages of learning English is effective in helping children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in through the school to have the well-focused one-to-one attention that helps them build confidence. The school's very caring and welcoming ethos helps pupils to feel valued and secure and this aids learning when it translates into very good relationships in lessons. Teachers try to provide as much individual support as possible but the quality of their planning is not

always good enough to ensure that pupils are provided with activities pitched at the correct level for their learning needs when specialist support is not available. Occasionally the work provided in Years 3 to 6 is inappropriate and a pupil becomes disengaged from the lesson. On such an occasion, the lack of support staff in the lesson has a negative impact on learning.

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

36. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Provision for Nursery and Reception children tends to be wider and richer than the curriculum in Years 1 to 6, and prepares children well for the rigours of the National Curriculum.

The Foundation Stage

37. In Nursery and Reception, the curriculum is varied, exciting and enriching. Activities are carefully organised around resource areas and there is an appropriate mix of teacher-led and child-led opportunities. Staff draw well on their professional experience in order to provide the relevant elements of the nationally recommended curriculum for young children. Consequently, there is well-established Nursery and Reception practice that emphasises the need to provide good learning experiences in the areas of social, emotional, physical and intellectual achievements. An area for improvement is the development of an outdoor play area with appropriate apparatus for the Reception children. The plans for the new school identify this need.
38. The curriculum followed in Years 1 to 6 is properly based on the national guidelines and benefits from:
- appropriate time allowances for each subject;
 - policies and schemes of work for all subjects;
 - a clear overview that maps out the topics for learning for the whole school;
 - the provision of Spanish for older pupils;
 - the adequate implementation of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy.
39. Improvements are needed in relation to:
- writing - a more systematic and creative approach to skills;
 - science - a more systematic approach to developing investigative skills;
 - design and technology - increasing the emphasis on design;
 - geography - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills through recording their learning.

Personal and social education

40. Although there is not a formalised scheme of work, the provision for personal, social and health education is good. This has much to do with the school's determination to develop all aspects of pupils' learning and well being. The work covers a good range of topics, such as healthy eating, knowing the body and drug awareness. Sex and relationships education is sensitively taught as questions and issues arise and this is the stated policy of the governing body and management. Visitors to the school, such as the police, provide good support in a number of areas. The school is aware that there is a need to develop a scheme of work that identifies and enhances current good practice.

Pupils with special educational needs

41. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the school curriculum. However, in Years 3 to 6, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching combined with the lack of specific and measurable targets linked to appropriate strategies make future planning more difficult and restrict pupils' access to the taught curriculum. The monitoring of teachers' planning by subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently stringent in making sure that teachers match work to pupils' ability. The low number of classroom assistants providing support limits the impact of teaching. The school philosophy of 'working together to develop the unique qualities of each child' is reflected very well in relationships and the development of pupils' social skills. This firm foundation results in pupils who have special educational needs being happy and ready to learn.

Pupils learning English as an additional language

42. Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory, with some strengths and weaknesses evident. Specialist support provided for these pupils is good, enabling them to focus on developing certain skills within a lesson. Non-specialist support varies in quality between classes. Sometimes it is satisfactory, as when teachers provide one-to-one support; occasionally it is unsatisfactory, when pupils are not provided with work that is specially tailored to their learning needs. Personal and social provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is very good, enabling pupils to feel valued and secure. This has a positive impact upon their attitudes to learning.

Gifted and talented pupils

43. The school makes good provision for talented pupils in art, by means of a 'master class' extra-curricular club. Provision for pupils to develop special skills in music is being recognised and developed through provision of instrumental tuition. Provision for enabling the highest attaining pupils to achieve is sometimes unsatisfactory. These pupils are not always provided with work that challenges them to achieve as well as they should. The school has made good efforts through Saturday workshops to encourage the highest attainers in mathematics.

Extra-curricular activities

44. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is a range of clubs/activities, including sporting and musical activities. These opportunities enhance the curriculum and enrich the learning experiences available to pupils. Furthermore, this enrichment includes a range of visits to places of educational interest and visitors who provide helpful guidance on a number of topics. A significant feature of the provision is the three art clubs and this has helped to raise the standards in this subject to a high level.

Links with the community and with partner schools

45. The school's links with the community and partnership with related institutions are good. They promote pupils' learning effectively and support the development of confidence and self-esteem. Community links include:
 - local history talk for pupils at the community centre;
 - visits from a local Anglican vicar and pupils helping to tend the church garden;
 - local shops providing prizes and refreshments for school events.

The links with partner institutions include:

- older pupils from local secondary schools coming in to do work experience;
- the school acts as mentor to student teachers at a local university;
- several links with local primary schools, for instance those in the local Education Action Zone.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and is a strength of the school. The school ethos of valuing personal development as well as academic achievement is reflected in the very positive attitudes and relationships that typify the school. The large majority of parents agree that the values and attitudes promoted by the school have a positive effect on pupils' personal development. This was confirmed during the inspection.

Spiritual development

47. The provision for spiritual development is very good. This is achieved through assemblies and the very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own feelings and those of other people. For example when their teacher told an anecdote about buying *The Big Issue*, Year 6 pupils empathised with people worse off than themselves. The 'Thought for the Week', well displayed on the stairway, is reinforced in lessons. During the inspection the emphasis was on teamwork and co-operation, the 'thought' being *'Together Everyone Achieves More'*. Year 4 pupils considered and discussed animatedly the theme of friendship, the qualities that make good friends and how falling out can impede co-operation. During a very well structured assembly, younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 appreciated the need to help each other, and the necessity for the rules that make their school such a happy place to be. They understand that Jesus also gave a rule, 'to love each other and be kind'. By looking after each other they are keeping Jesus' rule as well as conforming to school expectations. A similar theme was pursued during a Year 3 and 4 assembly, the analogy being that a broken plate can not be repaired but a friendship can if someone is prepared to say sorry and another to forgive. The school is welcoming, creating a climate where all pupils are valued, respected and learn to appreciate each other.

Moral and social development

48. The provision for pupils' moral development is good with social development judged to be very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Expectations of good behaviour and positive attitudes are reinforced in lessons throughout the school by House points and the weekly award of the Class Trophy. Pupils from Year 6 support the smooth running of the school by helping to control the stairways when everyone is on the move to and from lessons. Other opportunities to take responsibility include taking registers to the office, computer responsibilities, Year 6 pupils assigned as prefects to the other classes and setting up the nursery each day. Individual teachers employ their own methods of encouraging and supporting pupils in improving the academic and personal achievement.
49. The emphasis on good behaviour is helpful in supporting the very good relationships within the school. Pupils behave very well at lunchtimes. They enjoy playing organised games with a good range of small equipment provided by the school. Older pupils lead younger children in rhyming games and the *Buddy System* is effective in making sure no pupils become isolated during lunchtime. Social development including community

awareness is provided through the School Council. Two representatives from the school belong to the Liverpool Schools Parliament and have visited the Houses of Parliament on behalf of their school and city. An interesting display shows the profiles of the class councillors, their reasons for wanting to do the work and the changes introduced by the present council. These include a football rota system for the playground, a review of the dinner menus, and suggestions for club activities.

50. A very happy and welcoming atmosphere encouraging social interactions between pupils of all ages typifies the morning Breakfast Club: pupils respect the systems and the toys available for their use. This session provides a very good opportunity for pupils to follow the example of the adults and develop mature attitudes to each other. Pupils are aware of their school community and this feeling of identity has been reinforced by the introduction of a distinctive school uniform proudly worn by all pupils. In lessons teachers give a wide range of opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and in small groups, in this way pupils develop not only their speaking and listening skills but also their positive social interactions. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others who are not part of the school community, this is evident through their charity work such as fund raising for Cafod, RNIB, Red Nose Day and the Macmillan nurses, as well as performing for local elderly people at Christmas.

Cultural development

51. The provision for cultural development is good. Through the curriculum pupils increase their knowledge of countries other than England. They are aware of the wider community of Liverpool, and the school has been part of the preparations to win the 2008 Capital of Culture title. The taught curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors, for example from theatre groups, Police Band, gospel choir, the recent highlight being the Animal Man who brought the actual owl that appeared in the *Harry Potter* films. The older pupils benefit from weekly Spanish lessons taught by a visiting teacher. Visits out of school to the Wildlife Centre, Toy Museum, Chester and outward bound centre all enhance the opportunities for pupils to extend their cultural development.
52. There is strong emphasis on art and design and this gives pupils throughout the school the chance to participate in a good range of artistic activities and also to reflect on the work of known artists from around the world. The results of pupils' artistic efforts are displayed very well throughout the school and contribute to the welcoming and interesting appearance of the classrooms and corridors. Though the recognition of non-Christian religious festivals is limited, the school celebrates cultural diversity through art, music and literature.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

53. Overall the school takes very good care of its pupils. This is strength of the school. All pupils are very well known to their teachers and more generally across the school and particularly by the learning mentors who support them pastorally. Those pupils with a variety of special needs are fully included in the life of the school and made to feel included. The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is in place and the school makes appropriate use of outside agencies to help these pupils succeed. Similarly, pupils learning English as an additional language are made to feel fully a part of the school community.
54. The site manager checks the school daily, including the grounds for any potential problems, which are dealt with immediately. The headteacher and site manager undertake termly risk assessments but at present there is no designated governor

undertaking this role. Within lessons teachers are conscious of the safety aspects of learning as was shown in a Year 6 design and technology lesson when pupils using sharp knives were fully aware of the safety aspects of their work. Within the school, the welfare officer ensures that pupils receive the necessary physical care. Child protection procedures are fully in place and the school has trained all members of staff. The school takes very good care to promote racial equality, in keeping with its aims for education. This is exemplified by the way in which asylum seekers are so well integrated into the school community. Making the building accessible to all pupils is a difficult business in this school, situated as it is on four floors. Within the constraints imposed by this, the school makes the arrangements it can.

Monitoring attendance

55. Procedures for the promotion and monitoring of attendance are good overall. The rate of attendance is a major concern in the school. With the support of the learning mentors and the education welfare officer, attendance is monitored weekly and parents whose children are causing concern are regularly contacted. However, the school does not yet consistently contact the family of each absentee on the first day of absence. Pupils and parents who arrive after registration are greeted at the entrance and their reasons for lateness are discussed and possible strategies to improve punctuality suggested. In addition the education welfare officer regularly visits the homes of pupils who continually fail to attend school and in extreme cases the school is ready to support the local authority in taking parents to court. There is a high profile reward system for attendance in place for classes and individual pupils. The school is aware of the effect on learning of those pupils with low attendance and is trying to isolate these pupils from those with special education needs in order to better serve their particular needs.

Monitoring pupils' behaviour

56. The school has good procedures in place to monitor and manage pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are aware of the high expectations for good behaviour in the school and the large majority fulfils these expectations. Those pupils spoken to were very clear that fighting and associated rough behaviour would not be tolerated. The behaviour of those pupils with specific behavioural problems is carefully monitored and considerable efforts are made to boost their self-confidence and self-control. Bullying and other forms of harassment are kept to a minimum by the vigilance of staff and the clear and consistent guidance given to pupils on the effects of bullying and how it should be dealt with in the school. When incidents are discovered a programme of support is put in place for the victim and the child doing the bullying.

Monitoring pupils' personal development

57. The school has very good procedures in place to promote pupils' personal development. The reward system for good behaviour contains real incentives for pupils such as outings, activity days or picnics as well as the day-to-day rewards of a sticker from the headteacher and special time for pupils to choose their learning activities. Pupils are encouraged to look out for each other's welfare and personal development by the good opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility for the welfare of others.

Care of pupils who have special educational needs

58. The school meets the requirements for pupils who have statements of special educational need. The school uses assessment procedures effectively to identify pupils who have special educational needs. The assessment of new pupils combined with the pupil tracking system are positive steps in ensuring pupils who have special educational needs are identified. At the time of the inspection the school was reviewing the number of pupils already recorded on the register of special needs. This is because the school quite rightly feels that a significant number of pupils recorded as having special needs have in fact been affected by poor attendance or frequent moves and do not actually have learning difficulties. Likewise, pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue may be incorrectly judged as having learning difficulties. Once the audit is complete the school anticipates developing appropriate strategies to support the varying needs of these pupils.

Care for pupils learning English as an additional language

59. Very good care is taken of these pupils. The school goes to great lengths to make these pupils feel welcome and to value them as people. Learning mentors play a very important role in this. The leadership provided by the headteacher is the source of the school's good practice. She ensures that the school systematically cares for these pupils and this has a positive impact upon their learning.

Assessing pupils' progress

60. The school has a good and consistent approach for collecting assessment data in English and mathematics. This is not yet extended to science and other subjects of the curriculum where, although informal assessments may be made, they are not systematically recorded and analysed to help determine areas for improvement. Where procedures are developed, they are used effectively to monitor pupils' academic progress throughout the school. The results of optional testing, covering aspects of English and mathematics, enable targets to be set and reliable predications to be made of what pupils should be achieving by the end of the next academic year. Other assessments are made at regular intervals. The system is working well in English and mathematics and is helping the school to identify potential problems which may prevent the raising of standards.
61. Overall, the use of assessment is good and teachers use the information they have gathered to help them plan for groups and individuals. Observations that teachers make during lessons, often informally, help them to be clear about what pupils can and can not do. There is a developing 'tracking system' by which pupils' progress towards these targets is carefully analysed. The school has 'intervention strategies' to provide additional help and support for those pupils not on course to achieve their targets.
62. The refinement of assessment data to distinguish between special educational needs and problems caused by poor attendance is very useful in helping the school address individual problems. The quality of marking is variable but overall it is satisfactory. When it is good, it provides good information about pupil progress and attainment. It gives encouragement to pupils and recognises their hard work and effort, and in the very best examples, points clearly as to how they can improve further. Where marking is less useful, particularly in the writing aspect of English, it does not refer to individual learning targets and does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance to help them improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents' views of the school

63. Those parents who responded to the consultations before and during the inspection feel that this is a very good school. Nearly half the parents responded to the questionnaire and of these the overwhelming majority agree that their children are happy and making good progress in a well led and managed school where teaching is good. Further, as a result of the high expectations behaviour is good and their children are growing in maturity and responsibility. Parents have very positive views about the approachability of school staff. A small number are less happy that the school works closely with them as parents and that they are well informed about their children's progress. A small minority of parents is critical about the range of extra-curricular activities.

Links with parents and information provided for them

64. The school has satisfactory links with parents and respects the wishes of the majority of parents by keeping the induction process to an informal minimum and discontinuing the pre-school home visits, which parents in this community dislike. A regular well-run Parent and Toddler group helps to bridge the gap between home life and school for a number of parents. The school prospectus is contained in a well-produced folder, which highlights the school's vision and caring ethos. However, the enclosed information sheets are not well presented either in layout or language. This is in contrast the Nursery's *Welcome Booklet* that is clear and welcoming. The school provides parents with information about events and issues concerning pupils through letters and intermittent newsletters, but does not inform parents of the main topics being taught each term, so that those parents who support their children's learning can do so more effectively. The school makes every effort to involve the parents of pupils speaking English as an additional language in their children's education.
65. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory overall. However, the reports vary in their feel for the teachers' knowledge of the child, some being very formal with stylised phrasing and use of jargon whilst others are written in a way that conveys a clear knowledge of the individual child. None of the reports give clear targets for pupils to help their future progress. Parents of those children in reception and infant classes have daily access to teachers before and after school and other parents have the opportunity to talk to teachers informally at the end of the school day. The school holds two formal parents meetings a year for parents to discuss their children's progress with class teachers. The school has taken the opportunity to consult parents on particular issues such as the new school uniform, when it received an overwhelming response.
66. Help provided by parents is decreasing as fewer parents are prepared to involve themselves in the everyday life of the school despite the school's efforts in this respect. However, a small but active Parent Teacher Association raises considerable amounts of money to help the school. The parents of many pupils are unable to provide home support for their children's homework; as a result homework is not always as effective as it could be in improving pupils' progress. A considerable number of parents fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly or arrive in time for the start of the school day. However, other parents are making considerable efforts to ensure that their children have the opportunity to gain the most from their schooling by being in school on a regular basis.
67. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved from the time the school has an initial concern. The school makes every attempt to keep them

fully informed about their children's progress. The school adopts an open door policy and parents are welcome at any time to discuss the progress of their children informally whenever they have a concern.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership

- The headteacher, key staff and governing body provide good leadership.
68. Since amalgamation, key staff have identified as a first priority the need to provide pupils with a secure and happy learning environment in which each is valued and feels well motivated to learn. They have been very successful in achieving this and in recognising and beginning to deal with some significant barriers to learning. All pupils are encouraged to view the school as a caring community that is there to help them develop responsibly. The school is successful in meeting this stated aim for education.
69. The headteacher gives a very strong lead in this aspect of the school's work. Her own pastoral leadership of the school is very good and she is developing a staff team that is clearly committed to the school's aims. Senior staff also display good skills of person management and provide good examples for other staff and pupils. The governing body is very committed to the school's success. Its chair and members all convey the same sense of wanting to do their best for the school and its pupils. Governors convey a very strong sense of wanting the school to be at the heart of its community and they very clearly value and are proud of its success in doing this. The school has a very welcoming and positive 'feel' to it. It is a place where pupils are valued and respected as people and where a strong belief in their potential is held. The commitment to individual pupils, especially to those who have particular social and personal needs, is very evident, for example in the way in which the whole school community welcomes asylum seekers and makes them feel wanted and at home. This in itself is a good reflection of the school's own shared values and in particular those of the headteacher and the chair of governors.

Management

- The management of the school is satisfactory.
70. Since amalgamation, the bringing together and bonding of staff and pupils has clearly been a major priority. As a result, the spotlight has been on leadership rather than management issues, although a sound management structure is in place and some good systems for tracking pupils' progress have been devised. The school has also had to cope with the recent tragic death of one of its senior managers.
71. The school is now well placed to develop its management systems and procedures so that they focus more effectively on the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of how well pupils are achieving in their work and how far teaching is effective in helping them to do this. At present, whilst some checking on teaching quality takes place, no strong and effective system has yet been developed that will serve to:
- identify in the teaching and learning, strengths to be shared and weaknesses to be improved, and how this will be done;
 - give the governing body a sharper view of the school's performance that would enable it to require further improvements.

72. The school's development plan is very thorough in identifying a whole range of issues for improvement. However, it does not yet have a sharp enough focus, a 'top layer' of a few key priorities that will drive the school to further improvement.
73. Individual subject co-ordinators are usually knowledgeable about their subjects and understand what needs to be done to improve but they do not yet have a sufficiently formal role in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in order to help achieve improvement. Similarly, senior managers do not yet provide sufficiently clear direction in the monitoring of standards pupils achieve and the reasons why this achievement is either strong or weak. The need to provide key staff with the skills and time to monitor standards and quality of education provided has been recognised by the school as an area for development.
74. The governing body is keen to be involved in the process of checking the school's performance (and some of its members do visit lessons) but does not yet receive the sort of information that would enable it to keep a close check on performance. Nonetheless, the governing body is conscientious in its work and meets its statutory obligations.

Management of particular groups of pupils

75. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is experienced and caring. She has a firm grasp of staff training needs and the areas of development necessary to improve the provision for pupils in the school. She is initiating improvement, taking into account the existing expertise of staff, new legislation and the diverse needs of the pupils.
76. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are made to feel an integral part of the school and are helped in this by the school's very supportive ethos. Management of special support for these pupils is good but the monitoring of support and progress in other lessons is insufficiently developed.
77. Management of gifted and talented pupils is developing well although its impact is more evident with talented rather than gifted pupils. Activities are arranged for talented pupils, for example in performance and visual arts. Funding is used effectively to support these. Parental support is sought wherever possible. Consideration is being given to holding a training day for teachers on the theme of gifted and talented pupils.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

78. The school has a suitable number of qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Significant changes have taken place in recent months and staff have shown their commitment and flexibility in maintaining as much consistency possible after the untimely death of one of their colleagues. The teaching staff as a whole has sufficient knowledge and expertise to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and most have responsibility to lead development in a specific subject. The limited amount of staffing support for pupils in Years 1 to 6 sometimes has a negative impact on maintaining the quality of learning from the Foundation Stage. The employment of learning mentors is proving to be an effective use of staffing in supporting pupils who have difficulties in settling into the school routines.
79. Resources for teaching are good in most areas of the curriculum and very good in art and design. The priority is to make sure that all subjects are adequately resourced and then to look for priorities in line with school initiatives. The school has identified the

school library as an area for improvement but plans to relocate and restock have been delayed by the proposed new building.

80. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. It is well maintained and kept clean by the caretaker and his staff. The building is on four levels; the result is that staff have to be vigilant about the time it takes to get to lessons from the playground. The classrooms for the older pupils are not accessible for pupils who have physical disabilities, but the school is aware of this and would be flexible in dealing with this situation. The teaching environment in the classrooms is of good quality, though one classroom is particularly small and the computer suites become very warm during lessons resulting in pupils and adults feeling lethargic. Colourful displays of pupils' work serve well to celebrate achievement and very good use is made of wide corridors as extensions of the classroom for imaginative play and quiet sitting areas. The Quiet Room has been carefully designed to create a safe haven with a relaxing atmosphere. The outside grounds do not fully meet pupils' needs but plans for development are understandably on hold due to the proposed new school.

Financial management and planned use of resources

81. Overall, financial management is good. The school budget is effectively managed by the headteacher, who appreciates the valuable support and guidance of the hard working governors' finance committee. Members of the committee are provided with regular and detailed financial statements, and this means that they carefully check income and expenditure. Importantly, the finance committee reports back, in detail, to the full governing body.
82. There are secure systems in place to ensure that finances are carefully controlled. These systems are very efficiently managed by the school's administrative officer, who makes good use of modern technology to do so. Recent failures by the technology left the school with little information about finances and attendance at the time of the inspection although this situation has since been rectified. The most recent audit, completed by the local education authority just before the inspection, supports the judgement that financial management is prudent and effective, and the school is properly resolving the minor recommendations.
83. Owing to the recent amalgamation of the two schools, infant and junior, there has been additional funding to support the governors and management in the successful transition towards one school. These funds have been rightly used to improve resources where there are shortcomings and in developing the management structure. A relatively small budget surplus continues to be carried forward as part of this process. An area for development is the improving of governors' evaluation of initiatives.
84. The school has received a range of grants for the specific support of groups of pupils, for instance:
- special educational needs;
 - English as an additional language.
85. These grants have been used well to secure resources that enable these pupils to make good progress. In addition, the school has effective resources that enable it to get value for money when purchasing supplies and services. For example:

- There is wide consultation over many matters. The expertise of the local education authority was sought when the computer suite was being stocked;
- The school constantly challenges staff to get higher standards. Once the senior managers had identified a 'dip' in standards in Year 3, increases in resources and changes in staff deployment were used to raise attainment;
- There are appropriate comparisons made with other schools in relation to standards, attitudes and behaviour. This is done through good reference to information from government, local education authority and the Education Action Zone;
- The school manages competition in its dealings with local contractors.

Value for money

86. The school provides satisfactory value for money:

- it enables its pupils to make satisfactory progress overall;
- teaching is satisfactory, with some strengths and some weaknesses;
- care and welfare of pupils are very good;
- pupils respond well to their teachers;
- the cost of educating pupils at the school is higher than average.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. In order to build effectively on the strong foundations laid since the recent amalgamation, the school should:

Raise standards in writing, mathematics and science by:

- providing pupils with work that is more closely matched to their learning needs, especially in relation to higher attaining pupils;
- improving, through training programmes, teachers' understanding in these subjects of how best to help pupils achieve well;
- implementing a sustained and rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching in order to ascertain areas of strength and weakness and through this to identify and spread best practice;
- making better use of planned opportunities in other subjects, including ICT, to help pupils develop the key skills of literacy and numeracy;
- rigorously monitoring the effectiveness of action taken and acting upon the results of this monitoring in order to improve performance still further. *

(the main references to this issue are in paragraphs 28, 29, 31, 39, 71, 121, 122, 127, 133, 134, 140, 142, 151)

Improve the matching of work to pupils' learning needs and the level of challenge in some lessons and subjects, and the school's systems for checking this, by:

- implementing a rigorous, shared approach to lesson planning that will ensure that pupils of all attainment are provided with work that matches their learning needs;
- implementing more consistently the school's useful approach to setting learning targets for individual pupils, and ensuring that pupils take full advantage of this to become more aware of the quality of their own learning;
- monitoring teaching systematically to ensure the identification of best practice, and ensuring that this is then spread effectively where teaching is weaker;
- rigorously monitoring the effectiveness of action taken and acting upon the results of this monitoring in order to improve performance still further.

(the main references to this issue are in paragraphs 25, 31, 64, 71, 119, 133, 140, 173)

Improving teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 by:

- improving the quality of learning targets in pupils' individual education plans;
- ensuring that activities closely match pupils' learning needs in all lessons;
- improving the quality of information available to teaching assistants to help them support pupils' learning most effectively;
- rigorously monitoring the effectiveness of action taken and acting upon the results of this monitoring in order to improve performance still further.

(the main references to this issue are in paragraphs 34, 41, 123, 134)

Raise the rate of attendance by:

- continuing to implement its already thorough procedures, especially in its use of learning mentors and in its strong partnership with the local education authority;
- ensuring that contact is made with each pupil's family on the first day of absence;
- targeting even more closely those families whose children have the poorest rates of attendance;
- learning from best practice elsewhere. *

(the main references to this issue are in paragraphs 23, 24, 55)

In addition the school should consider including the following more minor point in its action plan:

- improving the location of the school library and the quality of its stock of books.

(the main reference to this issue is in paragraph 117)

** = recognised by the school as a priority for development*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	10	32	28	4	1	0
Percentage	1	13	42	37	5	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	326
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	204

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	86

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	28	21	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	14	24
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	40	31	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (88)	63 (86)	86 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	23
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	39	43	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (86)	88 (86)	82 (86)
	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	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	19	25
	Girls	14	15	24
	Total	35	34	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (64)	54 (48)	78 (76)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	25
	Girls	20	16	27
	Total	37	36	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (48)	57 (42)	83 (68)
	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	303	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	11	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	876,833
Total expenditure	855,583
Expenditure per pupil	2,410
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,815
Balance carried forward to next year	48,065

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	354
Number of questionnaires returned	168

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	26	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	33	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	32	3	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	39	11	2	4
The teaching is good.	68	29	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	40	13	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	39	8	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	75	19	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	31	13	4	4

Other issues raised by parents

None

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

88. Children enter the Nursery when they are three years old. At the time of the inspection 26 were attending part-time mornings and 26 in the afternoon. Adults work very well together and provide a very calm, welcoming place to learn. Children gain a great deal from the positive, stress-free learning experiences which promote very good relationships, confidence and self-esteem. Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) records show that many of the children start in the Nursery with well below average attainment for this age, most particularly in language, and inspection findings confirm this. The children make good progress in the time they are in the Nursery.
89. The transition to Reception Year is carefully handled and the similarly good teaching methods aid a smooth move from the Nursery. Confidence, relationships and self-esteem are maintained, and the children have a clear sense of security. The range of attainment is catered for well in the literacy and numeracy sessions. These children achieve well. Nevertheless, the achievement of all the children is good across the two years of the Foundation Stage. Teachers place high priority on developing children's basic skills.
90. By the end of the Reception Year, the majority of children have achieved the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literature, mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world but some (about 20 per cent) still have to achieve some of the 'stepping stones' towards these goals.

Provision of learning opportunities

91. The school maintains good quality provision in the Foundation Stage. Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, the new school has:
- formed a very good and welcoming Nursery and Reception working area where children move freely;
 - introduced an exciting and challenging curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The planned activities are a good balance between teacher - and children - led starting points;
 - developed good arrangements for judging pupils' levels of attainment so that progress is carefully checked.

The main area for improvement is:

- developing ways to track the activities done each day by the children, thereby ensuring a well-balanced programme without reducing independence.
92. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator understands how young children learn best and these principles clearly underpin the consistently good teaching and enable the children to make a good start. Children have very good attitudes to learning in Nursery and in the Reception Year. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language do as well as other children because early checks ensure that appropriate support is provided.

Quality of teaching

93. The quality of teaching is consistently good in all the areas of learning. Strengths of the good practice in Nursery and Reception include:
- very good understanding by the staff of the children's next steps in learning enables them to make good gains in their basic skills levels;
 - activities that interest and motivate the children, such as role-playing a flight in an aeroplane and visiting a rainforest;
 - the very good management of the children;
 - the very good work of all practitioners working as a team.
94. The teaching of early independent writing gets off to a good start in Nursery. Subsequently, Reception teachers emphasise how to form letters and words and give sufficient emphasis to children's own early writing, thereby retaining their interest and motivation.

Personal, social and emotional development

95. In the Nursery and Reception, children are happy, cheerful and eager to come to school. They take a keen interest in all the activities and enthusiastically welcome visitors to their area. This significant strength in the provision is fostered by good teaching and the fact that the personal and individual needs of each child are carefully discussed and mainly catered for. For example:
- teachers take a positive approach to the small range of different languages that children speak and the varied backgrounds of the minority. This helps all children respond positively to diversity;
 - there are many good opportunities for children to play and learn together, such as role-play areas with a variety of themes, and climbing on the outdoor house frame in the Nursery;
 - teachers actively encourage mixed gender work and play, which helps to inhibit stereotyping.
96. Overall, staff are aware of the educational gains from giving children the freedom to choose what they do for substantial periods within each session. However, staff are not always aware of the breadth of activities each child undertakes and they know that they must develop this area of their work.
97. The spiritual and moral development of children is good. Staff help children to understand right and wrong actions and they trust children to play and learn actively. The good management of the children means that there are few occasions when inappropriate behaviour is seen, but when it is, staff give firm and calm reminders to children. Values and beliefs are explored in simple terms, in circle time (class discussions) and in a variety of other activities, for example in the recent work on Africa, Australia and France. Consequently, an environment is created where the children show a respect for each other, property and the environment.

Communication, language and literacy

98. Throughout Nursery and Reception, children make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. At the end of the Nursery year a large number of children chat confidently to adults and ask questions. Two children became 'inspectors' and made 'notes' on paper they had on their clipboard. In Reception, children listen

carefully and usually answer questions sensibly, with the most mature providing a lot of detail.

99. Nursery children enjoy books and are increasingly aware of those containing pictures and simple words. The majority of children know how to follow words on a page but they are not yet reading them. Reception children share books with their parents and most identify and match letters and sounds. Most achieve well, providing accurate detail as they share a big text with the teacher and most say the first letter sound of a word, for example:

'g / grassy; m / messy.'

100. Some Nursery children are beginning to 'write' letters and starting to write their name. Most children in Reception write their name in legible print. The most mature children write shopping lists in legible, neat and mainly consistent sized letters. Achievement is good.

Mathematical development

101. In Nursery, children use a wide range of resources to gain mathematical ideas. For example:

- filling containers and pouring water;
- making recognisable dough shapes, such as circle, triangle and square, and know these shapes by sight;
- The most mature children, count quickly and accurately to 30; successfully do a simple sum, such as $2+1=3$. The least mature have difficulty remembering consecutive numbers but, nevertheless, count to five. They know the same shapes as the most mature, but do not recognise many colours.

102. Reception children make good progress. The majority accurately cut out the clock faces they are given and attach the minute and hour hands. Most children recognise the hour times. All children know the sequence of numbers on the clock and most count in tens, often to 100. The children achieve well, they count accurately, solve very simple problems and show plenty of confidence.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

103. When children enter the Nursery they often have limited general knowledge. Teachers and support staff successfully set up experiences that help to overcome these shortcomings and provide the children with exciting and motivating ideas. For example, themes about Africa, Australia and France maximise understanding through art, music, language and role-play.

104. By the end of Reception, the children have used the computer to support their work in literacy and numeracy. They collect frog spawn and know that they will change into frogs. The most progress is made when they are curious and keen to explore new surroundings in very practical ways, for example:

- 'travelling' to France; using French words and pictures to indicate what they would buy;
- 'selling' holidays in the travel shop and creating an airport with toy aeroplanes and other vehicles.

Physical development

105. Overall, children make good progress in their physical skills despite the lack of a fully equipped outdoor area for the Reception Year. Nevertheless, by the time the children leave the Foundation Stage they have significant strengths;
- they manage their bodies well and in most cases combine a range of movements to play games effectively, such as football, tennis and skipping;
 - show good co-ordination, find space and show confidence and agility.
106. Nursery children have opportunities in the small outside area to use small climbing frames, slides and stepping stones. Most negotiate successfully a path on the stepping stones and show good balance. On climbing frames, the children:
- judge accurately the space needed to get through a hole;
 - balance whilst sitting on a narrow bar;
 - alternate feet as they climb the frame and travel successfully; under, over and through.
107. When the children go into the hall for physical education lessons, they show high levels of agility on benches and help sensibly with the putting out and clearing of apparatus. Good progress is also made in their control of small implements, such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors.
108. The children benefit from good teaching that is well focused on safety and refining physical skills. They are encouraged to have a go and increasingly face challenging tasks with increasing confidence.

Creative development

109. The good quality of teaching and learning provides a good foundation for the high standards that are clear throughout the school, most particularly in art and design. Children make good progress, and strengths are imaginary play, and exploration with paint and with other media. In the Nursery and Reception, the detail and vivid colour that they use is of a high standard in the Aboriginal and African art they reproduce. Nursery children print with sponges, for example, on the frame of their large Eiffel Tower. In reception, the practitioners create learning opportunities that support high attainment and achievement. For instance, in one lesson, children were taken to the wild flower garden to sketch flowers; practitioners introduced some Monet prints as stimuli and the children produced good pictures of recognisable 'poppies'.
110. Children sing familiar songs and rhymes together, clapping and moving to the beat, with the most mature increasingly keeping to the rhythm. In Nursery, staff further extended the theme on France by introducing the song 'Frère Jacques'. This well organised, planned and resourced lesson gave the children plenty of opportunities to sing, play percussion instruments and make a contribution to a team effort. These children were good listeners, following rhythm and maintaining their confident approach.

ENGLISH

111. As the school is a recent amalgamation, insufficient data exists to identify trends in National Curriculum test results over time. Most recent National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 show that attainment in reading last year was below average and in

writing was well below average. At the end of Year 6, attainment in English was well below average. Work seen during the inspection shows some improvement in standards this year, particularly in reading, owing to some effective teaching of the basic skills of reading. Differences in the cohorts of pupils also help to explain differences in standards between the two year groups, with the present Year 6 pupils showing a level of skill that fits more closely with a 'below average' judgement on attainment. Standards in reading are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils make good progress throughout the school. In writing, standards are below average and better than the 2002 test results indicate. This is because teachers help pupils to learn the separate skills of writing satisfactorily overall. Standards remain below average because these skills are not then practised sufficiently, especially in other subjects.

Reading

112. By the end of Year 2, pupils:

- read fluently from books of appropriate difficulty;
- chat knowledgeably about the themes and characters in the stories they read;
- show that they read other books for pleasure;
- are beginning to know how to find information from books.

By the end of Year 6, pupils:

- read fluently from a range of books;
- read with good understanding;
- are keen to discuss books they have read and authors they like;
- retrieve information from reference books.

The reasons for this good progress are:

- A regular programme of reading lessons and homework, well supported by parents.

113. Pupils read regularly in school and are taught the skills of reading systematically. A strong home-school partnership results in many pupils practising their reading regularly at home. Parents contribute valuably to this process, often writing supportive or evaluative comments in their children's Reading Records. Pupils are encouraged to read and to develop a liking for books.

- Good teaching of the skills of reading.

114. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively in order to help pupils develop their skills. In some lessons observed, pupils were given well planned short sessions during which they read a challenging shared text with the teacher and then quietly on their own before discussing aspects of the text together (a process known as 'guided reading'). These sessions are effective in helping pupils to develop both accuracy and understanding in their reading.

115. As a result of these strengths, pupils are eager to read. They like to show how well they can read and how knowledgeable they are about books. For example, a Year 2 pupil was not content with reading to an inspector from one reading book – she went and collected several others she had recently read and then read extracts from each, showing good recall of the stories concerned.

116. Pupils develop basic skills of reading well in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 they read confidently and with understanding. They are beginning to show skills of finding information from simple reference books. As they move through Key Stage 2, good progress continues, although some pupils in Year 4 display insufficiently developed skills of finding and retrieving information from books. However, by Year 6, these skills are back to the expected level for pupils this age. Whilst 'Harry Potter' is the undoubted favourite 'read', other books and other authors do get a mention, including Roald Dahl, Brian Jacques and JRR Tolkien.
117. In view of these very positive features, it is a little disappointing that the school library is a rather isolated place that seems far from the heart of the school's success in reading. Partly this is due to the unusual nature of the accommodation with the library being situated on the top floor of the school. However, it is not a place where pupils are likely to browse or read for pleasure (it contains no fiction books).

Writing

118. Writing is identified in the school development plan as a priority for improvement and inspection findings support the school's view. Whilst progress is largely satisfactory from a low starting point when pupils begin school, nonetheless the school is not yet achieving the success in writing that it is in reading. This is due in large part to two factors:
- the teaching of reading skills is more effective than those of writing;
 - the curriculum for writing is insufficiently developed.
119. In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were often not given sufficient time to practise and develop their writing skills, and the work set for them sometimes did not provide them with sufficient opportunity or challenge to develop these skills. Pieces of work in pupils' exercise books quite often show good progress over longer periods of time in developing a particular skill but the lack of sufficient planned opportunities for pupils to write work they have composed themselves hinders their progress in writing.
120. Pupils often do well in putting together one piece of writing. In Year 2, for example, pupils were producing longer pieces of work in July than in the previous September and were punctuating their work well and spelling simple words more accurately. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 show a good turn of phrase and have developed the ability to extend their sentences in an interesting way. By the end of Year 6, pupils show that they can adapt their writing to suit different settings and often produce an eye-catching phrase, as when one Year 6 pupil wrote about a visit to a restaurant, 'I was appalled by the service'. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are confident spellers but this is not usually the case for other pupils. Standards in spelling are generally weaker in Key Stage 2 than they should be. Pupils' handwriting is neat but some wait a surprisingly long time before they are encouraged to write using joined script: pupils in Year 4 are sometimes still printing their letters separately.
121. The problem comes not with progress in individual pieces of work but in the fact that pupils do not build upon this over a sufficiently wide range of writing experiences to consolidate their learning gains. Writing is not yet seen as an opportunity for real communication and learning in subjects other than English. In science, history and geography, pupils are too often constrained by answering short questions on worksheets or by copying work from another source. Far too few examples were evident of pupils being presented with the opportunity to organise their thoughts so as to plan a piece of writing about a particular subject and then to write for an extended

period of time to complete their task. As a result, enrichment of writing does not occur and progress is limited.

122. Writing tasks set by teachers sometimes do not challenge pupils sufficiently to improve their skills, and assessment of pupils' work is sometimes not sufficiently well focused on improving individuals' writing skills, although teachers do mark work conscientiously. Sometimes in literacy lessons, too little time is given to allow pupils to write and that time often comes towards the end of a lesson in which pupils have listened to the teacher and worked on developing other skills. During the inspection, very little evidence was seen of pupils using ICT in order to help them communicate more creatively through writing.
123. Teachers and other staff often provide appropriate support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and for those learning English as an additional language. This usually takes the form of the teacher or support assistant working with these pupils within a group. However, there was less evidence, particularly at Key Stage 2, of pupils being given different tasks to support their learning in a more focused way. Whilst teachers often provide support for pupils with special educational needs by working with the groups in which these pupils work, little was seen of pupils working towards targets set in individual education plans. As a result, their learning is not sufficiently focused. Teachers' lesson planning sometimes did not refer to the learning needs of these pupils.
124. In the best lessons, pupils are given the chance to create English for themselves, as when pupils in Year 3 developed a choral approach to speaking their own poems. In this lesson, higher attaining pupils did particularly well, establishing and sustaining a strong rhythmic element to their work.
125. Where teaching is ineffective, tasks set do not challenge pupils sufficiently and as a result, whilst they complete them, little gains are made in learning. When specialist support is given to pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, these pupils become eager to learn and especially to converse in English. As a result, they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes not provided with learning targets that provide a sufficiently sharp focus on developing a particular skill. This limits their progress.

Speaking and listening

126. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school in developing the skills of speaking and listening. They are given good opportunities in lessons to respond to questions and to work together to discuss issues and explore ideas. On these occasions, pupils respond enthusiastically and sensibly. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils worked creatively in pairs to develop questions about growing seeds. They produced some good work – and lower attainers were helped to achieve well by the good support of a teaching assistant. Year 6 pupils responded well to the opportunity to devise and put questions to the teacher who was playing the part of a child from a story they had been discussing.
127. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The two subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable about subject strengths and weaknesses. The planned programme for improvement is being monitored closely. The school's system for using assessment information about pupils' performance to enable specific targets to be set for each pupil is a sound one but is not always evident in practice. As yet, the co-

ordinators do not systematically check the quality of teaching in other classes and hence are not in a good position to identify best practice and areas of weakness.

MATHEMATICS

128. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are below average when compared to similar schools but well below average when compared to all schools. Achievement is good though it is inconsistent in Year 6. It is clear from judgements made during this inspection that standards for pupils in Years 3 and 5 are in line with national expectations. This reflects the consistently good teaching across both classes in each of these year groups. Pupils who have special educational needs are integrated into all classroom activities; their overall progress is satisfactory. However the rate of progress is inconsistent and does not always match that of the rest of their classmates, specifically pupils some classes in Years 3 to 5 who have special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to learning. They are prepared to learn and try their best to achieve well.

Standards at the end of Year 2 (Inspection Findings)

- Pupils identify odd and even numbers and progress from recognising numbers to doubling numbers, adding numbers to twenty, and realising the links between addition and subtraction of numbers but only higher achieving pupils are able to consistently give reasons for their answers.
- Higher achieving pupils rank temperatures from the lowest to the highest.
- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of heavier and lighter but limited knowledge of standard measure.
- All pupils gain a knowledge of common three-dimensional shapes but show no evidence of knowledge of angles.
- Pupils learn to create simple block graphs, recognise and colour half of a regular shape and are starting to recognise the time on an analogue clock but are not yet sufficiently confident in this.

Standards at the end of Year 6 (Inspection Findings)

- Pupils have extended their competence in number and confidently round numbers to the nearest ten, hundred or thousand. They can use positive and negative numbers though lower attaining pupils have difficulty in consistently applying the four rules of number.
- They know the relationship between decimal, fraction and percentage equivalents but not all are confident in the application of this knowledge.
- Pupils' knowledge of shape becomes more sophisticated as they identify different types of triangles and quadrilaterals but their increased knowledge of measurement in time or capacity is limited.
- Pupils can calculate the angles of triangles and work out the area of right-angled triangles.
- Use of data now includes using frequency tables and calculating the mean, median and range of a group of numbers but the majority of pupils show insufficient understanding of probability.
- They build on their earlier experiences of traffic counts and temperature graphs and mark and plot co-ordinates, taking care with the presentation of their work, but

interpretation and construction of line graphs and other diagrams is insufficiently developed for the majority of pupils including higher attaining pupils.

- Pupils use appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as 'equation' and 'formula' when they use letters as symbols.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. However the picture varies between different classes and year groups, ranging from unsatisfactory to very good. Consistently good or very good teaching is evident in Years 3 and 5. Teaching in these classes is typified by:

- well planned and well organised teaching, structured approaches building on skills already learned, lively and challenging tasks that interest and motivate the pupils;
- lessons have a prompt and fast paced start, with teachers questioning and involving all pupils;
- the main part of the lesson is clearly demonstrated by the teachers and work is provided to match the attainments of all the pupils.

Other examples of effective teaching

130. The youngest pupils in Year 1 enjoyed the challenge of paying for small items during well-planned imaginative play, gaining confidence from the happy and informal learning atmosphere.

131. In a Year 2 lesson, very good teaching included a lively start with very good use of individual number lines so pupils could demonstrate their understanding of 'twos' 'fives' and 'tens'. After an activity where pupils closed their eyes and listened carefully to the sound of dropped coins, calculating the total value of the coins, their teacher congratulated the class on how much they had learned. This provided a very good starting point for the subsequent challenges of recognising halves and quarters of shapes.

132. In Year 6, a very good lesson started with a practical activity with groups of pupils holding circles of string and working collaboratively to demonstrate their knowledge of pentagons, trapezium and rhombus. The pupils were fully involved, had fun and reinforced their exiting knowledge of shape. After this excellent start pupils were more than ready to explore and investigate number sequences, sharing their learning, explaining their rationale and enjoying the challenge of the lesson.

Less effective teaching

133. Where teaching is less effective, some of the following characteristics are present:

- the mental arithmetic 'starter' to the lesson is too teacher dominated;
- teachers are insecure in their knowledge;
- resources are not matched to pupils' skills;
- activities lack challenge;
- time is wasted and learning is restricted.

136. Though teachers are aware of the different levels of ability within their classes, the planning to meet the different needs, particularly those pupils who have special educational needs, is inconsistent. Where teaching is very good those teachers make sure they spend individual time with pupils who need support but in other lessons the work is not sufficiently targeted to meet pupils' individual educational needs. Similarly evidence of extension work to challenge the higher attaining pupils is inconsistent,

reflecting the quality of teaching. ICT is being used successfully with Year 5 pupils, giving daily focused activities to interest and challenge pupils. This is a pilot scheme and the school has yet to measure the impact on learning before deciding to extend the scheme. Hence, the impact of ICT on the development of skills in numeracy is limited.

134. The National Numeracy Strategy is embedded in the work of the school, however there is some way to go in identifying the wide range of opportunities to introduce mathematical concepts in other subjects to reinforce and extend pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. Analysis of test results is satisfactory. The school is able to identify underachievers and to focus on particular year groups to address specific needs.
135. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is conscientious and has a clear understanding of how to take the subject forward and to build on the improving quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Evidence from assessment tests is looked at closely and decisions made to target particular groups of pupils to raise attainment and to buy additional resources to support pupils' learning. Though it is early days to judge the impact of this strategy, standards in Year 5 have improved and this may correlate with the successful teaching combined with the ICT pilot scheme. Individual target books have been produced for each pupil; these are intended to inform parents and children about the subject objectives as well as helping teachers to focus more clearly on individual pupils' levels of attainment. The school is well resourced for the teaching of mathematics.

SCIENCE

136. Teacher assessments of seven year-olds in 2002 showed attainment well below average. Inspection evidence including discussions with pupils currently in this age group indicates that by the end of Year 2 standards are a little improved but still below average. As pupils move through Years 1 and 2, they make satisfactory progress although those capable of higher attainment do not progress as well as they could. In Years 3 to 6, progress is variable although satisfactory overall. In national tests for Year 6 in 2002, standards were well below average. Inspection findings show that for current Year 6 pupils attainment is better than the 2002 national tests results indicate although still below average. Pupils in the present Year 6 show a level of understanding that indicates better attainment than the results achieved by the previous cohort. There is no significant difference between the progress and attainment of girls and boys throughout the school, and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to others in their age group.
137. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 2 pupils' understanding and skill in scientific enquiry is below average. For example:
- although some pupils in Year 2 have begun to record their findings and carry out measurements, overall, pupils show poor measuring and recording skills;
 - the quality of written work is poor for many pupils and, although they are sometimes encouraged to develop their writing skills, the overuse of worksheets and 'cut and paste' activities in some classes militates against this;
 - higher attainers are beginning to be aware of the need to make a test fair, but this, and the idea of prediction as part of a scientific approach, is generally not understood.

138. Attainment in the other areas of science is also unsatisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. For example:

- although most pupils can name the main parts of a plant and group organisms as plants or animals, many are confused in their understanding of the requirements for plant growth and for the germination of seeds;
- pupils have limited awareness of the idea of forces and cannot discuss them in terms of 'pushes and pulls' despite appropriate work, such as testing the movement of cars on a ramp.

139. By the end of Year 6, the level of pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is below average. For example, pupils in Year 6:

- know how humans carry out basic life processes and can confidently explain the reasons for faster heartbeat and increased breathing during exercise but they do not appreciate why extra oxygen is needed;
- have limited understanding of links between organisms and their environment although pupils can provide a range of examples of food chains and explain these relationships well;
- have satisfactory understanding of evaporation and condensation but in discussion are unsure of the idea of a solution; and separation of mixtures is not securely understood;
- do not have a satisfactory understanding of forces.

140. Teaching of science is satisfactory overall throughout the school and sometimes good.

Strengths in the teaching

- Teachers generally use and reinforce scientific terminology well.
- Where work is well matched to pupils' learning needs, for example in Year 3, pupils of all attainments are challenged well to enable good progress.
- When teaching is most effective, independent writing is encouraged, so that as well as articulating their scientific thinking, pupils develop this skill.
- Lessons for older pupils often include good attention to the interpretation of data.

Weaknesses in the teaching

- Planning of lessons is inconsistent and does not always give sufficient emphasis to clear objectives for learning.
- Attention to the interpretation of data is sometimes at the expense of opportunities for first-hand investigation.
- Activities are not always tailored to meet the needs of different groups within a class, especially higher attainers.
- Overuse of commercial worksheets in some classes and widespread copying of key information and outcomes of experimental work. The absence of a consistent approach to guiding pupils in the independent recording of their work hinders literacy development as well as progression in scientific enquiry.
- Numeracy is not well supported as pupils undertake limited measurements and draw graphs only occasionally. Use of information and communication technology is also limited and the use of ICT to record work or for research is rare.

141. Throughout the school pupils take good care over the presentation of work. Good behaviour was seen in all lessons during the inspection, with pupils responding well to

teachers' expectations, showing enjoyment and good engagement with their work and carrying out practical activities responsibly. A notable feature of almost all science lessons observed is the full involvement of all pupils in the activities and the good attention to ensuring that the needs of all groups are met.

142. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by co-ordinators who are aware of the need to improving assessment, use more literacy skills in science and develop a systematic approach to progression in Science Enquiry. However, strategies for improvement in the identified areas are not yet sufficiently formulated. Teachers' planning is supported satisfactorily by units of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority although not always adapted enough to meet the needs of a particular class. The curriculum is enriched well by use of the local environment and by workshops funded through the Education Action Zone, but these are not always clearly integrated into the planned work for the class and followed up quickly in lessons, reducing their impact on standards. The co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work but this is not systematic and there is no observation of teaching. Overall, monitoring is unsatisfactory as it does not yet have an impact on standards.

ART AND DESIGN

143. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above average. Their achievement is very good and builds very successfully upon the very good start they make in the Foundation Stage. These very good standards are apparent when entering the school. Very high quality displays greet the visitor, helping to create a high quality environment in which pupils' efforts are highly valued and clearly reflect the high achievement.
144. By the end of Year 2, pupils have benefited from good teaching of a very good range of skills and techniques across a wide range of media. Pupils learn to observe closely, paying good attention to finer detail. Pupils understand the technique of weaving and use a range of fabrics and take inspiration from the work of other artists. The use of art to record and illustrate is enhancing the standards in other topics, for example a collage of "Where The Wild Things Are" is supporting literacy.
145. By the end of Year 6, many pupils have built a very good bank of skills and knowledge and have benefited a great deal from the good opportunities the school has to offer. They have considered the work of many well-known artists in different media. For example, they learn from the bold use of colour of the potter, Clarice Cliffe, and then produce highly coloured pictures of jugs emulating her designs. In a Year 6 lesson when considering texture, pupils were able to mention Van Gogh as an artist noted for the texture in his work.
146. Teaching is good overall. Strengths include:
- It is securely based upon sound subject knowledge, and good teaching of techniques and skills;
 - an enthusiastic approach ensures a very good variety of well planned learning opportunities and well resourced lessons for the pupils and as a result they are interested and keen to learn and do their best;
 - behaviour in lessons is usually very good.
140. All pupils have the opportunity of joining one of the extra-curricular art clubs and in one of these clubs the school recognises and promote the talents of pupils who have been identified as having a special talent in art. Work can be seen from pupils representing

Years 3 to 6 who looked at a variety of Picasso's work before drawing and colouring a picture of their partner in a similar style. The results were excellent and show the progress these pupils are making over their time in these year groups. Similar very good standards can be seen in a collage made from 12 highly decorated clay tiles to resemble fish. A very pleasing effect is created when they are displayed against a background which depicts the colour, texture and movement of the sea.

141. The school has a very good curriculum for art and design, and the high level of interest of the staff, the high expectations they have of the pupils, and the high profile of the subject, strongly contribute to its success, making it one of the strengths of the school. A significant feature is the drive provided by the very good subject management. The art and design curriculum plays a full part in promoting multi-cultural awareness. A good example is the excellent display of African art in Year 6. There is a growing use ICT for finding information or, as in Year 3, using the 'Paint' program and repeating pattern to create wallpaper design. The opportunities for learning in art are a model for very good practice in ensuring that all pupils are included in the work of the school. The school clearly sees art and design as a curriculum area in which all can succeed, regardless of attainment. As such, some of the lower achieving pupils are amongst the highest achievers in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but all pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other groups of pupils.
143. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop skills such as cutting and joining, although there is not a systematic approach to developing these skills. Photographic evidence of vehicles with wooden axles made in Year 2 show that pupils have given consideration to the purpose of their vehicle in making the design, for instance to transport a giraffe. Pupils in Year 1 understand the importance of fruit in a healthy diet and have made fruit salad, but there is no evidence of identifying design criteria or evaluation of the outcome, and this element of the subject is unsatisfactory.
144. Pupils in Year 6 also show poor understanding in these aspects of design and technology, although their skills in making are as expected for the age group. Their work on slippers shows a thorough consideration of styles and materials, and pupils of all abilities have displayed slippers made from a careful individual plan, but there is no evidence of evaluation against agreed criteria. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, where pupils made a prototype for a controllable vehicle, they were not aware of the idea of a design specification and had no agreed criteria for evaluation. However they were implicitly evaluating their work as it progressed and modifying their model accordingly, showing good understanding of principles. Discussion with Year 6 pupils confirms that they do not experience systematic opportunities to evaluate their products and do not work to a specified design brief to enable evaluation.
145. Teaching is satisfactory.
- Overall, teachers display satisfactory knowledge, planning appropriate activities, although they do not encourage pupils sufficiently in the drawing of design ideas and specifications and establishing criteria for evaluation.
 - Where pupils are not given opportunities to explore their own ideas and are over-directed by the teacher, lessons are less effective.

- Classroom management and organisation are good, and lessons are orderly with good attention to issues of safety.
146. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily and national guidance has recently been introduced to provide a suitable framework to ensure a satisfactory range of learning opportunities is provided. This is supported by resources, including some for assessment, and from externally-provided workshops such as on construction, which enrich the curriculum. Although the co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject throughout the school, at present there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and standards of work to ensure that all aspects of the subject are adequately addressed.

GEOGRAPHY

147. At the end of Year 2, standards are below average. They are average overall by the end of Year 6 although they are weaker in geographical skills than in other areas. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils respond positively to their work, showing good attention to presentation and engagement with ideas, with good behaviour in all lessons seen.
148. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the difference between human and physical features of an area and can describe these for both seaside and island environments. Their understanding and skill with maps is weak and even higher attaining pupils cannot explain the use of a key, simple co-ordinates or maps of the locality, although they have traced their route to school on a local map. Work on traffic has given rise to a discussion of road safety in which pupils show that they understand road signs, but the majority are only aware of the area around their own school.
149. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils can discuss geographical issues with confidence, offering informed opinions in a discussion on conflicting priorities and showing awareness of issues such as pollution, urbanisation and conservation. They have a sound knowledge of rivers and major towns in the United Kingdom. Most pupils can identify patterns and processes in physical geography through their study of rivers locally and in Egypt, including erosion and the effect of rivers on agriculture, though not soil fertility. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils show good awareness of environmental issues, considering the changes over time and the possible uses of a local derelict site, taking account of differing needs. By the age of eleven they can use maps of the locality with different scales, linking them to aerial photographs, and are familiar with 4-figure grid references but are less confident of the use of symbols and keys.
150. Teaching is satisfactory overall.
- All pupils are included well in lessons; relationships are very good; and pupils are managed well.
 - Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and most produce clear plans with appropriate expectations of pupils' performance, though there is insufficient expectation that pupils will record their work, especially in Years 1 and 2, resulting in missed opportunities to develop writing skills, and limitations to the depth of pupils' learning, including the learning for pupils with special educational needs related to writing, who do not get the opportunity to achieve their learning targets;
 - Teachers link geographical issues to real life situations, such as local traffic issues and a study of a derelict area but not all teachers are good at developing pupils' speaking skills through the subject.

151. As well as the poor links with literacy, links with numeracy are underdeveloped, with only some data handling. There is a significant deficiency in the opportunities to link geography with ICT. Marking of pupils' work is often cursory and praises work without commenting on pupils' learning, with insufficient use of dialogue to encourage pupils to think about their work.
152. Management of the subject is satisfactory, and a considered curriculum is evolving to make sensible of established elements alongside new developments. The time allocated in the scheme of work to the study of geography is appropriate. Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory, as although there is a policy for a systematic approach to ascertaining what pupils have learned and for monitoring their progress, in practice this is not evident. Insufficient attention is given to monitoring teaching and learning.

HISTORY

153. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average. The good progress the pupils make in Years 3 to 6 result in standards at the end of Year 6 being above average. Achievement throughout the school is good and can be seen in the depth of study of the various topics and the progressive increase in quality, quantity and extent of work. All groups of pupils are ensured the same opportunities and are included well in all activities. Lower attaining pupils tend to represent their work with a greater emphasis upon pictorial representation and some of the tasks they are given have prompts and other forms of help built into them.
154. By the end of Year 2 pupils are aware of the passage of time by comparing the changes that have taken place in everyday objects, for example placing toys on a timeline, or as typified by Year 1 work, studies of changes that have taken place at the seaside. They begin to be aware of the significance of some famous people such as Florence Nightingale and how nursing has changed since her day. They learn of famous people and their association with particular events they have studied, for example, they know how the diary of Samuel Pepys gives us information about the Great Fire of London. Through this pupils begin to understand the importance and variety of different sources of historical knowledge.
155. Scrutiny of the work from Years 3 to 6 shows an impressive amount of work of consistent good quality. Very secure learning of historical facts and skills takes place throughout the junior school. Pupils have good factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of history, within the areas of study in which they have worked, for example, Britain and other countries, the Ancient Greeks, the Romans, the Tudors and Victorians and such important events as the Second World War. Local and social history is often interwoven into these topics, for example how the war affected children and why Liverpool was so heavily bombed. The quality is much enhanced by very good and careful presentation, showing that pupils are interested and care about their work. By Year 6, pupils link the causes and effects of changes. They make judgements upon historical events and consider the validity of arguments of the time, for example, arguments for and against the railways.
156. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and is sometimes good.
 - Teachers plan interesting activities for the pupils and often support their lessons with interesting artefacts. As a result, pupils are keen to learn.

- Where teaching is good, historical events are made very vivid for the pupils and pupils are very well involved in listening carefully and then giving their own ideas and opinions.
- Teachers expect pupils to take part and in turn. All ideas and pupils' comments are valued.

157. The curriculum is good and subject leadership is satisfactory. Although there is some monitoring of standards through the work in pupils' books, there is no formal system for assessment. Marking is inconsistent but in instances it is very good. Homework is at times given but it does not follow set patterns. Pupils have opportunities for visits to places of historical interest or significance, usually linked to their topic. In accordance with this policy, Year 3 have visited Chester for their Roman topic and Year 6 to Croxteth Hall in connection with their Victorian topic. There is awareness of the need to increase the use of ICT to help pupils develop their skills as this does not yet make sufficient contribution to pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

158. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has made considerable progress over the past two years. Achievement for all groups of pupils is satisfactory.

159. Pupils in Year 2 use an appropriate range of computer skills. They have satisfactory keyboard skills and mouse control and use icons to change font and colour. They word process poems they have written and can import pictures to enliven the text. They use their skills to make 'plaques' of their names and decorate these with pictures they access through the 'Clip Art' program. They use the computer to help them design Mother's Day cards. They create graphs to illustrate places visited as part of a geography topic, an example of the improving use of ICT to enrich the wider curriculum. They can satisfactorily program a floor robot device to make it move and turn in directions they determine.

160. By the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory use of the computer but opportunities for independent use are insufficient in some classes. Pupils use the computer for data handling in mathematics and create graphs depicting mode and range. They use a sensor program to record changes in light and temperature, leading one pupil to comment, "Data logging using the computer is a lot easier". Regular use is made of word processing, as is evident in the story by Year 5 of 'The Haunted House'. Pupils are able to create computer-based presentations and can demonstrate their use, but their knowledge of spreadsheets is very limited.

161. Teaching is satisfactory overall.

- Teachers are making some good use of the computer suite and the interactive whiteboard to teach part of important curriculum areas, such as literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers are beginning to plan carefully to use computers to support learning in other subjects.
- In the best lessons observed, the teacher's enthusiasm was shared with pupils and they were keen to extend their skills to emulate the skills the teacher had demonstrated.
- Teachers encourage pupils to use the Internet to research for information.

164. The merging of the two schools has greatly contributed to the very good provision. Pupils' opportunity to use computers has increased through the availability of two networked computer suites as well as computers located in each classroom. There are two interactive whiteboards, which are seen to greatly assist teaching in some lessons observed. The school is increasingly using the computer to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs. This helps these pupils in their progress as it makes them more keen to learn.
165. Subject management is satisfactory. The subject manager is enthusiastically supporting his colleagues and has formulated plans for improvement, which include facilities for all pupils to have their own e-mail account. He has recently started a computer club aimed at providing opportunity for pupils who do not have a computer at home. The subject is financially well resourced and this should enable the school achieve its short-term aim in creating a more favourable pupil to computer ratio.

MUSIC

166. No work was seen in Year 2 during the inspection but in Year 1, standards are average. Pupils are reasonably tuneful when they sing simple songs unaccompanied. They can perform actions within songs in appropriate places whilst they sing. Nearly all know which instruments from a selection give either a long or a short sound. Higher attaining pupils make the connection in length of sound between long/metal; short/wood.
167. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average, with pupils generally working at levels a year or so behind those expected for their age but they achieve well in lessons. Whilst pupils work at a level that is below that expected for their age they are enthusiastic and imaginative in their approach. They work well in groups to produce creative music effects for particular parts of an imaginary journey. They combine various tuned and untuned instruments well in order to produce effects. They control the resultant sound well, responding attentively to the conductor. As a result, some good creative 'layers' of sound are produced. Pupils who speak English as an additional language take full part in lessons, working happily and productively in small groups when required to do so.
168. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good.
- Whilst teachers often demonstrate no more than a satisfactory level of musical knowledge and understanding, they make up for this with enthusiasm and their ability to interpret a commercial scheme well.
 - Lessons are well resourced and have a clear focus. They are long enough to allow teachers to develop a theme but not so long as to become tedious.
 - Pupils are involved actively and respond well.
 - Where teaching is good, for example in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher has high expectations of pupils' posture and breathing when they are singing. This results in improved quality of performance and good achievement.
169. Subject management is satisfactory. The subject's profile in the school is an improving one and it is managed with enthusiasm and a clear sense of direction for development. The school is building up instrumental tuition for those who wish to learn to play an instrument and who have the talent to do this. The co-ordinator runs a recorder group that has had opportunities to perform in front of other pupils. Working with a local Gospel group, pupils in Year 6 performed with other pupils from city schools. All these activities aid pupils' social development and enhance the school's place in the local community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

170. Owing to timetable restrictions, it was not possible to observe the full range of activities. Consequently, there is no overall judgement about attainment and achievement. However, in the aspects inspected:

- attainment in games by the age of seven is below national expectations;
- attainment in athletics by the age of eleven is in line with national expectations;
- attainment in swimming by the age of eight is in line with national expectations. However, the pupils do not go swimming with the school after Year 4 and it is difficult to judge that they will swim 25 metres by the age of 11.

In the narrow range of aspects inspected, attainment is not as high as it might be.

171. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have insecure throwing and catching skills. Around one third of pupils are strong, accurate throwers and safe catchers. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the effects of exercise on the body are restricted because of:

- insufficient opportunities to discuss how their bodies react after vigorous activity;
- too few opportunities to be involved in strongly physical work, particularly in the warm-up to lessons.

172. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are developing secure throwing and jumping skills. In jumping, most pupils make adequate progress in developing:

- a running jump;
- a standing jump;
- hurdling.

173. Owing to the precise and helpful ways that these skills are broken down into discrete parts which pupils then practise part by part, they connect them adequately for performance. A minority of pupils have difficulty with accurately striding up to hurdles so that they take off at the right moment. In throwing, most pupils are developing adequate techniques, particularly in how to transfer weight in the throwing act. Pupils are aware of safety matters and talk soundly about the skills and techniques of others.

174. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. They are very good when the quality of teaching and learning are good and in this case the lesson was a boost to pupils' self-esteem.

175. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This judgement includes good and unsatisfactory lessons. In general, teachers have insufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject and this is most noticeable in:

- the weak warm-up activities in several classes;
- the lack of reflection/discussion activities;
- the inappropriate choice of venue for activities, such as tennis in the hall and jumping on a playground that has uneven parts and loose stones.

176. In the unsatisfactory lesson, there was inadequate attention paid to catching skill development, weak control of the class and insecure knowledge and understanding of how to teach throwing and catching.

177. Where teaching is effective:

- there is a vigorous warm-up;
- higher attaining pupils provide good examples of how to do something; and pupils are expected to comment on this;
- teachers allow pupils to learn new skills in small parts, for instance, learning the importance of leg thrust in throwing by not allowing them to use their legs at first. Subsequently, when using their legs the ball travels further.

178. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Owing to inadequacies in the checking of teaching and learning, the co-ordinator has little idea of standards in Years 1 to 5. The curriculum is adequate, but the fact that it is based on three separate documents is a cause for concern until these inputs are integrated into one scheme of work that is clear to all. There is an appropriate scheme to bring in outside coaches to give expert guidance on football and judo.