

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Widnes

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 133322

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Woodman

Reporting inspector: Keith Edwards
21190

Dates of inspection: 23 - 26 June 2003

Inspection number: 249055

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Edinburgh Road Widnes
Postcode:	WA8 8BQ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Lee
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

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19741	Trevor Smith	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8316	Jozefa O'Hare	Team inspector	Geography History Music Special educational needs	
25470	Jean Morley	Team inspector	English Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakfield Primary School serves a large suburban area of Widnes and draws most of its children from the immediate locality. The school is the result of the recent amalgamation of two separate infant and junior schools on the same site. The school is larger than most other primary schools with 414 pupils on roll. This includes the 36 children who attend the nursery part-time and the 32 pupils who attend the school's three special educational needs units. Forty-three per cent of the pupils have an entitlement to free school meals which is well above the national average. The school has an almost all white population and all come from homes where English is the first language. Attainment on entry to the nursery is much lower than usual, although there is a wide spread of ability. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, mainly because they find it harder to learn than usual. This is below the national average. Fifteen pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is above average for the size of school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The excellent leadership of the headteacher has successfully fused the two separate infant and junior schools into a primary school. This is already an effective school that provides good value for money. Standards in English and mathematics are improving rapidly as a result of the good teaching and excellent assessment procedures. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and there are particular strengths in the nursery and in the special educational needs units. The pupils have good attitudes towards school and are growing in confidence as learners.

What the school does well

- The quality of leadership is excellent. The headteacher, staff and governors are working well as a team and have established a successful basis for the future development of the school.
- The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good overall. The quality of work in the units is outstanding and it enables the pupils to achieve a true sense of worth.
- The provision in the nursery is very good and enables the children to make a very good start to their learning.
- The school has introduced a very successful programme of personal, social and health education which promotes self-esteem and positive attitudes towards learning.
- The school's assessment procedures in English and mathematics are excellent and make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress.
- The school is very successful in developing its links with the community and with partner institutions.

What could be improved

- There are missed opportunities for the pupils to develop their literacy skills.
- The external accommodation is shabby and belies the quality of the work of the school.
- Standards in music are too low.
- Attendance is lower than the national average and punctuality at the start of the school day is poor.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the new school's first 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	N/A	N/A	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	E	E	
Science	N/A	N/A	D	B	

The above table relates to the pupils who left the school in 2002 and does not reflect the current picture in the school. The school is now successful in meeting the challenging targets it sets for different groups of pupils. For example, the Year 6 test results for 2003, which have yet to be confirmed, show a much improved performance in English, mathematics and science. Furthermore, the pupils make good progress and the standards of work seen at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing are average. Standards in English at the end of Year 6, and in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average as the impact of the school's assessment procedures and improved teaching are yet to take full effect. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average. Only in music in Years 3 to 6 are standards too low by the time the pupils leave school. Standards are close to the expected level in each of the other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils enjoy school and demonstrate positive attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils are well behaved in lessons, around the school and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The good relationships contribute well to pupils' learning. The pupils are supportive of each other and mix easily, both in lessons and in the playground. The pupils' use of initiative is satisfactory.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance levels have dropped and punctuality at the start of the day is poor. There is a high level of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. The monitoring of teaching has been a keystone to the success of the school and teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress and good learning

throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the nursery class and in the units for those pupils with special educational needs. Throughout the school, the teachers make very good use of assessment information to ensure that pupils of different abilities are enabled to make good progress. The monitoring of academic progress is very good for all pupils in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The quality of teaching is sound overall in literacy and numeracy lessons. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. However, in some lessons, opportunities for the pupils to express their own ideas are wasted as the pupils are merely required to copy information from a given text. Furthermore, there are too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their speaking skills through planned activities at the end of lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriching. The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school has established very good links with the community and pupils benefit from a wide range of visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. This is a strength of the school. The provision for those pupils in the units is outstanding.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The provision for the pupils' moral development is good. The provision for the pupils' social development is satisfactory but more opportunities could be provided for the pupils to take initiative. Although the school promotes the pupils' spiritual and cultural development satisfactorily, there are too few opportunities to celebrate the diversity of cultures from around the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. This is a caring school. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The school has developed very good procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic performance and personal development.

The school has developed a satisfactory working partnership with the parents. The involvement with the community has a very good impact on the pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. The school benefits from having an effective management team that has achieved much in a short period of time. It has established a climate of continuing improvement and strives to ensure that Oakfield provides the best possible education for all of its pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors meet all statutory requirements. However, they rely heavily on information provided by the headteacher and should ask more questions to deepen their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and key staff make a detailed analysis of test results and track the performance of each individual pupil. The headteacher monitors teaching and the outcomes are being used to improve the overall provision. The priorities identified in the school development plan are entirely appropriate.

The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Educational priorities are supported through the school's financial planning and the school seeks best value in its spending decisions.
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The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. The new computer suites are very good facilities and are used well. The outside of the school is shabby. Inspectors also noted that parents frequently dropped cigarette ends on the paths and waiting areas when bringing and collecting their children. Although resources and staffing are satisfactory overall, there are too few support staff in the junior classrooms.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approachability of the school. • The school has high expectations of their children. • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. • Their children enjoy coming to school. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team supports the parents' positive views and judges that there is now a good range of extra-curricular activities, although acknowledges that many of the clubs for the pupils have only recently started. The homework provision is satisfactory although there is inconsistency between classes. The parents at the meeting expressed concern about the future of the 76 swimming programme for their pupils now that the school's own pool has fallen into disrepair. The inspection team share this concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range although it is well below average overall, especially in terms of the children's communication skills and their mathematical development. However, by the end of their time in reception, most of the children are likely to reach the expected levels in all of the areas of learning. This is because they respond well to the very good teaching in the nursery class and the good teaching in the reception classes. The children show positive attitudes to learning, listen well to instructions and make good progress overall.
2. Although the National Curriculum assessments for the pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that the pupils' attainments were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing, the school met its targets for its pupils in most cases. This cohort of pupils included a significant proportion of pupils who were listed on the school's special educational needs register. Very few pupils achieved the higher grades (Level 3) in reading and mathematics. Standards were close to those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that current standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 are average. This represents a significant success and assessment data show that these pupils achieve well when compared with their attainment on entry to the school.
3. The results of the 2002 national tests for the pupils at age 11 show that standards were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. When compared to similar schools, they were below average overall. Inspection evidence shows that there has been a clear improvement in the current school year. This is because the teaching is better organised and very effective use is made of assessment information. Inspection findings show that in the present Year 6, the pupils' attainment in science is broadly average. Standards in English and mathematics are below average. However, progress in the junior classes is uneven. Although most pupils respond well to the setting arrangements and make good progress overall, there is some uneven progress in the few classes where the teaching lacks inspiration. However, the quality of teaching in Year 5 is very good and this enables the pupils to make rapid progress before their final year at the school.
4. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the units is outstanding. The Assessment units offer a very good curriculum, which is rich, vibrant, varied and relevant to the specific needs of the pupils. The excellent quality of teaching and of teamwork that exists between staff contributes to this provision. As a result, the pupils achieve very well in all areas of their learning and in personal development.
5. The pupils on the school's register of special needs have a wide range of needs and benefit from the specific help they receive, particularly in English and in mathematics. Throughout the school, these pupils make good progress relative to their abilities, because the school is committed to inclusion.
6. Attainment in speaking is below expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6 but, given the very low baseline when children join the school, these standards still represent good progress, particularly from the nursery to Year 2. Attainment in listening is good in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 6. Younger pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to their peers. Many older pupils are also good listeners but a significant minority – mainly Year 6 boys – do not attend well enough to what their teacher tells them or involve themselves adequately in the lesson. As a result, when asked to work independently, they show little interest in the task, have a limited idea of how to complete it and generate some minor disruption. This limits the progress they make in other aspects of the subject, particularly writing.
7. The pupils respond well to the systematic teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2 and make good progress. Standards in reading are average at the end of Year 2 but pupils' progress slows in the junior classes as the higher-order reading skills are not taught systematically. At the end of Year

2, the pupils' attainment in writing is average. Standards in writing are below average at the end of Year 6 as the benefits of the new teaching methods have not yet fully worked their way through the school. Furthermore, too few opportunities are made for the pupils to practise their writing in different subjects. The pupils' spelling and punctuation match expected levels but the range of vocabulary is weak. Standards of handwriting and presentation are satisfactory throughout the school.

8. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily and clearly tracks the pupils' progress. Although the pupils make good progress in the infant and junior classes, standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, the pupils benefit from the setting arrangements and this enables the pupils to achieve well by the time they leave the school. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a satisfactory grasp of how to use their mathematical skills in practical situations. They are beginning to use some of these to solve simple problems. In Years 3-6 pupils are given opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in problem solving exercises but these skills are rarely developed through other subjects.
9. Current standards in science are average at the end Year 2 which represents an improvement on the teacher assessments for 2002. The pupils make good progress through the school and current standards are average in Year 6.
10. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because the new computers in the suites are used systematically to teach the pupils the basic keyboard skills. The school is beginning to make effective use of computers to support learning in other subjects.
11. Standards in religious education are in line with what is expected at the end of Year 2 and by the time the pupils leave school in Year 6. The pupils have a basic understanding of Christianity and different world faiths. This understanding of the beliefs of major faiths and the consideration of how their actions impact on the lives of others are strong features of the pupils' work.
12. At the end of Year 6, standards meet expectations in art, design and technology, history, geography and in physical education, including swimming, where records show that many of the pupils become competent swimmers. Standards in history and geography are well supported by visits and visitors to broaden the pupils' first-hand experiences and these enhance learning. Standards in music are below average at the end of Year 6. This is because the pupils have too few opportunities to develop their skills of performance and the teaching lacks structure. The quality of singing is mediocre.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Most pupils enjoy school and, overall, their attitudes to learning are positive. In general they listen carefully and usually apply themselves well to their work. However, whenever teaching is not fully effective, as was observed in some lessons in junior classes, some pupils quickly lose interest and become indifferent to their studies.
14. Behaviour in class is generally good and, as a whole, mirrors pupils' attitudes. Out of class, pupils usually behave sensibly. Bullying is not a problem. No incidents were observed or reported during the inspection. Exclusions are rare, but when deemed necessary, are handled properly.
15. The pupils with special educational needs relate well to each other in their groups and in whole class situations. They contribute in lessons and enjoy being involved in activities with their peers. For example, in a food technology lesson, where the pupils, while preparing a healthy sandwich, listened patiently to each other as they outlined what contents they had chosen. Their faces reflected the enjoyment and pleasure and they commented positively on each other's choices. They develop a positive self-image through the effective support they receive from their teachers and the support assistants. Consequently, these pupils have developed a positive attitude to their work.

16. Overall, the pupils' personal development is good. They show respect for other people's feeling values and beliefs and understand the impact of their actions on others. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to show initiative and originality in lessons. All too often, they are told exactly what to do and, as a consequence, their creativity and development of independent learning skills are restricted. A school council has been formed but is not functioning as well as it could do as many of its elected members do not seem to be particularly interested in their roles. Relationships, generally, are good. Pupils are generally polite, friendly and work well together in class.
17. Attendance has fallen this year from a previously good level, and is now below the national norm. Unauthorised absence is relatively high despite measures recently introduced to reduce it. Punctuality is poor and is an issue that should be addressed urgently by the school. During the inspection, large numbers of pupils (and their parents) were observed drifting leisurely into school each morning up to ten minutes late. As a consequence lessons often start late and valuable teaching time is lost.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed, 73 per cent of the teaching was good or better with 26 per cent being very good and a further nine per cent judged to be excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The very good and excellent lessons were mainly seen in the nursery and in the work for the pupils with learning difficulties in the special educational needs units. The teachers maintain good discipline in almost all classes. A particular strength of the teaching is the quality of marking and feedback given to pupils which is very good throughout the school.
19. Science, with its strong emphasis on practical and investigative work, is well taught. Information and communication technology is well taught in the computer suites and is used well to support learning in other subjects. Although the teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory overall, more could be done to improve the quality of the pupils' work, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school does not yet plan consistently for the pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
20. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery ranges from good to outstanding. In the reception classes it ranges from satisfactory to very good and is mostly good. The concentration on the teaching and learning of basic skills through interesting and imaginative activities is fundamental to the work in the Foundation Stage and accounts for the very good overall progress of the children. A particular strength of the Foundation Stage is the very good teamwork of all staff. The nursery nurse, classroom assistants and student are an integral part of the planned provision and bring much enthusiasm and skill to children's learning. The staff work extremely well together and have high expectations of the children.
21. As a result of thorough planning and the effective and efficient use of time, most children maintain a good pace in their learning and show positive levels of interest and concentration in their everyday work. In an excellent range of daily planned activities in the nursery, emphasis is placed on learning through imaginative practical activities in situations familiar to the children to capture their interest. For example, as they plan a tea party in the "Nursery Rhyme Cottage" for "Mary, Mary", they develop their language and social skills. In the reception classes, whilst activities are based on the six areas of learning, they are approached more formally through subject specific lessons to prepare the children for entry into Year 1. The procedures for assessing the children's attainment are very good and significantly contribute to the very good progress made by the children.
22. The teaching of the pupils in the units is excellent. The staff know the needs of these pupils exceptionally well and plan appropriate programmes for learning. They have particularly high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of how they should behave. The high standards of discipline set, and the teachers' very good classroom management skills, ensure that there is a purposeful working environment in which it is easy for the pupils to learn. The high expectations and encouragement given ensure that the pupils try their hardest and they consequently achieve

very well. The quality of interactions between the pupils and the adults is consistently of the highest quality.

23. The teaching of children who have special educational needs in the mainstream classes enables them make good progress because they are well taught. The teachers are fully involved in drawing up the pupils' individual educational plans, in consultation with the co-ordinators. The staff know the needs of these pupils well. In the best lessons, the teachers target their questioning and support effectively, to encourage the pupils and to help them to feel included in class activities. This was observed in a literacy lesson, where the pupils persevered with their spelling and with extra support from the teacher, they began to understand spelling rules. The use of information and communication technology consolidated these pupils' spelling.
24. The quality of teaching in the infant classes is good. The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught systematically and good use is made of homework to support learning. The teachers, particularly those in Year 2, have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and academic achievement and are well organised. All of the teachers have established good relationships with their pupils. In science, the teachers are successful in planning a range of practical experiences for the pupils. For example, in a very successful Year 1 lesson, the pupils became fully engaged in investigating sources of light and were skilfully guided by the teacher and his classroom assistant in helping the pupils to draw out appropriate conclusions. In all classes, the teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together. This was evident in a Year 1 physical education lesson where the teacher and her assistant combined effectively to demonstrate a sequence of moves.
25. The quality of teaching in the junior classes is good. The quality of teaching in Year 5 is consistently good with very good features. Because the school has developed a clear strategy to monitor and develop the quality of teaching and to hold each teacher accountable for the progress of the pupils in his/her class, the quality of planning has improved and the teachers have appropriate expectations of the different ability groups. The setting arrangements are working well in English and mathematics. In some classes, for example in Year 4, the teachers develop the pupils' writing skills through other subjects such as geography, where the pupils write interesting accounts of changes on the River Mersey. Good use is made of new technology such as a "smart board" in one Year 4 class to teach times tables. However, in other classes, for example in Year 6, opportunities are wasted as the pupils are merely required to copy information about geographical features from a given text. Furthermore, there are too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their speaking skills through planned activities at the end of lessons.

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

26. The school provides a relevant and worthwhile curriculum which meets the needs of all of its pupils well. All national curriculum requirements are met including the teaching of religious education which is based on the local agreed syllabus. Provision for personal social and health education is very good. There is a well planned programme of work which enables time to be spent in lessons and on discussion dealing with personal issues which affect relationships and how they can contribute pupils' own and others' well being. A good example was the discussion Year 5 pupils had with the representative from Arriva Transport. Pupils learned of the consequences of vandalism and unsafe behaviour on buses and gained some clear insights about how to protect themselves and others from unnecessary harm. As part of their personal development pupils in Year 6 are taught about how their bodies change as they become teenagers. All pupils learn about the possible harmful effects of drugs and the importance of keeping safe, when the 'Life' caravan makes its annual visit to the school.
27. A strength of the curriculum is the planning and teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils learn good strategies for mental and written calculations and develop a good understanding of number patterns and sequences. In literacy lessons there is a strong emphasis on grammar, punctuation and spelling, and pupils learn how to organise their writing so that ideas are

expressed more clearly. However although good progress in both literacy and numeracy standards is evident, pupils do not apply those skills sufficiently in other subjects.

28. The strong curriculum focus on literacy and numeracy has been a priority for the school. This has resulted in less attention being given to some of the other subjects particularly music where standards are not as good as they should be. Provision for all other subjects is satisfactory.

29. The quality of provision has been improved since the reorganisation of time in the morning session. This has been extended for junior pupils, creating opportunities for science investigative work as well as literacy and numeracy to be taught when pupils are most alert. The school endeavours to make the curriculum more relevant to pupils' needs by encouraging the use of concept maps. This means that the classes 'brainstorm' prior to a topic to share all that they know about the subject. A similar process at the end of the topic reveals how much more they have learned. This was used effectively by pupils in Year 6 at the beginning of a science lesson about how combining substances can create gases.
30. The Foundation Stage curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes is well planned and fully meets the national guidance for children of this age. The children benefit from a rich and varied curriculum where effective links are made across all six areas of learning through themes.
31. The school makes very good provision for pupils on the register for special educational needs. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to their needs by means of individual education plans. The targets for these plans are detailed and contain useful work programmes. The pupils are taught in specific groups for English and for mathematics, but mixed for other subjects. This arrangement works well as pupils are able to work at appropriate levels. However, there are too few teaching assistants presently to ensure effective support for these pupils across all subjects.
32. The school provides an inclusive curriculum in which all pupils have learning opportunities which best suit their needs. Teachers are very sensitive to their pupils' specific difficulties and give very good support. A good example was seen in a class where a teacher encouraged a normally reticent pupil to be questioned by the whole class. This gave the pupil a lot of confidence so that later in the lesson he contributed a great deal to the discussion; this marked a significant achievement for the pupil in communication skills. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well in that they are grouped by ability for some lessons. A group of pupils from Year 6 attend weekly mathematics lessons at the local secondary school, while some younger pupils work with the age group above their own so that they are challenged at a higher level. Those who are more vulnerable are also very well provided for. In lessons work is planned to meet their specific needs. Booster classes to improve literacy and numeracy skills are effective in helping pupils achieve more and this is reflected in the overall standards seen in the school. A slightly less positive aspect however is that some pupils miss out on the lessons such as music because they are withdrawn from classes for additional support in basic literacy skills.
33. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities outside school time. Seasonal sporting clubs such as athletics, soccer and rugby league, as well as engineering, gardening and information and communication technology clubs, help pupils develop their wider interests. Junior pupils have the opportunity to go on residential visits to outdoor activity centres, where the focus may be adventurous activities such as orienteering or as in the case of Year 3 a 'Night Walk' (taken at dusk) in the Delamere Forest. These visits also contribute well to pupils' personal developments by promoting team work, negotiating skills and consideration for others.
34. The school works very well with the community and partner institutions to enhance pupils' learning. There are strong links with the local church. Resources have been donated by the local supermarkets and representatives from the police, transport companies, Liverpool and Everton football clubs and the local rugby league club have contributed to the life of the school. The school has also designed a 'maths challenge' to be used as part of a package of activities by schools visiting the local leisure and sports complex. Community links are also very well established through the "Parent Partnership" activities; for example, by providing adults with the opportunity to extend their skills in the use of computers so they can more easily support their children at home. Out of school care is also provided because of the school's links with 'Kids in the Community' project. Very good links are also established with other schools. Pupils benefit especially from specialist coaching during their visits to the secondary school. The co-ordinators for special educational needs liaise very effectively with other schools and ensure that pupils' learning is not unduly disrupted during their transfer to the next phase.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about the values and belief of different religions and how they

guide people's daily lives. Assemblies also contribute to pupils' spiritual development in giving them time to reflect on the qualities which are needed to form good relationships. For example, one assembly theme was 'winners and losers' from which pupils learned the all-important message about 'taking part'. In lessons, pupils' views are sought and valued. This is a particularly strong feature in the special educational needs unit, where teachers make learning a creative and exciting experience. Although there are displays of art and music around the school they are generally not interactive. A photographic display, for example, reminded pupils about the wonder they experienced in the forest, particularly their 'night walk', but there is nothing on that or other displays to encourage pupils to reflect on how they have felt or how to describe their emotions. In lessons there are too few instances of teachers questioning pupils to encourage them to express their deeper feelings, and, as a result, spiritual development is incidental rather than planned.

36. There has been a strong focus on pupils' moral development, and this is reflected in the good attitudes and behaviour of most of the pupils. There is a clear code of conduct which all pupils understand. Teachers are consistent in the way they use praise and reward to acknowledge good effort. Pupils know they are dealt with fairly and accept the consequences of any misdemeanour. Personal, social and health education, (PSHE), lessons help pupils to think through situations which may affect their relationships with others. For example when asked what difference the school had made to them as citizens, Year 6 pupils were very positive in their opinions against bullying and racism. The school encourages pupils to think about others' needs. Assemblies provide corporate, whole-school experiences and are attended by the whole staff. All adults are very good role models in the way they relate to pupils' with courtesy and deal fairly and sensitively with their different needs. Pupils in all junior classes have the chance to take part in a residential visit. This helps pupils learn to resolve differences through negotiation and to be tolerant and considerate of others.
37. Provision for the pupils' social development is satisfactory. However, the school could do more to encourage social interaction in the playground. There are no quiet areas where junior pupils can withdraw from the hurly-burly of playtimes, and no resources to encourage them to share group activities. The one instance observed in the infant playground was more encouraging. Pupils played with hoops and skipping ropes in mixed groups making the lunchtime a more rewarding social experience for them. In lessons there are too few opportunities for collaborative independent work. Apart from duties as monitors, giving out books or returning registers to the office there are too few occasions when pupils are given the opportunity to take on responsibility.
38. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory, but again more could be done to help pupils recognise the cultural diversity of society beyond their own locality. Pupils explore religious and to some extent cultural traditions of the Jewish, Hindu and Sikh faiths. This helps them to examine their own values and thoughts about equality. In literacy lessons, teachers use stories from other lands which also provides insights in different cultures. Occasional visitors such as the Chinese musician provide a real opportunity for pupils to learn that appreciation and love of music is a feature of all cultures. However such authentic opportunities are infrequent and the school has not developed strong enough links with agencies who are able to promote and support cultural development in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' general welfare are satisfactory overall. Child protection arrangements are secure. The headteacher has responsibility for liaising with the outside agencies and is suitably trained to carry out the duties associated with this role. The school is fully committed to the promotion of healthy living and is currently in the process of obtaining accreditation for this through Halton's Healthy School Programme. The poor standard of the outdoor environment and the need to carry out regular formal health and safety risk assessments are notable examples where improvements could be made.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good, although in the units they are generally very good. Teachers know their pupils well and put a lot of effort into raising levels of confidence and self-esteem. High standards of behaviour are promoted

successfully by most staff and, as a consequence, the school has a calm and orderly atmosphere where effective learning can take place. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort and significant achievements are celebrated. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility around school, particularly through the school council, although at present this body is not operating as effectively as it could do as many of the elected members seem uninterested in their roles. In class, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative and independence through their studies.

41. Registers are marked properly, checked on a daily basis and a first day contact scheme is operated to investigate any unexplained absences. This is good practice. Other measures to promote regular attendance include schemes such as 'star week' as well as involvement of the education welfare service. These, however, do not appear to be having any real impact as attendance has fallen this year and unauthorised absence remains high.
42. The school's procedures for early identification of pupils who are likely to experience difficulties start in the nursery, occasionally prior to children being admitted into the Foundation Stage. Analyses from baseline assessment are used for provision of support. The individual education plans are appropriately reviewed each term and statements of special educational needs are reviewed annually. Specialist agencies are contacted for those pupils who may need statements. The staff give pupils who need it sensitive help and guidance, both in school work and in behaviour. Progress is tracked closely.
43. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are very good and significantly contribute to the very good progress made by the children. The staff make good use of the information gathered to guide future planning. On entry to the nursery initial assessments are thorough and involve discussions with parents. The staff are presently involved in the implementation of the Foundation Stage Profile to assess each child's stage of development in the six areas of learning and also to set future targets for their achievement. Arrangements to track the children's progress over time are very good. These include monitoring progress through 'micro targets'. Close and careful observations of the children enable accurate assessments to be made. Assessment is an integral part of most planned activities.
44. In line with the priorities in its improvement plan, this young school has developed excellent strategies for assessment in English and mathematics and good ones for information and communication technology. Assessment in other subjects has yet to be developed although the vision and blueprint for doing so are clear. Overall, the current quality of the school's system is very good with clear indications that it could be excellent when complete.
45. The strength lies in the cohesion of the system as a whole, which is one conceived to move the school forward to a situation where all teachers are equally accountable for the progress their pupils make. It has received commitment from staff who, from an often low baseline of expertise, have been given the training to bring them to an accurate awareness of what constitutes attainment at each relevant National Curriculum level. Staff in each year-group have agreed a half-termly 'macro target' for each of literacy and numeracy. These have been dissected to give weekly 'micro targets' known to pupils and displayed in the classroom. For example, the current Year 2 macro-targets for mathematics and literacy are, 'to use standard units of measurement' and 'to write a non-fiction information leaflet'. Each has its several micro-targets, examples of which are, 'to introduce the terms *mass* and *capacity*' and 'to create and use a contents page, index and glossary'. The headteacher meets monthly with members of staff to look at 'value-added' – the progress their pupils have made. The system leaves little to be desired in terms of using assessment to influence teachers' planning and to improve achievement. The much improved current English and mathematics standards are testament to its success.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Response to the questionnaire was relatively low and only a few parents attended the parents' meeting before the inspection. Nevertheless, their views indicate that they are pleased with the way their children are being educated, and no significant concerns were raised.

47. The partnership with parents is satisfactory overall, although strenuous efforts are being made to establish closer links with them, particularly through various courses and workshops. These are moderately well attended and starting to make a positive contribution to parents' understanding of what is taught in class. For example, five parents are currently studying for a recognised qualification in computing. Parents do, however, give good support to social and fund-raising events organised by the Friends' Association. A few parents also provide regular and reliable help in class, particularly in the infants and nursery, and with after-school sports clubs.
48. There is close involvement with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are fully involved in the procedures at every stage and are kept well informed of their children's progress. The open-door policy and the initiatives to form closer links with the parents are all beginning to pay dividends.
49. On-going correspondence keeps parents well informed about life generally in school, and includes termly updates about the work taught in class. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved and kept fully abreast of all new developments. However, the quality of information which parents receive about their children's progress in end-of-year reports could be better. Whilst the report usually gives a clear indication about the work covered, all too often it lacks specific details about actual achievement, with many comments concentrating on attitudes to the various subjects. Targets are also frequently too general. The prospectus and governors' annual report do not meet statutory requirements. The prospectus lacks national comparative data for the standard tests and wrongly states that parents can withdraw their children from assembly when, in fact, they can only exercise this right for the element of collective worship. The governors' report also lacks the national comparative data for the standard tests as well as information about the provision for disabled pupils, staff development and the election of parent governors.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has ensured that Oakfield Primary, born of the recent amalgamation of the separate infant and junior schools, has made rapid progress in establishing its own identity and in functioning as one establishment. Through extensive consultation with the staff, priorities have been clearly identified and there has been unstinting commitment to establish procedures and systems that are common to each phase. For example, the school has developed rigorous and effective assessment procedures for English and mathematics to ensure that all pupils are achieving their best and all teachers are clearly held accountable for their pupils' progress. Standards are improving rapidly as the pupils rise to the challenge of higher expectations.
51. The headteacher has been very successful in promoting a common ethos of social inclusion and high expectations of the pupils' academic performance, behaviour and courteousness. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are happy to come to school; this is reflected in the positive response of the parents in the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection. The school has a growing reputation within the community and has established very good links with partner institutions.
52. The strategic management of the school has been first class and it has been particularly successful in building a team that will settle for nothing less than the best for the pupils. The curriculum priorities identified in the school development plan are entirely appropriate and set aspirational, and yet achievable long-term goals, within the current climate. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been supportive, systematic and yet rigorous to ensure that the process results in a clear evaluation of progress. Furthermore, the role of the curriculum co-ordinators has developed well and their effectiveness has improved. This is particularly the case with the co-ordinators of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology whose subjects have been a priority for development in the current academic year. The co-ordinators have risen to the challenge of increased responsibility and accountability. Their

confidence in taking the initiative and the development of their expertise has made a significant contribution to the improvement in standards.

53. The headteacher and senior staff have a commitment to ensuring that all pupils benefit from the educational opportunities that the school provides and seek to promote racial understanding and awareness of racist issues. The teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' own sense of worth and to their learning. The leadership of special educational needs is excellent. The head and the co-ordinators work very closely together for provision of support for pupils with special educational needs. They provide valued support and guidance for teachers and assistants. The designated and knowledgeable governor for special educational needs actively supports the staff. She is passionate about the work of the school and supports the initiatives, such as the setting up of school website, which provides valued advice to parents as to how they may help their children.
54. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and the school. The committee structure is well established although much of the work is left to a hard-working nucleus who visit the school regularly and know staff and pupils well. The governors fulfil their statutory duties. They have a clear understanding of pastoral, staffing and premises issues but are less well informed about the curriculum and standards. The governing body's role as a critical friend to the school is underdeveloped as the governors rely too heavily on information presented to them by the headteacher.
55. The office and administrative staff provide a welcoming first point of contact and an efficient service. The day-to-day financial management of the school is good. This is the result of the effective partnership between the local education authority and the school to establish financial systems that are relevant and effective. Teachers and other staff know how to use the systems; they are well managed by office staff and overseen by the headteacher and governors. The school ensures that specific grants are correctly spent, for example on information and communication technology, special educational needs and the out-of-school club. Although there has been no external audit of school finances, the office staff effectively support the headteacher in an ongoing evaluation of the systems as they are established, so that spending is carefully tracked in line with best value principles, and the budget is updated continuously to show the current state of the school's finances.
56. The school has ample accommodation to teach the planned curriculum but the outside environment is barren and shabby. In spite of the best efforts of the cleaning and caretaking staff, many parts of the building are covered in graffiti and there is a lot of litter (including broken glass, cigarette ends and beer cans) scattered around the site. Most of this arises from after-hours vandalism, but inspectors also noted that parents frequently dropped cigarette ends on the paths and waiting areas when bringing and collecting their children. Two of the playgrounds have worn surfaces and are very rough, and the outdoor play facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage are generally poor. These matters set bad examples for pupils, especially as much is being done to promote their personal development generally. The school is, however, very conscious of this and has started to address the situation. A good quality perimeter fence is being installed, and once completed there are further plans to develop the grounds.
57. The internal environment, in marked contrast, is attractive and welcoming, although the toilets, whilst generally clean, are rather run down and not particularly pleasant for the children to use. The classrooms are spacious, suitably furnished and contain good quality displays on the walls. Two good-sized and well-equipped computer suites have been created, and are used effectively. There are sufficient teachers for the demands of the curriculum but there are too few teaching assistants. Library facilities and learning resources are generally adequate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:
 - (1) continue to raise attainment in English by:

- making optimum use of the curriculum to provide good quality writing opportunities (paragraphs 27, 87);
- significantly reducing the amount of work that is copied and using worksheets only when they are the best choice for the task (paragraph 25);
- improving the quality of reading and writing guidance to pupils and ensuring consistency of opportunity in all classes (paragraph 90);
- making the development of speaking skills a priority focus in the 'wind-up' sessions at the end of lessons (paragraph 25);
- developing the teachers' expertise in promoting the pupils' writing skills (paragraphs 27, 87).

- (2) raise standards in music in the junior classes (paragraphs 12, 137);
- (3) take steps, as funds permit, to improve the external accommodation to match the quality of the internal environment (paragraph 56);
- (4) continue to strive for improved attendance and punctuality (paragraph 17).

Minor issues:

The school should:

- give greater emphasis to raising the pupils' awareness of, and celebrating, the multi-cultural nature of contemporary society (paragraph 38);
- provide more opportunities for the pupils to develop their mathematical skills through other subjects (paragraph 103);
- seek ways to encourage the pupils to take more decisions about their learning within school (paragraph 16);
- ensure all school publications meet with statutory requirements (paragraph 49).

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNITS

59. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the units is outstanding. The units offer a very good curriculum, which is rich, vibrant, varied and relevant to the specific needs of the pupils. The excellent quality of teaching and of teamwork that exists between staff contributes to this provision. As a result, the pupils achieve very well in all areas of their learning and in personal development.
60. The level of attainment of pupils in the units is low. However, the pupils make very good progress relative to their abilities because of the inspiring teaching they receive and the way that the staff nurture these pupils. In addition, there is a very calm and caring atmosphere in all of the unit classes. All members of staff provide excellent role models. The staff have established close bonds of trust and friendship, through which the pupils develop a positive self-image. As a result, the pupils are interested in their learning and achieve success in their work. For example, in a re-enactment of an evacuation in a history lesson, the pupils were totally absorbed in reliving the experience of the children evacuated from cities in World War Two. The teacher used sound effects of warfare to bring to life those parts of the city which were affected.
61. The teaching of the pupils in the units is excellent. The staff know the needs of these pupils exceptionally well and plan appropriate programmes for learning. They have particularly high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of how they should behave. The high standards of discipline set, and the teachers' very good classroom management skills, ensure that there is a purposeful working environment in which it is easy for the pupils to learn. The high expectations and encouragement given ensure that the pupils try their hardest and they consequently achieve very well. This was observed in a food technology lesson, where the pupils, while preparing a healthy sandwich, listened patiently to each other as they outlined what contents they had chosen. Their faces reflected the enjoyment and pleasure and they commented positively on each other's choices. The quality of interactions between pupils and adults was outstanding.
62. The teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects that they are expected to teach. This ensures that they teach basic skills very well. For example, in a mathematics lesson in the infants' class, the teacher knew exactly how best to teach numeracy, which was the focus for the day. The tasks that followed were very carefully differentiated, so that the pupils' specific needs were fully met. The teaching assistants were very effective in consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding, because they were very quick to recognise pupils' misconceptions. They helped them to overcome difficulties by using a variety of strategies and resources to ensure that the pupils understood the mathematical operations of addition and subtraction. The pupils used information and communication technology to consolidate their learning.

63. A particular strength of teaching is the way lesson planning spans other subjects. Literacy and speaking and listening skills are consolidated through science, for example. This was observed in an excellent lesson where the pupils described a person by their observable features. The lesson contributed to pupils' spiritual development through the highly imaginative strategies, such as a fanfare rumble of drums, and a grand revealing of a photograph, while the teacher led the unveiling of each person. All staff joined in the activity, encouraging the pupils to respond. These factors contributed to the pupils making excellent learning gains.
64. The curriculum for the pupils is very good. It is appropriately adapted to their specific needs, but, nevertheless, it sustains the rigour of the statutory requirements. It is socially inclusive, because the school is totally committed to ensuring that the pupils have equality of access to all school life. The curriculum is stimulating and imaginatively planned to provide for high achievement in all subjects. Active learning is an additional factor in these pupils' very good progress. In one class, for example, the pupils visited St. Michael's church, where they were encouraged by the vicar to use the microphone from the pulpit. This was an excellent opportunity for pupils' development of speaking and listening and for the development of self-esteem. The follow up work from the visit entailed further language activities. This is just one example of the wealth of opportunities that the units provide for these pupils.
65. The units make very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. During the inspection, the pupils were observed learning about drugs safety. During the discussion, they decided correctly who could administer medicines and what constituted a drug. They knew that caffeine can be found in both tea and coffee. The pupils recorded how they can stay healthy and what they need to do about 'good living'. Health education is promoted through science and food technology. The pupils learn about the importance of hygiene, when preparing food, such as making butter and baking scones for their tea party in the infants' class. The thoughtful and imaginative planning of lessons by the staff results in very good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and personal development. This is amply exemplified in the way that the staff actively promote pupils' personal development. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils work very hard to gain 'bank time' and in the 'I can do' books, the pupils record and celebrate their successes in writing and in pictures. They also record self-assessment notes of what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve. The cross-curricular links are excellent and contribute greatly to pupils' overall development.
66. The staff have established very close links with the parents. There is a regular monthly magazine and parents can access a website, specifically designed by one of the unit teachers to help support parents. In addition, there are a number of initiatives such as parent support groups, 'Talking Partners', Music Makers and thinking skills groups, which are all designed to help parents and their children. There is also a very successful parent partnership group, through which very close links are established. The school has plans to develop these links even further.
67. The leadership is excellent. The co-ordinators and the staff, with the active involvement of the head, work very hard and consequently they have succeeded in establishing an ethos of teamwork. This has led to a commitment to high standards of provision and care for these pupils. There is a very well informed governor who maintains a very close overview of the work of the unit. She provides invaluable support through her active involvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	23	33	24	0	0	0
Percentage	9	26	38	27	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	378
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	164

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	52

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	19	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	24	22
	Girls	16	18	14
	Total	37	42	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (n/a)	89 (n/a)	77 (n/a)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	21
	Girls	16	14	15
	Total	36	37	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (n/a)	79 (n/a)	77 (n/a)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	8	9	10
	Total	36	41	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (n/a)	58 (n/a)	65 (n/a)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
378	4	1
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
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)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.57
Average class size	24.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002 - 2003
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	£
Total income	1, 051,438
Total expenditure	1,041,400
Expenditure per pupil	2542
Balance brought forward from previous year	*N/a
Balance carried forward to next year	10038

*2002/2003 was the school's first full financial year

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	369
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	33	5	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	52	3	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	54	7	8	3
The teaching is good.	62	36	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	38	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	20	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	23	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	48	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	48	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	49	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	48	13	5	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. Provision for learning in the nursery and reception classes is good with many instances of very good and sometimes outstanding provision in the nursery year. This is the outcome of the good teaching and the emphasis on learning through practical and play experiences. The nursery provides a very well resourced, attractive, purposeful environment which effectively supports the children's progress in the six areas of learning. Whilst accommodation and resources for reception children are adequate they are not of the same high standard. Future developments include the introduction of an integrated Foundation Stage Unit with plans to make structural alterations for open areas and to improve the outdoor facilities to allow increased outdoor activities.
69. The children enter the nursery in the September following their third birthday. They attend on a part-time basis and transfer to the reception classes in the following September. The majority of children enter the nursery with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age especially in speech and language. By the end of the Foundation Stage the children have made very good progress and most children attain the levels expected. Some higher-attaining children in the reception classes have made a good start on the early stages of the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. The personal, emotional and social development of most children by the age of five is in line with the levels expected. The children make very good progress because the staff set up a very wide range of activities to promote children's independence, interest and self-confidence. Staff share the same high expectations for behaviour and emphasise praise and positive encouragement. As a result the children show an increasing level of self-assurance and willingness to organise themselves. Nursery children quickly learn the daily routines and this helps the children to settle into the class. They listen carefully to the adults and watch intently when they are shown what to do. The adults welcome the children's ideas and opinions and respond with reassuring comments such as, "I like the way you did that" and "Well done" to reinforce the children's efforts and confidence in what they do.
71. In the nursery, the children independently choose from a range of activities that have been carefully set up by the staff with particular learning in mind. For example, the teacher reminds the children of what they are expected to do through comments such as, "Remember, I am looking to see if you can..." so that they know what is expected of them. The children know how to take turns, to speak when they have the teddy bear and to be quiet when they don't during circle time. The children often persevere and concentrate for long periods of time; for example, when reception children made their own books which required writing a sentence on several pages about the things they could do. In the reception classes, the children know that they have a responsibility to share equipment amicably and tidy away when asked. The staff observe and listen carefully to the children and are quick to spot where individuals need particular support or greater challenge; they are also very skilled in knowing when to allow the children to sort things out for themselves. As a result, the children form good relationships with each other and adults. The children know where to get help but they are also very self-sufficient and eager to be involved. Children in the reception classes concentrate well; for example, as they practise the skills of aiming in a physical development lesson and when they listen to instructions.
72. The successful management of the children is achieved with friendliness and good humour. The staff provide good role models of helpfulness, fairness and friendship. They show very high levels of care and respect for the children. The frequent opportunities made available for the children to work in small groups or with a partner provide very successfully for the development of personal and social skills. When class groups gather together, these times are used effectively for the children to share ideas, and stories are used to good effect to highlight moral and social issues. For example, to develop the children's understanding of 'special stories', the teacher showed a very old Bible before reading the story of Moses. In the nursery the teacher

read the story 'Being Kind' to raise the children's understanding of the need for caring attitudes towards others. Insufficient activities are planned in this area of learning to ensure the children develop an understanding of other cultures.

Communication, language and literacy

73. Most children meet the expected levels of attainment by the end of the reception year and this reflects very good progress particularly in speaking and listening. In the reception classes the literacy strategy is firmly established and is making an impact on raising standards in this area of learning. Speaking and listening skills are successfully developed through the teachers' good use of questioning, sensitive interventions and carefully planned activities. On entry to the nursery, many children have restricted speech and poor diction and use a limited range of words. The children make good progress in their confidence to speak because the staff skilfully engage the children in conversation and give them time to share their ideas. For example, in a baking activity, the nursery nurse consistently encouraged the children to articulate their observations. The children listen attentively; for example, to each other as they construct a model and to instructions in physical development sessions. In a very good language activity in the nursery the teacher achieved excellent interaction with the children as they looked at pictures and determined whether they were real or imagined. The children were totally engrossed.
74. The children develop enthusiasm and interest in books as a result of the daily story sessions in the nursery and literacy sessions in the reception classes. In the nursery the teacher shared a story where each page required the children to make choices, making up their own story. This was an inspirational activity. Children in the nursery are motivated to want to read because they have access to an excellent, comfortable and well-resourced book area. As a result the nursery children enter the reception classes with an enthusiasm for reading and ability to recognise many familiar words. The children in the reception classes make good progress in reading skills during the literacy sessions. They make good progress with their phonic skills and have a secure foundation for the development of reading. The reception children are introduced to non-fiction books as a resource for learning in their topic work activities.
75. A good start is made to writing skills in the nursery. A well-resourced writing area encourages early mark-making skills and there are opportunities to write in role-play - for example, a shopping list of items for Old Mother Hubbard's party. Progress is made from scribbling when the children first enter nursery to some reasonable attempts to write recognisable letters. In the reception classes the higher-attaining pupils write a simple sentence for themselves. However most children are making slower progress in writing independently, although many try to write simple words. They can convey information, such as when writing about the character of 'Titch', and label the names of shapes in a picture.

Mathematical development

76. The children's attainment is in line with the levels expected by the end of the reception class. Progress is very good because the staff plan a wealth of opportunities for the children to learn mathematics through practical activities in familiar contexts and through the other areas of learning. The nursery teacher made effective use of a parachute activity in physical development to check the children's understanding of positional words; for example, by asking individual children to travel 'under' the parachute or 'move beside' it. The staff organise stimulating lessons that encourage the active participation of the children and develop their confidence to use number. This was clearly demonstrated in an excellent whole group session in the nursery when the children used 'Springy Spider' to capture numbered 'bugs' to aid number recognition. In another imaginative activity the children's interest was fully captured as they helped the teacher to sort the clothes into sets. Dirty clothes went into the 'washing machine set' and clean clothes into the 'washing line set'. The children use vocabulary related to counting and comparing whenever possible.

77. By the time the children enter the reception classes, most children recognise numbers to five and many use numbers to ten. There are opportunities for practical use of addition and subtraction to ten. The structure of the numeracy lesson is well established and group activities are closely matched to children's needs. The system for setting the children is effective in raising standards.
78. The children develop a sound grasp of mathematical language as demonstrated in their ability to use words to describe comparative measures. Through thoughtful questioning staff introduce simple problem solving activities to extend the children's abilities to use their knowledge of mathematics; for example, a teacher asked, "Is there a way to find out who is the tallest?" The children came up with many suitable suggestions. Further activities also led the children to realise that whilst using small cubes to measure a book was appropriate, cubes were too small to measure a person. Almost all children have a sound knowledge and understanding of basic mathematical shapes and can record repeating patterns.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. The children's attainment by the age of five is in line with the levels expected. The children make good progress because the staff provide interesting and meaningful activities. The planning ensures continuous progress in the children's learning through a rich range of activities to observe, explore and experiment. The children in the nursery develop confidence and interest to talk about their world through opportunities to play with toys, the puppet theatre and role-play areas. The staff encourage the children to observe changes; for example, ingredients when baking as they observe the effect of heat, dissolving and melting when making biscuits. The children were very effectively prompted to recall the changes when making pastry by explaining photographs taken in the previous week's session.
80. The children in reception build up a good understanding of the stages from babyhood to starting school. In a well-planned activity to taste a range of baby foods the children compared the textures and taste. This led to the children realising how difficult it can be to identify the different ingredients when foods are blended.
81. The staff ensure links are made with literacy, for example, by using information books to help the children to think about what they would like to be when they grow up. Their early skills in using computers are developing well. Children in the nursery know the names of some parts of the computer and competently use the mouse to navigate a program. Computer programs are used consistently to support learning; for example, to practise counting and number recognition skill in the nursery.

Physical development

82. In all aspects of physical development most children attain the levels expected by the end of the reception year. The children move confidently with good control and have an appropriate awareness of space and others. The children in the nursery have a weekly lesson in the hall when their skills are effectively developed because the staff participate with lively enthusiasm and make direct teaching points. The children can travel in different ways and at different speeds and follow carefully the instructions used by the teacher. As they work together with the parachute they learn to use different parts of their bodies to move the parachute, such as their wrists and elbows. The reception children show agility in movement and their co-ordination is good for their age. They listen to instructions, respond quickly and are keen to display their developing skills. In a series of tasks the children in one reception class demonstrated good skills when throwing, aiming and bouncing large balls to a partner. The staff make appropriate use of examples of good practice to enable the other children to improve their skills. The very good relationships between the staff and the children promote best efforts and have a positive effect on progress.
83. There are some opportunities for outdoor activities although these are mostly for nursery children. A good range of wheeled toys is available to develop their skills to guide and steer. There is no direct access outdoors for the reception classes. In activities the children show increasing control in handling equipment such as pencils, crayons, small tools and scissors. The good range of planned activities provided daily in both nursery and reception classes for the children to use their physical skills enables continuous practice.

Creative development

84. In creative development most children attain the level expected by the end of the reception year. Progress is good overall. In the nursery the very good teaching stimulates the children's interest with lively activities that generate high levels of excitement. This is clearly evident in the good quality of imaginative play. The children know that they can dress up as a nursery rhyme character in the 'Nursery Rhyme Cottage'. Good use is made of the outside area for creative activities. The children industriously worked together to make a frieze to depict 'Mary, Mary's garden' ready to put up around the area for their picnic at the end of the week.
85. There are fewer opportunities for creative work - particularly artwork - in the reception classes and this is an area for development. Sometimes in art activities, there is no element of choice to promote independence and stimulate curiosity. The areas for imaginative play in the reception classes are not of the same high quality as in the nursery; however good use is made of role-play when the children develop many creative ideas when playing the part of a receptionist, parent or nurse in the 'baby clinic'.
86. As well as singing as part of each day, each class has a music session. In the nursery the children have opportunity to explore sound-making as a chosen activity, using a suitable range of percussion instruments. They also use their voices to create different sounds. Reception children know a good range of songs and rhymes.

ENGLISH

87. In Year 2, standards are broadly in line with those nationally and have improved significantly since the 2002 tests. Standards in Year 6 have also improved from a year ago but are still below expectations. The development of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. The pupils have many opportunities to write and to listen and some opportunities to speak and read. However, if standards are to rise further, there will be a need to improve the quality of some of these experiences, particularly those in speaking and writing.
88. Attainment in speaking is below expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6 but, given the very low baseline when children join the school, these standards still represent good progress, particularly from the nursery to Year 2. The most able pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards while pupils of average or below average ability do not. They find difficulty in composing a complete sentence that responds to given prompts. For example, knowing the key facts 'brown and smelly leaves' and 'fresh green leaves', pupils had difficulty in responding to the question, 'What do snails eat?' beyond saying, 'Snails eat leaves.' By Year 6 pupils lack fluency in conversation and the breadth of their vocabulary is limited. This rubs off on the quality of their writing. Throughout the school, the 'wind-up' session at the end of lessons invariably lacks a clear focus. The potential for using this session to improve speaking skills is considerable but is largely unexplored.
89. Attainment in listening is good in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 6. Younger pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to their peers. Many older pupils are also good listeners but a significant minority – mainly Year 6 boys – do not attend well enough to what their teacher tells them or involve themselves adequately in the lesson. As a result, when asked to work independently, they show little interest in the task, have a limited idea of how to complete it and generate some minor disruption. This limits the progress they make in other aspects of the subject, particularly writing.
90. Reading standards are close to national expectations in Year 2 but fall short of them in Year 6. In Years 1 and 2 pupils benefit from regular group-work to develop and reinforce reading skills. Conversations with older pupils reveal that there are significant differences in the regularity of these sessions and this lack of consistency is a weakness in provision. Many parents of the younger children help with the development of reading skills at home but this tails off when they are in Years 3 to 6, well before some are skilled enough to read to themselves productively. With

the reduction of focused support at home and at school, reading standards then improve steadily rather than rapidly.

91. Writing standards meet expectations in Year 2 but fall short of them in Year 6. That is not to say that standards are not improving beyond Year 2. They are. Throughout the school expectations of presentation are at least satisfactory and often high. Spelling is usually accurate although pupils rarely use exciting, adventurous vocabulary and even by Year 6 sentence structure remains simple. The school has worked hard to raise standards in writing and has already met with some success. The assessment system in operation is an excellent tool for focusing teachers' attention on the issue of standards. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in knowing how well they are doing and what they need to do next but there remain facets of writing development that have yet to be explored by the school. For example, the use of the full curriculum as a vehicle for developing the writing skills that are taught in literacy lessons is not operating at optimum efficiency. The spread of opportunity is not as wide and even as it could be. There has been no audit to check that the writing experiences on offer present the best possible opportunity to help pupils to become skilled young writers.
92. Furthermore, of the experiences that are available in lessons other than literacy, (in science, geography, history and religious education in particular), there is excessive use of copied work and some overuse of worksheets. In religious education for example, Year 4 pupils had produced a beautifully presented book telling the Easter story. It would have been the result of several lessons' work, but it was all copied text. This, and many others like it, represents squandered opportunity. Working with groups of pupils on the development of writing skills is not a regular enough feature of literacy lessons. Not all staff are sufficiently skilled in this important technique and resources are inadequate for pupils to benefit from the process; writing on a large sheet of paper on the table cannot be seen well by all pupils in a group. Finally, in literacy lessons, some pupils are given too many 'exercises' to complete. This not only reduces the time available for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing, but also inhibits their chances of developing a sense of what a sentence actually is. It contributes to the lingering weakness in Year 6 where a significant number of pupils are still unable to demarcate sentences correctly.
93. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good overall in Years 1-2 and satisfactory thereafter, although this broad generalisation disguises the exceptions. Of the 14 lessons seen, teaching was very good in two, good in six and satisfactory in the remainder. Literacy skills are taught consistently well in all four classes in Years 2 and 5 and in several of the other classes as well. In the remainder teaching is sound and, in one instance, barely so. Importantly, the good progress that pupils make in Years 3 to 6 is driven as much by the excellent assessment system as by the quality of teaching. Increasingly, good use is being made of information and communication technology to support learning.
94. Where teaching is very good it is because it is lively and activities are planned to capture the interest and imagination of pupils. In Year 5, for example, pupils were working on 'performance poetry' and the poem, 'Gran, can you rap?' The lesson got off to a great start with the teacher's own performance of the poem and from this point onwards, pupils had fun and learned very well at the same time. In the section of the lesson dedicated to independent work, the teacher used her time productively, sitting with a group to develop their reading skills. The skill to engage pupils rather than to control or contain them is what distinguishes the best from the weakest teaching in the subject. However, in one lesson, pupils answered simple questions dutifully. There was no sense of enthusiasm on their part; the teaching was uninspiring and, while pupils were writing, the teacher's time was spent in helping individuals on what was already a straightforward task. The 'wind up' session at the end of the lesson had no useful focus and was therefore unproductive.
95. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are assisted by the setting arrangements throughout the school, by the targeted support in lessons and by the additional opportunities afforded to them - 'booster classes' for example. There are no pupils identified as being particularly talented in English although the setting system does provide a good vehicle for challenging the most able.
96. The co-ordinator works in Year 1, has a very good grasp of standards in the lower part of the school, a good and improving grasp of standards in Years 3 to 6 and a realistic view of how all

might be improved. He has overseen improvement in standards this year and is now ready to refocus in order to lead further improvement. Resources in the subject are satisfactory overall although the library for Years 3 to 6 is 'thin' and there is no appropriate equipment to help teachers work effectively on developing writing skills with small groups of pupils.

MATHEMATICS

97. Although standards have improved significantly they are still below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
98. By the end of Year 2 most pupils reach a level expected for their age. The proportion who attain a higher level however is still below that expected nationally. Nevertheless standards overall are much closer to the national expectation than those shown by the 2002 national test results which were well below average. There is a similar picture at the end of Year 6 where pupils' attainment has risen from well below average to levels which are significantly closer to those expected for their age.
99. The school has taken decisive and effective action to raise achievements of pupils in infant and junior classes. Systems for assessing pupils' progress and setting new targets are highly effective. Teaching quality and its impact on learning and progress are very closely monitored by the headteacher. Termly meetings are held to evaluate the progress pupils make towards agreed targets for each class. Extra classes to boost the mathematical skills of higher and lower achieving pupils are arranged for pupils in Years 4, 5, and 6 throughout the year.
100. Assessments show that girls tend to achieve slightly better than boys in mathematics. This is reflected in the current Year 6 group where there is a much greater proportion of girls in the higher attaining set. Achievement for a small number of boys is hindered by unsatisfactory attitudes and a lack of capacity to sustain effort.
101. Pupils on the school's register for special educational needs achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. Those taught in special classes receive what is frequently outstanding support because of highly skilled teaching and the relatively small numbers in the groups. Pupils taught in mainstream groups are supported very well. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' individual needs and plan work which is well matched to their stages of learning.
102. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a sound grasp of addition and subtraction facts to 20 and can recognise sequences and patterns - for example, when counting in twos, fives or tens. They practise written and mental methods of problem solving and order numbers correctly up to 100. Higher attaining pupils recognise the values of numbers when working in hundreds, tens and units and solve problems by breaking numbers down into more manageable parts; for example $425 + 124$ becomes $500 + 40 + 9 = 549$. Pupils use standard measures such as centimetres and collect data from which they construct graphs. Almost all pupils recognise regular two-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties, such as the numbers of corners and edges.
103. By the end of Year 6 most pupils understand and calculate with numbers beyond 1000. They multiply by 10, 100, and 1000 showing sound understanding of how the decimal system works. They learn a range of different pencil and paper methods by which to solve problems and show a clear understanding of equivalent values such as the relationship between percentages and decimal fractions. Higher attaining pupils work with mixed number fractions and solve problems related to ratio and proportion. Pupils' work on shape includes finding areas of squares and rectangles and they use data they gather to construct line and block graphs. There is a good focus throughout the school on mental arithmetic and solving number problems. Shape and space and data handling are dealt with satisfactorily, though there is scope for more independent investigative work. Opportunities to apply mathematical skills in other subjects do not feature in teachers' planning often enough. There was a good example seen, however, in Year 3 where pupils linked science, design and technology and data handling skills in one activity, making good use of their learning to record their findings about healthy eating habits.
104. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good overall. The good learning is underpinned by the quality of the relationships established in the classrooms. Teachers expect good behaviour and use praise fairly to reward good effort. Pupils appreciate that their contribution to lessons is valued so they are more confident about expressing their views. The very good relationships promote respect, good behaviour and hard work in all but a very small minority of pupils. As a result those pupils do not achieve as well as they should in lessons because their

behaviour is not well managed or supported. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This enables them to question pupils well in lessons in order to help them clarify their thinking. Another strong feature is the way teachers ask, 'How do you know?' or 'How did you work that out?' requiring pupils to explain the process they use and giving them a better understanding. Increasingly, good use is being made of information and communication technology to support learning. Most lessons begin at a brisk pace with a good 'warm up' to test pupils' mental agility. For example, Year 5 pupils were given a set of fractions to sequence in ascending order, but there was extra challenge because not all the denominators were the same. The pupils in Year 2, used whiteboards at the start of the lesson to write down answers to problems about changing pence into pounds and pence. They had to show the correct sign and the decimal point - for example, to show that 1425 pence = £14.25. The teachers use resources effectively to help pupils learn. The use of overhead projectors ensures that all pupils can see the teacher's demonstrations clearly. Small apparatus such as multilink cubes and number fans are used well in infant classes. This resulted in some good learning in a lesson for pupils in Year 1 because they could engage in role-play, pretending to buy fruit and groceries from their 'market stalls' and working out their change. This made their lesson seem more purposeful and exciting for them.

105. Although there are good strengths to be seen in teaching, there are some inconsistencies. In a very small number of lessons the learning objectives are not made clear to pupils so they do not know what is expected of them. Sometimes objectives are not focused precisely on what pupils will learn. This leads to a lack of 'sharpness' in both teaching and learning. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but not all of them use marking to inform pupils of what they need to do to improve. Although short term targets are set by teachers there is little evidence to suggest that they are reviewed with pupils regularly to ensure they keep up to date with their own progress.
106. Leadership and management of mathematics are strong. The co-ordinator is highly skilled in the subject and provides good support for colleagues. The monitoring of teaching quality and pupils' progress is effective in that it has led to the right action needed to improve standards.

SCIENCE

107. Standards in science, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are currently in line with national averages. This represents good achievement for these pupils in relation to their prior attainment and an improving trend in standards over the last two years. Class teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in lessons and, as a result, there is little significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Standards are improving because there is a good emphasis on developing pupils' experimental and investigative skills, such as additional lesson time for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
108. Teachers cover all aspects of science well and make good use of the national guidance for the subject. This ensures that, by the end of Year 6, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of fair testing; for example, they assess the suitability of certain materials for different purposes when looking at musical instruments and whether they vibrate to make sounds. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 apply the appropriate scientific vocabulary to a food chain in describing 'a producer', 'a prey consumer' and 'a predator'. They compare readings on a Celsius thermometer with other measures of temperature. The younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 recognise that living things grow and reproduce, and they study the life-cycles of butterflies. The teachers build well on what pupils already know from visits to local habitats, through drawing 'mind maps' showing what they know about plants. They also investigate materials such as plasticene, lycra, wood and wire for their capacity to be stretched, twisted, bent or squashed. Across the school, teachers ensure that science makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the need for healthy living through including all members of the school community such as kitchen staff.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but stronger for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Of the seven lessons observed, teaching was very good in three, good in two and satisfactory in two. Teaching is well focused to key learning intentions that are shared with the pupils so that they are aware of what they are required to learn. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils'

behaviour and organise lessons well to establish good relationships and a productive working atmosphere in classes. When this good practice is accompanied by challenging lessons, pupils learn enthusiastically and progress well. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson when pupils shared their knowledge and understanding about sources of light and completed a simple table to categorise whether these sources would be useful in a 'dark den' made in the corridor. Similarly, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils use computer programmes to record the outcomes of their investigation into different types of bread. In a Year 4 classroom, careful observational drawing links investigation of snails in their habitat with other representations from the world of art. Where teaching is less effective, pupils have been directed to use standard formats for recording the outcomes of investigations such as pre-prepared worksheets or copying from the board. This means that pupils are not developing a range of responses for themselves.

110. Although science has not been a focus for development in this recently established school, the co-ordinator has attended specific training, operates a range of supporting documentation and analyses the outcomes of national assessments to act as a knowledgeable point of reference for other staff. As yet she has not been involved in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. Together with the staff team there is a commitment to improvement and there is a clear plan of action to do so.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally. The evidence from lesson observations and samples of pupils' work indicates that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making steady progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they use national guidelines to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are gradually built up as they move through the school.
112. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experience of a variety of media and styles. They use pencils and crayons to make bright, colourful illustrations for their work. There are examples of close observational drawings of natural materials such as fruit and vegetables, and connections with scientific and mathematical work on symmetry in nature through pattern-making for butterflies. Overall, by the end of Year 6 pupils have made strong progress in investigating and making art, craft and design, and similarly good progress in their knowledge and understanding of elements and materials. They are improving more steadily in evaluating and developing work, but make the least progress in exploring and developing ideas for themselves.
113. The skills acquired in the lower part of the school are built on throughout the junior classes, for example in a project on 'Faces' pupils have looked at silhouettes and mirror images, completed half-face photographs with the careful application of shading, and by the end of Year 6, have made some distorted representations using 'Mod-Roc'. This project culminated in an eye-catching display of masks set in a jungle-like background. Another carefully mounted display shows the work of Year 6 pupils on tone, with questions framed in the labelling to encourage pupils to consider "What effect does tone create?".
114. The quality of teaching and learning in art is good. In the best teaching, Year 2 pupils were exploring hues and shades using water colour mixes to replicate the style of Impressionist paintings such as those by Monet. The teacher ensured that pupils clearly understood the techniques of making different shades with water colour paints, and encouraged fine motor control through using narrow point brushes. In addition, pupils were expected to make evaluations of their own and others' efforts through "standing back to see how to improve" their work. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher enabled the pupils to concentrate and become utterly engrossed in their work. Where teaching is less effective pupils have not been given the opportunity to respond independently to the work of an artist, such as in a Year 5 lesson about Matisse's snail picture – skills and techniques were well taught but creative response was stifled by the need to replicate an image. In an otherwise good lesson on creating a design for an initial letter following Viking models, Year 6 pupils did not have access to a range of 'B' to '4B' drawing pencils and used only HB writing pencils. This limited their range of creative response to hard lines with pale shading.

115. As yet, art has not been the subject of focus for development so the co-ordinators have not been involved in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. They are gradually establishing a portfolio of examples of pupils' work in each year group to match the planned coverage of each aspect of the art curriculum. They provide good advice and support to ensure that lessons are well planned and outcomes attractively displayed. The local initiative for an arts network will

help the development of plans for the art curriculum. Currently, there are insufficient equipment and resources from which pupils can select appropriately and independently, or enough focus on encouraging pupils to make their own creative responses to a stimulus.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally for pupils of the same age. The evidence from lesson observations and samples of pupils' work indicates that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making steady progress in all the elements of the design technology curriculum. Teachers make good use of the national guidance for the subject, which is helping them accurately to identify the skills to be taught and is supporting their confidence in teaching the subject.
117. During the time of the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson in design technology. This was a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils to begin to design a new type of battery-powered light for a special reason. The teacher guided pupils through the disassembly of a torch to label and identify the purpose of the components, and using this information, to explore how they might be used in different sizes and different fitments to create a new light for someone each child may know. The teacher formed good questions which challenged each pupil to think of practical and helpful purposes, which led them to some unusual and amusing designs – "My mum with a light on her waist band for when she goes shopping in the dark". The teacher encouraged pupils to talk to each other and focus on how they were going to make this new light, and with what materials, in the next lesson. Although several pupils had weak writing skills, they presented their designs with care and imagination and concentrated and persevered with the set task. Very good progress was made because of the very good planning, support for all pupils, and quality of interaction throughout the lesson, and the pupils clearly enjoyed it.
118. From the work displayed around the school, looking at samples of previous work done and talking with staff and pupils, it was evident that tackling design processes and pupils' evaluating their work are developing features of teaching in this subject. As staff become confident in teaching construction skills so pupils are applying these skills at an earlier age, although the emphasis that the teachers place on the safe use of tools is not always consistent. Opportunities for pupils to design and select materials independently of teacher direction are limited.
119. Much of the work is associated with themes or topics so that design and technology is often intermingled with science, geography, or history. For example, current investigations by Year 6 pupils were exploring modern versions of a Viking shoe and the wearability of different buckles and fabrics. A major theme for the school this year has been the work towards Healthy Schools' accreditation, with all pupils across the school working on different aspects of healthy eating in their food technology curriculum. Pupils have identified the reasons for safe procedures for food hygiene, and designed very healthy, and very unhealthy, meals.
120. Design and technology has not yet been identified as a focus for development, and the school is at an early stage of developing appropriate tool and resource banks. Good use is made of the library service to supplement reference and information books, but tools are not used as a matter of course and there is limited access to a wide selection of resources to challenge pupils to consider the best or most appropriate material to match their designs. In turn this limits the quality of the end product. Although there has been no monitoring of teaching in this subject yet, the co-ordinators are building a portfolio of pupils' work to exemplify expectations in each year group, and there is a strong commitment to improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Standards meet expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 and the pupils achieve well.
122. The pupils in Year 2 study the area of Widnes and list their likes and dislikes in the local environment. They make sensible suggestions for improvements, such as asking people to putting litter into bins. When making comparisons between localities, the pupils recognise that Mousehole is a fishing village. They note the differences in buildings found there and those of Widnes. They are acquiring early mapping skills through a visit to Clinton Woods and mark streets and buildings on a map. The pupils in Year 1 make good use of their developing literacy skills; for example, they understand the significance of each line when writing the name and address on a postcard.
123. The pupils in Year 6 understand the water cycle and use this knowledge in their studies of rivers. They make use of geographical vocabulary, such as 'delta', 'meander', 'tributary' and 'oxbow', which they explain as a narrow loop or 'natural break'. In a discussion with inspectors, Year 6 pupils showed considerable enthusiasm for the subject. They talked knowledgeably about Christopher Columbus and his discoveries, through which he showed that the earth was round. The pupils explained in detail about weather and climate, showing clear understanding of the two terms. Younger pupils, for example, in Year 4, provide reasons for crossing the River Mersey, such as visiting relatives, holidays, shopping and work. Pupils' geographical skills are enhanced through residential visits, such as to Beeston Education Centre.
124. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers reinforce vocabulary and ask questions to encourage the pupils to participate in discussions. The effects of teaching, particularly for older pupils, are at times limited by the lack of sufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all pupils. Scrutiny of work indicates a weakness in teaching and in learning, when the pupils copy work from a source. Opportunities are missed for the pupils to undertake independent study, to develop enquiry and geographical skills and to build successfully on their previous knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills of literacy and of numeracy are consequently limited and, as a result, do not contribute to improvements in English and in mathematics.
125. The leadership of geography is satisfactory. Presently, the co-ordinator for the subject is doing a 'holding' job, so his role is under-developed. Consequently, he is not contributing to improvements in the subject, nor has he taken the initiative for the full development of geography.

HISTORY

126. Standards meet expectations by the end of Year 2 and 6 and the pupils achieve well.
127. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have covered a range of topics that have given them a clear insight into the differences between the past and the present. Through stories about famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, the pupils compare similarities and differences between past and present. They learn about holidays in the past and, through the attractive display of artefacts and photographs, about the passage of time. The differences in washday, for example, also contribute to the pupils' understanding of history and the changes that have taken place in their grandparents' time. Evidence from scrutiny of work indicates that pupils are developing their enquiry skills well.
128. By the end of Year 6, the pupils understand what life was like in different strata of society during the Victorian era. During the inspection, the pupils were involved in a study about the Vikings. In a discussion about that period, the pupils showed clear understanding about beliefs and customs of the invaders and settlers. The pupils were quick to identify which areas were invaded, and talked knowledgeably about countries the Vikings found. The pupils quoted countries such as Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, France and parts of England, such as Northumbria. They showed

some understanding of their own historical heritage, explaining reasons why King Alfred was called 'Great'. In a history lesson in Year 6, the pupils explored reasons why monasteries were good places to raid and offered explanations such as gold, treasures, paintings, food and ale.

129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with two good lessons observed during the inspection. In Year 1, for example, the pupils showed considerable enthusiasm for the transporter bridge, particularly when the teacher explained her own fears while crossing it when she was a little girl. She made the history of that period live for them, when she showed photographs from her parents' album, indicating crossing by ferry, sometimes by a rowing boat. In Year 3, the teacher seized the opportunity to compare the school's own initiative on healthy eating with that of the Roman banquets. The pupils' understanding of the era was deepened, when the teacher gave the pupils interesting snippets of information such as slaves going up

mountains to gather snow and ice which they mixed with fruit pulp. Effective support was given to the pupils with special educational needs, which enabled them to make good learning gains in history.

130. While the pupils are provided with good opportunities to practise their basic skills through history in Year 1 and 2, in Year 6, there are many examples, which indicate that pupils copy writing from a given source. This was evidenced in their booklets on the river, showing work that was identical. Opportunities are missed for the pupils to research and to practise literacy and numeracy skills, while using history. There were no examples seen of extended writing, for instance. The consequence of these weaknesses is that pupils' standards in basic skills are not improved.
131. The co-ordinator for history is keen, but her role is under-developed as yet. As a result, she is unable to influence teaching and learning and the development of history across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

132. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the pupils' attainment is in line with the levels expected. The pupils make good progress because lesson plans are detailed and well focused upon developing pupils' skills. The teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject through the school's commitment to training all staff. The school has two computer suites that are timetabled regularly to ensure that basic skills are taught and also that computers are used regularly to support learning in other subjects. This is working well in developing the pupils' information and communication technology skills.
133. In Year 1, the pupils enter text in relevant cells to create a pictogram. Year 2 pupils use CD-ROMS as a research tool. They know there are different ways to retrieve information, for example, by using the index or key words. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have broadened and enhanced their experience of information and communication technology and they know how to combine different effects to improve the presentation of their work. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrate their skills to combine sound, images and text to improve their multi-media presentations linked to a residential visit. Pupils used the computer effectively in a good lesson with a Year 4 class, learning to use command buttons to draw two-dimensional shapes.
134. Teaching is good overall. In almost all of the lessons seen teachers effectively implemented their lesson plans. Teachers' demonstrations of skills and techniques are clear and this ensures pupils can proceed with their tasks. Pupils have good opportunities to learn new skills, for example, to navigate a science quiz program to consolidate their knowledge of 'changing states'. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs to ensure they develop skills at their own level of ability. Pupils respond well to the high expectations and they are well supported by teachers as they work in pairs on the computers. Teachers are making increasing use of computers to support learning in other subjects. For example, by using information and communication technology as a vehicle for learning a spelling rule in a literacy lesson all pupils were fully interested and engaged in the task. In a Year 4 lesson very effective use was made of a 'smart board' to help pupils identify patterns in multiplication tables.

135. When working on computers together, pupils were mainly helpful and co-operative. Pupils approach their tasks with confidence because teachers match the level of challenge to abilities, sometimes use mixed ability pairings and good support is available from teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils behave well in lessons in the computer suites because they know the rules and expectations and the learning activities are interesting. There is a marked enthusiasm for the subject.
136. The very good work being done by the subject-co-ordinator is having a positive influence on pupils' progress. She provides colleagues with good advice and support and has made a significant contribution to the development of the computer suites. A good knowledge of the subject and a commitment to improve the subject is very evident in the good provision now in the school. Good systems for assessing pupils' progress are in place and in each year group teachers assemble portfolios of pupils' work to reflect the standards achieved.
137. Resources are mostly good. In addition to the two computer suites, each classroom has at least one computer and a laptop. Good use has been made of additional funding for information and communication technology to improve the quality of the pupils' learning.

MUSIC

138. The pupils achieve well in the infant classes and standards are in line with what is expected at the end of Year 2. This progress is not sustained in the junior classes and standards do not meet expectations by the end of Year 6. Furthermore, some pupils miss out on their lessons because they are withdrawn from classes for additional support in basic literacy skills.
139. The quality of singing for pupils aged five to seven years is satisfactory. They sing with enjoyment, maintaining pitch and rhythm successfully. Year 2 pupils clap rhythmically and sustain the beat, for example, when singing and when accompanying on instruments simultaneously. In assemblies, the pupils sing enthusiastically and come in on time after the piano introduction.
140. In Year 6, the pupils sing the 'Skye Boat Song' rather tentatively and are unable to hold high notes. With practice, the pupils gain sufficient confidence to sustain verse and chorus to the CD accompaniment. The pupils recognise instruments such as oboe and harp, when listening to the recording. They show some understanding that lyrics can tell a story and were helped in this by the teacher providing information about Bonnie Prince Charlie.
141. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In an effective music lesson in Year 5, the pupils replicated the rhythmic patterns and melodic shapes, using a variety of pitched instruments. In this lesson, the pupils had an opportunity to listen to orchestral music and were able to talk about dynamics and pitch. Throughout the school, however, opportunities for listening and appraising are missed to develop pupils' appreciation of a variety of music from different times and traditions. Assemblies provide short spells of listening to music but overall, opportunities for listening to different musical interpretations are very limited. The subject makes only a limited contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
142. The co-ordinators for music both have very good ideas how to develop the subject further. They are adapting a published scheme, which will provide some guidance about what the teachers need to teach next and how they may achieve it. The peripatetic teachers provide good instrumental tuition to those pupils who are interested. Parents pay for this tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainments are in line with the levels expected in each element of the subject. The pupils make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress by Year 6 in the juniors.

144. The quality of teaching is good in the junior classes and satisfactory in the infants. In the main, the teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to ensure that their pupils are taught at an appropriate level. They understand the basic structure of a good physical education lesson, and the importance of including opportunities for warming up and cooling down, prior to and after vigorous exercise. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher highlighted how muscles could be damaged if they were not 'warmed up' prior to the activities. Teachers also ensure the pupils understand the rules for safety and follow routines for changing without fuss and a good learning pace is maintained. The pace of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is sometimes slow when teachers stop the whole class for minor infringements and explanations are overlong.
145. Pupils in Year 1 sequence a series of movements whilst working with a partner. Year 2 pupils practise developing throwing and catching skills by working in pairs. They manage this successfully, and consolidate and improve on their skills.
146. In the lessons seen in Year 5, the pupils make very good progress because the teachers focus on the development of skills and involve the pupils in evaluation of their movements. A very good example involved pupils observing a partner carrying out a standing long jump. As a result of very good direct teaching at the start of the lesson, the pupils were able to evaluate the quality of the jump and offer advice on how to improve. Teachers prepare pupils well for games activities by coaching the skills pupils will need for the game. Pupils in Year 5 were taught how to lean backwards to throw a ball a further distance and how to pick up a ball and turn to return it quickly. These skills were then practised in a game of short cricket. Pupils' attitudes to physical development are good. They enjoy the subject, participate with lively enthusiasm and mostly behave well during lesson times.
147. A strength of the provision is the integration of pupils from the special educational needs units to mix fully with their peer groups in lessons. This is a very successful strategy which works well. With money raised by the PTA modified equipment is available; for example, tactile balls to support learning for these pupils.
148. Until recently swimming was taught using the school's own swimming pool. In this year swimming provision has met statutory requirements. However, this will not be the case next year because the pool is in need of major repairs and has been closed down. There is no alternative venue at present.
149. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who provides guidance for teachers in planning and updating the curriculum. He maintains an up-to-date knowledge of the subject through attendance at training events and as a primary link teacher. Although assessment presently is informal, a pilot assessment check sheet is ready for a trial phase. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities which initially are well attended. However some pupils lose interest and attendance becomes sporadic. The pupils are involved in many local sporting events which are well attended by staff and pupils. Indoor and outdoor accommodation are good and resources are generally good. Future developments are to include developing a wider range of outdoor adventure activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Attainment meets expectations in Years 2 and 6. The school follows the local agreed syllabus and, because of near identical content, it uses and benefits from the planning guidance in the nationally available scheme.
151. Pupils in Year 2 talk with enthusiasm about Bible stories, such as that of Noah. They know that the disciples were Jesus' friends but describe Judas as 'the nasty one'. Having named Peter and John and described them as fishermen, they said of Jesus, 'Jesus was magic and he cut the bread and fish. Everybody got some'. They recount the Christmas story and two parables in some detail. They have visited their local church and remember and name the cross, stained glass windows, organ, pulpit and pews. They know something of the Jewish religion.

152. Year 6 pupils talk animatedly about a friend whose father is Muslim, describing their enjoyment in learning about their different customs and foods. They know some stories about Muhammad and retell them in some detail. They have read some Hindu prayers and explain what they mean. They know what a parable is and explain the meaning behind that of the Good Samaritan.
153. Teaching is satisfactory. Of the four lessons seen, teaching was very good in one, good in one and satisfactory in the remainder. The very good teaching dealt with the literary genres incorporated in the Bible. Good links with literacy provided the introduction to the lesson as pupils reminded their teacher of the genres they knew about. They matched texts from the Bible to the genres; for example, poetry, letters, narrative, history. In addition, pupils learned how to locate a Bible text by working from the book to the chapter and finally to the verse. They clearly found the lesson interesting and worked hard throughout. The openness and warmth between teacher and pupils was another positive dimension as was the excellent 'hands-on' display of all types of Bible in the classroom.
154. The development of the subject has not featured in the school improvement plan this year as there has been an urgent need to raise standards in English and mathematics. While there had been no specific work undertaken by the co-ordinator, she has provided support and advice to colleagues when they have needed it. She has very good subject knowledge. Other school priorities have pegged her contribution to satisfactory so far but there is clear potential for it to be much better when the subject is a focus of development. In particular she would be a model for very good teaching in the subject from which her colleagues could benefit.