

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 133337

Headteacher: Mrs C Kirk

Reporting inspector: Mr B Tyrer
23101

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 7th February 2003

Inspection number: 249062

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hartsbourne Avenue Gateacre Liverpool
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father William Murphy

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
5902	Mr M Harrison	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	
7336	Mrs L Howard	Team inspector	English Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20614	Mr D Kimber	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary aided Catholic primary school came into existence as a result of the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in September 2001 and currently has 311 pupils on roll. It is, therefore, larger than average. It is situated in the Gateacre area of Liverpool which is typified by higher than average levels of deprivation. At present nearly four pupils in ten are eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. Two pupils have statements of educational need and about one fifth of pupils are recognised as having special needs. As a proportion of the school roll this is broadly average. Pupils display a range of special needs which include speech and communication, those which are emotional and behavioural in nature and those that relate to specific learning difficulties. Almost all the pupils are white. No pupils speak English as an additional language. Children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below what might generally be expected.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school with a good level of effectiveness and one that is giving good value for money. The headteacher is providing good leadership and this has contributed to the comparatively high attainment that pupils are achieving and the good progress that they are making. Teaching and learning are good overall and the school is careful to ensure that pupils of differing abilities are well catered for so that good progress is seen at all levels. Pupils with special educational needs are also well provided for both through their individual education plans and through the support they receive in the classroom. The school has good policies to promote equal opportunity and racial equality and the governing body is effective in meeting its statutory obligations. Boys and girls achieve equally well regardless of gender.

What the school does well

- The attainment of pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science is in line with national expectations and National Curriculum test results in 2002 were well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics when compared with similar schools.
- The headteacher is providing good leadership.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

What could be improved

- The unsatisfactory standards for pupils aged seven and 11 in physical education, art and design and information and communication technology and also for pupils aged 11 in music and design and technology.
- Attendance, which is below the national average.
- Teaching where it is unsatisfactory.
- The opportunities for subject coordinators to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects, to see that assessment procedures are effectively introduced for all subjects, to see that the time allocated to those subjects is used for that purpose and to monitor planning and the quality of work pupils produce.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a new school and so does not have a previous report on which to base such a judgement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/a	C	D	B
mathematics	N/a	D	D	B
science	N/a	C	C	A

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

The attainment of pupils in National Curriculum tests in 2002 for pupils in Year 6 was below average in English and mathematics and was average in science. In comparison with similar schools this performance was above average in English and mathematics and was well above average in science. Tests were taken in 2001 prior to the amalgamation and results were published after the amalgamation had taken place. Inspection shows that pupils are achieving well and that attainment in English, mathematics and science is now in line with expectations and that boys and girls are achieving equally well. The school has set reasonable targets for pupils in 2003. Pupils in Year 2 scored below average marks in National Curriculum tests for reading in 2002, average marks in writing and above average marks in mathematics. Teacher assessment for science was very high (in the top five per cent) for science at the expected level (Level 2). Inspection shows that these pupils are achieving well and that attainment is in line with expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in religious education is the subject of another report. The attainment of pupils in other areas of the curriculum is in line with expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in history and geography and similarly so for pupils in Year 2 in design and technology and music. It is below expectations for both groups in physical education, information and communication technology and art and for pupils in Year 6 in music and design and technology. Children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below what is expected for three-year-olds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. At all times of the day and throughout the school pupils behave very well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate very well to one another and are keen to take initiatives and responsibility.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Despite attendance having made good improvement recently it still remains below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & 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.

Teaching is good overall with about two lessons out of three being at least good. The quality of teaching English and mathematics is good. The skills of literacy are satisfactorily taught and those of numeracy are well taught. The teaching of communication, language and literacy skills for children in the Foundation Stage is also good. Out of 70 lessons observed during the inspection four were unsatisfactory and one was poor. Two excellent lessons were also observed. Good planning ensures that pupils are given work which closely matches their needs and those pupils who have special educational needs are well supported through their individual education plans and the good provision that is made for them in the classroom by way of extra support. Pupils' response is positive and in the vast majority of lessons they are active and enthusiastic participants. Classroom assistants make consistently good contributions to pupils' progress. Weak teaching is rare but is the result of inadequate planning and thought as to how resources might be used and an inability to challenge pupils through a lack of subject knowledge and subsequently expectation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school plans an adequate curriculum although occasionally lessons are either not taught or start late.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well provided for and supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. It is very good for pupils' moral and social development, satisfactory for their cultural development and good for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All health and safety procedures are in place and observed and procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils welfare are very good.

The school has a good partnership with parents who are, in the main, supportive and appreciative of what the school is doing for their children. Whilst the curriculum does meet statutory requirements care must be taken to ensure that where lessons are planned that they are carried through and not allowed to slip or start late.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing good leadership but coordinators currently do not have enough responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The governors have supported the school well through the initial stages of amalgamation and are meeting their statutory obligations as expected.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The good work done in monitoring teaching needs to be followed through to bring about the improvements necessary to ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has made good use of its funding, for example in its commitment to employing classroom assistants.

The accommodation is good although parts of the outdoor spaces are a little spartan. There is a good match of staff to the needs of the curriculum and resources are satisfactory. The school has successfully carried the amalgamation process so far and the next phase must be to give greater responsibility to subject coordinators so that they can influence standards in their subjects. The school is careful to seek best value when obtaining goods and services and does this effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That they are well informed about progress.• That the school has high expectations.• That their children like school and that the teaching is good.• That they are comfortable approaching the school and that it is helping their children to mature and be responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework their children receive.• The range of activities on offer outside lesson times.

The questionnaire and parents' meeting were very supportive of the school with individual parents who had concerns. The inspection team notes that in the questionnaire, three quarters of all questions were at least 99 per cent in agreement with what the school was doing. The inspection team agrees with and endorses those things that parent find pleasing. It is felt that homework is provided at an acceptable level and that the school is providing a satisfactory amount of extra-curricular opportunities for its pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Nursery at or after their third birthday on a part-time basis and enter the Reception class in September of the year in which they become five. The overall attainment of children on entry to the nursery is well below that expected of most three year-olds. The children adapt quickly into Nursery routines and make very good progress but most will not have reached the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1.
2. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and quickly learn to become absorbed in tasks that are not directly supervised. They follow rules and take turns in games. In learning to applaud others they gain in confidence themselves. Children in the Nursery are often not able to express themselves clearly when they arrive but staff plan carefully for this aspect so that by the time children reach the Reception class they are eager to talk about stories and plays. They listen to others and take turns to speak. They enjoy sharing books and the youngest children understand in the main that print carries meaning. By the time they have reached the Reception class some higher attainers recognize simple words and write their own name. They also acquire an understanding of how to say or read words that they don't initially recognize. Nursery children recognize some numbers and they count and sort objects. They have a sound understanding of expressions such as larger and smaller and can classify along those lines. By Reception the children work confidently with numbers to ten finding the correct missing numbers in number patterns. They have the opportunity to explore number operations that result in their being able to conclude that 'five take away three is two'
3. Their understanding of the world around them is very limited as a rule on entry to the Nursery but children quickly develop a sense of wonder and curiosity. They are given many rich experiences when they look carefully at ice or cobwebs or the smells that cooking brings. They paint and talk about trips they have made and begin to use computers. In the Reception class they are used to working with partners and begin to think about more complicated issues such as the passing of time when they examine a collection of toys of different ages. The natural world opens up its wonders as they investigate the effect of the wind and then try to move objects for them selves by blowing with a straw. Children learn how to use tools that require them to make small movements and they learn about controlling the way they move about in a space. This can be on foot or in control of a wheeled vehicle. They enjoy using different sorts of materials to make pictures and in their games they include others. Music is important to them. Children readily learn the repetitive elements of stories and songs.
4. National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 were:
 - below the national average in reading, at the average in writing and above the national average in mathematics;
 - well above average when compared with similar schools; and
 - very high (in the top five per cent) for teacher assessed science.
5. Attainment in these disciplines is in line with national expectations for pupils currently in Year 2. The differences are due to the make up and nature of the two differing classes of pupils to which the data refers. No previous results exist for this age group owing to the recent amalgamation. There is very little difference, both in the test results and the findings of the inspection, in the way that boys and girls are performing from the way they do nationally.
6. National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 showed that:
 - attainment in English and mathematics was below the national average;
 - attainment in science was at the national average;
 - in comparison with similar schools attainment in English and mathematics was above average; and

- in comparison with similar schools attainment in science was well above average.
7. Test results for Year 6 pupils who took the tests in 2001 before the amalgamation and which were published after the amalgamation had taken place, were similar to those in 2002 with the exception of English which was average. There is, therefore, too little data available to show a trend in the school's performance compared with the national trend. Taking the two years results together it can be said that boys have performed slightly better than the girls in this age group.
 8. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science and this represents a general improvement over the test results of the two previous years. There is no noticeable difference in the performance of boys and girls.
 9. Pupils in Year 2 are keen to listen to adults and their peers and are beginning to select descriptive words with care and accuracy. Some, where teaching of this aspect is unsatisfactorily provided for, have not yet learned these skills and so standards remain below average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to be just below average in their speaking and listening skills but are, through some exciting teaching, beginning to develop a good range of vocabulary. For example the oldest pupils take part in debating the question of whether or not the evacuation of children during World War II was a sensible plan. Pupils in Year 2 are meeting the expectation for pupils of their age in reading as they are doing in Year 6. Young pupils enjoy reading and have good attitudes towards reading in groups and to adults. Pupils in Year 6 are tackling challenging texts of some length and complexity by popular authors. They talk in detail about characters and plot and explain their preferences for a certain genre. Their ability to seek out information quickly from a piece of text is not as well developed as it should be because, in part, insufficient use is made of the very pleasant library area. Writing skills are also at the national expectation for pupils aged seven and 11. Pupils in Year 6 use their developing reading skills well to help them in their writing. They show sound understanding of punctuation as they use capital letters and full stops accurately when writing sentences. Year 3 pupils were seen to be writing using exciting language whilst the pupils in Year 6 write for different purposes and in different ways. Their work is accurately punctuated and paragraphed. Handwriting skills are progressively taught and this enables pupils in Year 6 to present their work in good style. Spelling is taught through weekly spelling lists. Attainment in spelling is at the expected level and pupils make reasonable attempts at spelling difficult or unfamiliar words.
 10. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in acquiring basic number skills and the older pupils solve problems involving money. They name two-dimensional shapes and talk about their qualities. Pupils in Year 5 are learning the basics of probability and pupils in Year 6 are working effectively with fractions, decimals and percentages. In science, pupils in Year 1 study the weather and the effect of moving air as a force. Pupils in Year 2 know about diet and healthy foods and explain why some simple electrical circuits work and others do not. Pupils in Year 6 can devise experiments and record data and introduce variables into an experiment whilst keeping it a fair test. They use their mathematical experiences to draw and interpret graphs and are comfortable with the specific vocabulary of the subject.
 11. The attainment of pupils in religious education is the subject of another report. The attainment of pupils in other areas of the curriculum is in line with national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in history and geography and similarly so for pupils in Year 2 in design and technology and music. It is below national expectations for both groups in physical education, information and communication technology and art and design and for pupils in Year 6 in music and design and technology. Where attainment is below the national expectation, the school acknowledges this is so because these subjects have not been regarded as major priorities. Attention must now be paid to addressing these shortfalls.
 12. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. This is due to the good quality of planning that recognises and provides for the different levels of need and ability within all classes and to the good quality of individual provision that is made for them through their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Throughout the school pupils are enthusiastic and have very good attitudes. This has a very positive effect on their progress and achievements and is a significant strength of the school. Parents agree that their children are happy at school and that they are encouraged to become mature and responsible. The vast majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and children in the Nursery are keen to be involved in all activities. During most lessons pupils concentrate well on their work and when given the opportunity, they work well independently. In all classes, pupils work co-operatively together in groups and resources are shared sensibly and willingly. Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and learning and they respond very well to the school's positive Christian ethos and code of conduct. When moving around the school pupils demonstrate a good level of self-discipline and control. They are very polite and friendly towards visitors and want to help. Children in the Nursery and Reception class settle quickly into well-established routines and they are happy and secure.
14. The school is a very orderly establishment where staff and pupils are supportive and caring towards each other. In most lessons and particularly those which are well managed, pupils are keen to answer questions and to share their ideas. A very good example of this was seen during a Year 5 literacy lesson when pupils were inspired by the poem 'The Lady of Shalott' and eagerly contributed their thoughts on how the Lady would be feeling as the story unfolded. Most pupils behave quietly and listen very attentively to teachers during lessons and this is a particular strength during assemblies.
15. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils respond very positively to the school's reward system. They enjoy the regular opportunity to be chosen as 'Star Pupil' in their class, win stickers, certificates and trophies for good work, behaviour and attendance. Through the strong Catholic ethos of the school, pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the impact of their actions on other people. In both dining rooms at lunchtime pupils of all ages are very polite and well behaved as they sit together to eat cooked and packed lunches. In the playground, although some pupils are often boisterous, pupils play together very harmoniously. They are sensible and self-controlled when playing games together in classrooms during wet playtimes. Pupils feel that bullying or harassment only happens occasionally, but they and their parents are confident that any problems are dealt with promptly by staff. There have been no exclusions during the last year.
16. Relationships are very good. Pupils have a happy relationship with all staff which develops their confidence in asking questions and sharing their own opinions and observations. Pupils fully understand the school's commitment to the inclusion of everyone in all activities. They are sensitive to those with special educational needs as was seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson when pupils listened very attentively to the contribution made by a pupil with learning difficulties. The very good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and all adults in the school make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal and academic progress.
17. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils in all classes help as monitors and older pupils help by looking after younger ones during wet playtimes. Representatives from each class are voted onto the school council. Pupils value this opportunity to suggest improvements to the life of the school and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils work hard to produce an annual school council newsletter which is very attractively presented and contains contributions from across the school. However, older pupils have insufficient opportunity to use their own initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning through developing independent research skills, for example in the library and computer suite.
18. Attendance is below the national average. The school works hard to improve attendance and the level has improved during this academic year. Unauthorised absence has also improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. Although most pupils are punctual in the morning, there are a significant number of pupils who are regularly late. Registration generally starts on time and staff ensure that there is a well ordered start to the day. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitude towards school and on their achievements and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall. Out of the 70 lessons that were observed during the inspection approximately a quarter were satisfactory. Two thirds were either good or very good in almost equal

amounts. Two lessons were excellent, four were unsatisfactory and one was poor. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the school are all learning well and making good progress. This is so because the process of amalgamation has not been allowed to detract from the high expectations that teachers have and the ethos the school has that ensures that pupils are active and appreciative participants in their learning. Some very good teaching was observed in all phases and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in the Foundation Stage where the teaching was the best. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 received a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than those in Years 3 to 6 where the proportion of satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching was higher.

20. The quality of teaching for children under the age of five is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes in all the areas of learning. All support staff work effectively and complement the good teaching. The wide range of interesting activities and attractive displays provide a welcoming environment where all children, including those with special educational needs, feel secure and are motivated to learn. They show that teachers know how young children learn. There are high expectations of good behaviour, which in turn contribute to a good learning environment in most lessons. Thorough planning, target setting and assessment systems are in place and their use helps teachers to extend children's learning and raise standards.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well throughout the school. Teachers work closely with classroom assistants to meet the needs of the pupils. Lesson plans include tasks matched to the needs and abilities of pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises well with teachers and support staff. Teachers are careful to show they value the work and contribution of pupils of all abilities and ensure that all pupils are drawn well into classroom learning activities. Support staff know the lesson content and help to assess pupils' progress as they provide appropriate support and challenge.
22. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Basic skills in English are satisfactorily taught and in mathematics they are well taught. Opportunities to use the skills of literacy and numeracy do occur in other areas of the curriculum and this provides a good opportunity for their consolidation.
23. The best teaching revealed teachers with excellent subject knowledge, who transmitted intense enthusiasm for what they were doing. An example was a Year 5 music lesson, which involved the teacher visiting different planets and listening to the music they made. Skilful and imaginative teaching ensured the interest and involvement of all pupils so that they could be called on to evaluate their work and that of others in a sensitive way. Conversely, in a physical education lesson, weak teaching revealed the inability to think and present a lesson in a way that challenged or extended the pupils' ability to perform certain tasks.
24. On occasion it was noted that lessons overran or started late. Conversation with pupils and coordinators shows that teachers do not always adhere to the allocations of time allotted to the different subjects of the curriculum. The result is that the systematic development of skills and knowledge in certain subjects such as physical education, art and design and information and communication technology has been interrupted. An element of good teaching that must be insisted upon in the future is that all time is used fully and effectively for learning in all lessons so that pupils receive their full and sustained entitlement to all areas of the curriculum.
25. The school, with the support of the governing body, has invested heavily in the deployment of classroom assistants. They make a very good contribution pupils' learning. The classroom assistants and other occasional ancillary workers showed a very good understanding of what was required of them and, like the teachers, enjoyed the trust and confidence of their pupils. The very good relationships that are observed in the classroom are an outcome of good teaching which makes clear its high expectations whilst at the same time ensuring that learning is carried out in a friendly, relaxed yet purposeful way.
26. Weaknesses in teaching relate to issues such as the pace at which lessons are taught and the lack of specific subject knowledge resulting in low and unchallenging demands being made on pupils. Control is hardly ever an issue in these circumstances because pupils are generally very well inclined to do what is asked of them. Sometimes more thought needs to be given to how a lesson objective might best be achieved in order to maximise pupils' interest and progress. The quality of marking,

whilst being of a generally acceptable standard, does not always help pupils by telling them how they might improve their work. Some work was unmarked.

27. Teachers show their care and concern for their pupils by the way in which they provide for them and in the way they make their expectations known to their pupils. In general they are often good or very good at this. The result is that, combined with all the other influences that the school ethos brings to bear, pupils are highly motivated, cooperative and interested in what they are doing. They learn well because they know that what they are doing is valued. They care about what they are doing and value the efforts and opinions of others.

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

28. The school has long-term plans that indicate that the appropriate curriculum is in place for every subject of the National Curriculum. These plans also indicate that there is the correct breadth and balance across subjects and throughout the school. For most subjects the school uses the national guidelines but has not yet adapted these to the particular needs of the pupils in the school. The planned amount of time given to each subject overall is adequate and class timetables show that timings match on a weekly basis. However, in practice, much time is wasted. Lessons do not always start on time, some begin up to ten minutes late. Some planned activities, such as extended literacy work and information and communication technology do not always happen. The hour planned for physical education each week is, in reality, half an hour of teaching and learning and, on one occasion during the inspection week, was only 15 minutes. At certain times of the year, for example Christmas, the curriculum is suspended and consequently some projects, such as those in design and technology, do not get completed. This means that over time, some of the skills and knowledge that pupils should acquire are not taught and pupils do not attain the standards they should. This is especially true in the more practical subjects such as art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and physical education. The curriculum in Year 5 is enriched by French lessons provided by the local catholic secondary language college.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and is soundly based on the nationally suggested curriculum guidelines for children in that age group. The children are presented with a good range of stimulating activities that are designed to develop their personal growth and prepare them well for future learning.
30. The school has sound strategies for teaching literacy skills. The extended literacy lessons provide well for guided and independent reading skills. The strategies for teaching numeracy skills are good. All parts of the numeracy lessons develop mental and written number work well.
31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are well met through appropriate lesson plans and good support from teaching assistants. This means that these pupils are able to enjoy a curriculum, which whilst tailored for their needs, is essentially the same as that for the other pupils.
32. The school has an appropriate policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education. This is developed in religious education lessons, through science lessons and through circle time. Sex education is taught as a discrete unit of work to Years 5 and 6 pupils in the second half of the summer term.
33. The satisfactorily planned study support programme enhances the curriculum. The Breakfast Club caters for 30 pupils who enjoy a nourishing breakfast alongside quiet games and activities in the company of their friends. There is a satisfactory range of clubs, such as football, cross-country, art and drama for pupils in Years 3-6. The school also provides after-school mathematics and revision clubs. There is a French club for pupils in Years 2 and 3. An innovative programme of Fun Days began last year and is planned again for this year. Two days in the summer half term holiday are used for art and sport activities. Pupils may go to one or both of the days and participate in four different activities. Last year 47 pupils enjoyed activities that included art, drama, technology, cookery, football, rugby, cricket and netball. This year, for the first time, pupils have been offered the chance to take part in a residential visit and 15 pupils in Year 6 are eagerly anticipating this new

experience.

34. The school is involved with other aspects of the local community to a lesser extent. The local police force visited the school to show the pupils how horses and dogs were used in their work. Coaches from prestigious football teams promote the game to keen pupils. The school choir has sung carols at the local supermarket.
35. The school uses some of the local facilities to enrich the curriculum. For example, Everton Park, Wildfowl Trust, Hale village and the Catalyst museum. Visitors talk about their wartime experiences and events such as Chinese New Year. Pupils visit the theatre and have theatre workshops in school. The rich heritage of the city of Liverpool and its surroundings are underused to promote deeper understanding of some topics in history and geography.
36. The school has good relationships with the local Catholic secondary schools, especially the girls' school that provides French tuition for Year 5 pupils. There are plans to extend this link so that pupils can use facilities such as the drama studio, the language laboratories and the sports hall. There are suitable links with the local primary schools and the nearby playgroups.
37. Overall the quality of provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
38. Pupils' spiritual development is good and is enriched through the Christian ethos of the school and the clear emphasis placed on daily prayers and collective worship. In all classes the day starts with prayers and pupils often suggest issues on which to reflect. For example, in Year 4, pupils thoughtfully suggested that in view of the current situation they should pray for world peace and the astronauts and their bereaved families. The school encourages pupils to reflect on a set of values, principles and beliefs on which to base their lives, the aspects of their learning and the impact of their actions on others. Pupils' contributions are valued and this effectively raises their self-esteem and feelings of well-being. Good opportunities are provided during assemblies and in lessons such as science and literacy for pupils to reflect on aspects of their own lives and the wonder of the world around them. For example, during a Year 4 literacy lesson they shared their preferences between a poem entitled 'An American Sunset' and a piece of prose 'The Seaside in Winter' both with atmospheric illustrations. Pupils were encouraged to feel the words and pictures and responded with '...yards and yards of darkness'..., "It makes me shiver", '...there was no-one else walking along the esplanade...' and "I feel empty and alone". Teachers and pupils have a very good rapport with each other and this promotes spiritual development as each confidently shares thoughts and feelings.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is promoted very well through the curriculum and the school's Christian ethos. The school has a clear moral code for behaviour and pupils are encouraged to respect the feelings and beliefs of others. All adults in the school have high expectations of good behaviour which are very securely based on a consistently well implemented behaviour policy. Moral issues are developed very well during assemblies with a strong emphasis on caring and sharing. Through stories, posters and classroom displays pupils learn to reflect on a wide range of moral concepts and values such as honesty and fairness. Adults provide good role models for pupils who, from the time they start school, are taught the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and this is evident in the way that they show respect for property and take care of the school environment.
40. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school works hard and successfully ensures that all pupils are fully included in all it has to offer. During lessons, pupils have plenty of opportunity to work with partners and in small groups. Very good opportunities for social development are provided at the very well organised Breakfast Club and also at lunchtime when pupils of all ages sit together to eat their midday meal. Throughout the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop very good social skills and a good understanding of their responsibilities as citizens. During assemblies pupils are provided with positive corporate experiences such as singing and praying together. The very good relationships between adults and pupils also promote social skills and help pupils to grow in maturity and develop a sense of responsibility.
41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school has strong links with the church

and this helps the pupils to develop an understanding of their own community and local cultural heritage. This understanding is further reinforced through projects in subject areas like literacy, geography and history. Visitors into school enrich the curriculum and pupils' cultural development. This includes a member of the community to talk about Gateacre during the war, theatre group workshops and a Chinese visitor. Limited opportunities are provided for pupils to go out on visits to places of educational and cultural interest to extend their experience of the wider world around them. Pupils have recently celebrated the Chinese New Year and enjoyed eating Chinese food at lunchtime. The school's link through the church with a school in Kenya has provided pupils with a good opportunity to develop an understanding of multicultural differences and opportunities. Although the school is effective in promoting the pupils' cultural development, more could be done to ensure that pupils are fully equipped to take their place in the multicultural society that exists in Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school makes very good provision for the care and welfare of pupils and provides a secure and well-managed environment in which to learn. The majority of parents are satisfied that their children are well looked after and that any problems are dealt with promptly. In all classes teachers and support staff know pupils well and they are sensitive to their individual, physical and emotional needs. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress and to their attitude to learning. The newly appointed learning mentor provides good support for individual pupils in classrooms, in the playground and in after-school activities. The learning mentor works closely with the co-ordinator for special educational needs to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties receive good additional support to enable them to take full advantage of all educational opportunities. Good induction procedures ensure that children and their parents understand how the school operates and help children to settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery and Reception class. Pupils in Year 6 are well supported and advised by staff in preparation for their transfer to the secondary school and a number of visits are organised.
43. The procedures for monitoring health and safety issues are good. The school has adopted the local education authority policy. A risk assessment is completed regularly and any concerns are dealt with promptly. The caretaker and staff are vigilant in monitoring and recording any potential safety issues. During lessons and in the playground pupils are well supervised by staff. Electrical equipment is checked regularly. Good provision is made for first aid with all staff trained. An accident book is kept up to date and parents are contacted where necessary. Regular fire drills ensure that all concerned know how to evacuate the building in an emergency.
44. Child protection procedures are good and any concerns are well monitored and recorded. The headteacher is the designated person with overall responsibility and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are aware of the procedures. All pupils, for whom there is a need, have access to outside support agencies. Good up-to-date personal and medical records are kept for all pupils and these are used well to provide very good pastoral care and support.
45. The school provides good quality support in class for pupils with special educational needs and this underpins the good progress they make. The SENCO has worked closely with colleagues to ensure the early identification of pupils and to prepare individual education plans with targets and objectives that are suited to their needs. These plans are reviewed regularly. There is also very good support for those pupils with statements of special educational need. Classroom assistants, working with these pupils, enjoy good support from the local education authority support worker and are fully briefed so that they can discuss how current targets can be built into the literacy hour.
46. Good procedures are followed for monitoring and improving attendance although the level remains below the national average. The learning mentor records punctuality and monitors registers daily. Unauthorised absence is promptly followed up. Attendance at the well-organised Breakfast Club is successfully improving the punctuality of a number of pupils. A good system of rewards for attendance includes certificates, letters home and 'early bird' trophies. Parents are reminded regularly in newsletters and in the copy of the attendance policy for parents, of the important effect of good attendance and punctuality on their children's progress.
47. The school has very good procedures to monitor and promote behaviour. The positive behaviour policy for enhanced learning is consistently well implemented and teachers generally manage behaviour

well. Class representatives on the school council help staff to implement the good behaviour policy. Pupils help to write their own classroom rules and rules for behaviour in the dining room and playground are displayed around the school. The clear guidelines to eliminate bullying and harassment of any kind are followed well. There is a good system of reward and celebration for good behaviour which is consistently well implemented and this contributes effectively to raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The orderly manner in which pupils behave and their very good attitude towards school reflects the very good procedures and high expectations. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' educational and personal development are satisfactory overall. Teachers know their pupils well and their personal achievements are well monitored both formally and informally.

48. The school has a satisfactory system of recording test information for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2. Computerised records are kept of how well pupils have done in a variety of tests and in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. This test information is beginning to be analysed so that comparisons are made with previous tests but it is not yet informing target setting for individual pupils or groups of pupils such as boys and girls. Target setting for numeracy and literacy is just beginning to develop across the school but there is inconsistency in approach within and across the year groups. Many pupils do not understand their numeracy and literacy targets as there is no regular discussion or review system in place.
49. The school's marking policy clearly sets out expectations for all staff. However, the marking of pupils' work is extremely variable across the school and some work is left unmarked. Where work is marked well, teachers give detailed feedback to pupils about how much they have learned and how they can improve their skills. Teachers record little ongoing information on the standard of pupils' work in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The teachers have begun to moderate samples of pupils' work in order to help them assess accurately the quality of work in year groups and across the whole school. The school has not fully developed portfolios of exemplar work to illustrate standards and to show teachers what is expected of pupils of different ages.
50. Teachers make too little use of ongoing assessment information to guide curriculum planning and to help pupils to improve the quality of their work. Teachers are not always evaluating their lesson plans and making appropriate changes to future planned lessons. In general, staff make insufficient use of assessment information to track progress made by individuals and to set targets for future learning, although some targets are set for numeracy and literacy. Assessment systems have been put in place but are not yet having the desired effect of improving pupils' learning or raising standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has a good partnership with parents. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them and is very approachable to answer questions or to discuss concerns. Parents are made welcome and the headteacher and staff are readily available to speak to them at the start and end of the school day. The vast majority of parents support the work of the school well and provide good quality support for their children's learning at home by listening to reading and helping with homework topics. This support has a very positive impact on the pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement and positively support the aims of the school.
52. Parents are almost unanimous in their view that pupils make good progress. They agree that the school is well led and managed and believe that the quality of teaching is good. Parents are pleased with the high expectations of good behaviour and agree that the school promotes positive values and attitudes. A small number of parents would like more extra-curricular activities. The inspection findings fully support the parents' positive views of the school and finds that the provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
53. A small number of parents help regularly in classrooms and many more help with special events and fundraising activities. Many parents have responded constructively to a parental survey as part of the school improvement plan and the school values their suggestions for improvements. A small number of parents are currently involved in the successful Parent Partnership group sponsored through

'lifelong learning'. They are learning techniques of numeracy which they share with their children. Parents speak highly of the group and the effect it has on their confidence and ability to help their children's learning at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about individual education plans and are involved in all assessment and review meetings. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) is an active and supportive group of parents and friends of the school. Regular social events are organised which raise considerable funds for the school. Parents receive a regular PTFA newsletter encouraging them to be involved. Events are well supported and pupils have benefited from the provision of a range of additional learning resources and activities financed by the Friends.

54. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. In response to the parental survey, the school has tried to improve the amount of information provided for parents. Helpful weekly newsletters inform parents about activities and organisation and these are adapted for the nursery, infant and junior departments. Pupils' target sheets are shared with parents and their comments are invited. A homework timetable is provided to help parents to understand the school's arrangements for homework. Although parents receive a list of curriculum topics for both key stages the information is very brief and does not always provide sufficient, clear information about what is involved. Regular consultation evenings are held which are well attended and new parents feel well supported by the induction meetings and taster days in the Nursery.
55. The quality of reports to parents is satisfactory. Parents are unanimous in their view that they feel well informed about progress. Reports cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage but are generally statements of what has been taught and pupils' response. There are inconsistencies between classes in the clarity of targets for improvement and how these can be achieved. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provides a good amount of helpful information about the school's aims, organisation and the curriculum. However, the prospectus is unclear in its statement of parental right to withdraw their children from the collective act of worship and from religious education lessons and thus does not meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The school has made a good start with the process of amalgamation. This has been due in the main to the good leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The school has succeeded in integrating the staff from the two schools and the headteacher and deputy headteacher have devised schedules that enable them to function in the two buildings which are about 100 metres apart. Much of the development work that has been undertaken has been concerned with setting up staffing structures and administrative procedures for the whole staff so that whilst the school is two buildings on a shared site it now operates in a uniform way. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been helped in this not only by the rest of the senior management team but by the whole staff and governors showing their clear commitment to carrying out the next stages of the amalgamation process successfully. The success so far has included maintaining the positive attitudes of parents and pupils and an overall good quality of teaching throughout the school. The school's aims are evident in all that it does and the environment is one that ensures that pupils and children in the Foundation Stage make good progress.
57. Coordinators have not yet been given the responsibility for observing teaching and learning of their subjects at classroom level and whilst there are generally good policies and schemes of work in place they have no way of knowing, at first hand how effective these are. Similarly they are not involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of planning and pupils' work. Some coordinators are very new to the post and do not yet have the necessary skills and knowledge to make them effective. Others have been in post for a long time but have not kept up to date with developments. The headteacher and governors must see that school development planning makes clear the needs of these coordinators and ensures that, as a high priority, the necessary provision is made.
58. The headteacher has shown that she is able to make good evaluations of teaching and learning as it appears in the classroom but as yet the benefits of her detailed observations have not followed.
59. The special education needs coordinator (SENCO) provides good guidelines to help class teachers identify pupils. They currently work with the SENCO to produce individual education plans, which are

reviewed each term. These are of good quality, setting out clear targets which often focus upon literacy, mathematics and behaviour.

60. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory obligations in a satisfactory way despite not being up to full strength. The governors act with the school's best interests at heart, take up issues on its behalf and have supported the headteacher well in the process of amalgamation. They know the school's strengths well but are less able to point out its weaknesses. They are appropriately organised and understand how the school should be seeking to get the best value when it spends its budget. They are also effectively involved in the process of allocating funding to the school development plan and then in monitoring the way the money is spent. The school is making good use of its funding and is providing good value for money. The governors, having managed transitional funding well, are aware of budget surpluses and the fact that current rates of expenditure cannot be sustained in the future. Some development work is done with the assistance of the local education authority but the school has a good system for consulting pupils and others about their perceived needs. The school council is also canvassed as to its views.
61. As the school has effective ways of measuring levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science it is in a position to set reasonable targets for the next set of National Curriculum tests in 2003.
62. The appraisal process is effectively established and there are good procedures for supporting the newly qualified teacher in her initial year. There is a good match of staff to the needs of teaching the curriculum and the school has invested wisely in providing classroom assistants who make a good contribution to pupils' welfare and learning. Despite being in two separate buildings the accommodation is good although pleasant areas like the library are under-utilised. Whilst some of the outside areas are well developed and carefully tended some of the outside spaces are bleak and open as a result combining the space from the two schools.
63. There are good management systems in place to support the smooth running of the school and staff who are not directly involved in the classroom make a good contribution to this. Resources are generally satisfactory but in the case of computers, not enough thought has gone into their location or timetabling their use to enhance pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise standards further the senior management team and the governing body should:
 - I. Take steps to ensure that the planning and teaching of physical education, art and information and communication technology for all pupils and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 in music and design and technology is systematically followed through and is rigorously monitored.
(paragraphs 11,28,111,117,132,133,138,139,142)
 - II. Ensure that measures, which have so far caused attendance to improve, continue to be applied until it is in line with the national average.
(paragraphs 18, 46)
 - III. Take the necessary steps to eradicate any unsatisfactory teaching.
(paragraphs 23,24,26,50,58,84,92)
 - IV. Develop the role of the coordinators so that they become responsible for:
 - monitoring teaching and learning of their subjects in the classroom;
 - monitoring planning and the quality of work that pupils produce; and
 - introducing and monitoring the effectiveness and use of systems of assessment.

(paragraphs 24,28,57,95,110,119,120,126,131,137,141,149)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

70

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	21	25	17	4	1	0
Percentage	3	30	36	24	6	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	32	279
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	120

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	51

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	32	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	22
	Girls	28	31	30
	Total	46	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (n/a)	89 (n/a)	95 (n/a)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	23
	Girls	29	31	32
	Total	47	50	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (n/a)	91 (n/a)	100 (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	19	31	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	17
	Girls	21	23	28
	Total	32	37	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (65)	74 (67)	90 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	17	18
	Girls	25	26	22
	Total	37	43	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (64)	81 (71)	75 (86)
	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
269	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
3	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
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	23.25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	16

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	797,453
Total expenditure	830,243
Expenditure per pupil	2,564
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,175
Balance carried forward to next year	17,067

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.4
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	311
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Return rate percentage - 12%

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	42	8	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	26	21	3	8
The teaching is good.	55	42	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	39	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	34	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	87	13	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	42	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	24	5	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	34	0	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	29	18	0	3

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

65. Children in the Foundation Stage are in one Nursery and two Reception classes. There are 32 children in the Nursery, who attend part time for either the morning or the afternoon session. Children are admitted to the Nursery as they become three, or soon afterwards. There are two Reception classes, one of which contains all reception age children. The other class contains children in Year 1 with six reception age children. Children enter the Reception class in September of the year in which they become five. The overall attainment of the children on entry into Nursery is well below that expected nationally. Skills in speaking and listening and personal independence are often poorly developed. This is confirmed by initial assessments carried out with these young children. Children settle well into the Nursery and make very good progress in all the areas of learning. Those who find aspects of learning more difficult are quickly identified and offered good programmes to support their learning. They too make very good progress.
66. Very few children are on course to meet the nationally expected standards for their age by the time they are ready to start Year 1. However, they will have made good progress towards them. In music skills, children make very good progress. In the Nursery, the quality of teaching in all areas of learning is very good and sometimes, teaching is outstanding. In the Reception classes the quality of teaching is good and occasionally has some very good features. Although the teaching observed was never less than satisfactory in the Reception classes, there are times when the achievements of children in the Nursery, in some areas of learning, are not sufficiently built upon. The progress of a few children, particularly the higher attainers, in communication, language and literacy and in personal and social development is occasionally restricted. This is because some individual or small group tasks are not as challenging as they might be, or have limited time allocated to them. Support staff in the Nursery and Reception classes complement the work of the teachers and make a strong contribution to children's achievements.
67. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator, who has been in post since the school was amalgamated, provides good leadership and management. The nursery teacher, who took over the role during her long-term absence, ably supports her. A clear rationale with very good planning, which is monitored regularly, has been established. Assessment and tracking systems are used well to check children's progress in all the areas of learning. The school's system of target setting involves parents in the setting and meeting of targets to improve individual children's learning. This, together with the arrangements for the recording of children's progress in each of the areas of learning and reporting to parents, is a strength of the education provided for children in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Children's very low attainment on entry in this area of learning has improved considerably by the end of Reception. Although most children are unlikely to meet the early learning goals, they make good progress towards them. This is due to the quality of the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and the very good and sometimes excellent teaching. Adults in the Nursery take every opportunity to ensure that children feel safe, happy and secure and develop a sense of trust. As a result children have very good attitudes to school. Staff encourage the development of independence through numerous strategies which enable children to take responsibility. Children learn how to dress themselves and some children can fasten buttons unaided. They learn how to become absorbed in tasks when not directly supervised, because of the excellent provision, suggestions and examples set by adults. For example, nursery children continued a drama activity of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', acting out the parts of the various characters using expressive voices. They followed the rules of a dice game, taking turns and imitating the behaviour modelled by the adult. Children are encouraged to try out new activities. These are structured so that children develop an awareness of their own needs and feelings and, with support, begin to be sensitive to those of others. During a game involving guessing which child was covered by a large piece of diaphanous material, they delighted in their own success and applauded that of others. In this way children develop the confidence to participate, to share and to take turns and are introduced to school

routines.

69. Staff in both classes are vigilant about children who lack a positive self-image or cannot concentrate. With support, children learn to manage developmentally appropriate tasks. Teachers constantly check children's development and progress. Assessment opportunities for children's personal, social and emotional development are identified in planning and also arise spontaneously. The very good system of tracking progress and target setting enables staff to ensure that children, including those with special educational needs, develop personal and social skills. Good classroom management ensures that reception children are usually able to select and use resources and engage in independent activities. Behaviour is very good. Reception children maintain attention, curiosity and concentration, for example, when engaged in a task exploring old and new toys while playing in the classroom 'toyshop', or when using headphones in the listening centre.

Communication, language and literacy

70. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good overall and there are examples of very good teaching with excellent teaching, on occasions, in the Nursery. Good progress is made by the end of Reception, but children are not likely to meet the level expected for five-year-olds. In the Nursery, many children have speech and language difficulties and are not able to express themselves clearly. Some children use single words and gestures to convey meaning. All staff are experienced and knowledgeable about extending children's communication and language skills. They use talk to good effect and are active listeners. The quality of the prompts and questions during group speaking and listening sessions is a strength of the teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers assess children's progress carefully to inform planning for the next stage of their learning and target setting for individual children brings about specific improvements. Reception children are eager to contribute to the discussion and display an emerging self-confidence, for example, when talking with the classroom assistant in planning for a drama activity about 'Five Little Ducks'. They wait without interrupting until it is their turn to speak. A few children speak more fluently, enjoy expressing their own ideas and begin to use language for an increasing range of purposes.
71. Children enjoy sharing books with an adult, listening to stories and joining in familiar rhymes. In the Nursery most children understand that print carries meaning and can recognise their name. In the Reception classes, the teaching of reading and how to build words from their sounds is part of the daily programme. Some reception children recognise simple words from the reading scheme and at times can recognize and say parts of other words. Those children who had spent two terms in the Nursery at the time of the inspection and some children in the Reception class were writing their name legibly under their pictures. Mark making is practised in a variety of activities throughout the Foundation Stage. Tracing, drawing, crayoning, painting and using dough are part of the continuous provision planned in both Nursery and Reception. Children in the Reception classes practise letter formation by copying the teacher's writing, but few children write words and sentences for themselves, even though they have a knowledge of phonics. This is often because the time allocated for independent writing tasks is insufficient and teacher expectations, particularly for the higher attaining children, are too low. This restricts the progress of some children, particularly the higher attainers.

Mathematical development

72. Children's mathematical skills are poor when they enter the Nursery. Many children are not expected to achieve the level expected by the end of Reception. They do, however, make good progress in this area of learning, because the good teaching in the Foundation Stage provides a variety of practical number tasks, which develop children's mathematical skills and understanding. In the Nursery, teaching and progress are very good. Children begin to develop their knowledge of number as they count and sort using a wide range of objects. They sometimes recognise numerals and can sort according to colour, although they do not always know the colour name. Staff carefully check and record the progress of individual children against the set targets during activities. During the inspection, children played a shape board game with the teacher. Because her prompts and questions elicited a good response, children followed the rules, throwing the dice and using vocabulary, such as 'semi-circle', when left to continue on their own. Nursery displays are rich with materials which challenge children to investigate shape, colour and other number concepts. As children investigated the number '2' and the concept of a pair, they accurately identified two matching

items from a large, colourful display of rubber dolls. In the cafe play area, sets of cutlery, crockery and colour co-ordinated table linen help children use the terms 'bigger' and 'smaller' and to compare size, colour and quantity. A wide repertoire of number rhymes and songs is included in the nursery and reception programme. Children begin to understand how to describe where things are as they point 'backwards', 'sideways' and 'in front' during a song.

73. In the Reception classes, children learn about numbers and work more confidently with numbers to ten. Teachers make learning fun, for example using a glove puppet to count the number of people in a bus. In whole class group activities, children provide accurate answers to simple calculations and can subtract three from five correctly. Written work includes adding numbers to ten. Some children record operations such as $10+3 = 13$. Children also work effectively with number squares, finding patterns and supplying missing numbers. This good progress in mathematical development is the result of the good quality of teaching they receive. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in exploring pattern, shape and measurement. Large tiles of different shapes are used to make floor pictures of figures and buildings. Children enjoy pricing goods in the class toyshop and solving simple number and shape problems in a computer program.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Most children enter the Nursery with a very limited knowledge of the world in which they live. It is expected that many will not reach the expected level for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Adults in the Foundation Stage compensate for the children's lack of previous experience by effectively reinforcing the children's growing awareness and curiosity about a range of objects and events. As a result of good teaching and the wide range of experiences provided, children make good progress in this area. Everything in the nursery programme contributes to children's growing sense of wonder and curiosity. Children examine objects to find out more about them. They enjoy feeling a piece of ice on a snowy day, watching the shadows move on a sundial, examining spider webs, the first shoots of plant growth and experiencing the smells and tastes when they bake cakes and biscuits. Children begin to be aware of their own culture, language and beliefs and those of others. They paint pictures, discuss and act out events about their visit to Calderstones Park and to a party at McDonald's. Photographs are used to remind them of their involvement in a wide range of nursery activities; to note differences and be aware of change over time. They learn about life in other countries, as they discuss and explore an attractive display about the Chinese New Year and stories about India and the Caribbean.
75. In both classes children show an interest in using the computer. Children in the Reception class are developing keyboard skills and know how to use a mouse. They successfully use a good range of simple programs and perform basic functions with support. Work using the computer is extended by useful sessions in the school's computer suite. Children work well with a partner to produce computer-generated pictures. They develop a sense of time as they discuss a collection of old and new toys. Good prompts and questions from the teacher encourage children to notice and comment upon their characteristics. They look closely for similarities and differences and develop new vocabulary, such as 'rough', 'smooth' and 'fluffy'. Children remember and describe significant events in relation to their own toys and how they work. Opportunities are provided for children to explore the natural world. During the inspection, they enjoyed investigating the effects of wind. They made a 'windmill' out of tissue paper and compared and contrasted external and internal conditions. They learned how 'moving air' behaves outside and inside as they moved a cotton reel by blowing through a straw.

Physical development

76. Most children are unlikely to meet the expected standards for their age in this area of learning by the end of their Reception Year. At the time they enter the Nursery they have underdeveloped physical skills and poor co-ordination. As a result of an effective programme of work, careful planning and good teaching, most children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers work hard to develop children's physical skills. In the Nursery, outdoor play experiences give appropriate opportunities for children to practise and improve their manipulative skills. They negotiate their way along a set route when walking, running or using wheeled toys and develop co-ordination and control when moving along a raised platform. They gain finer control through cutting, painting and building and

benefit from the times allocated to showing them how to use tools, equipment and materials. This work continues throughout the Foundation Stage. Most children use pencils correctly when they write and demonstrate good control when using paintbrushes, glue spreaders, scissors and malleable materials.

77. Teachers have high expectations for both achievement and behaviour. During physical play, hesitant children are encouraged to become more adventurous and think about the different ways of using apparatus. Staff are sensitive to the worries that children have and take care to promote their self-esteem. During the inspection, children worked well in a physical education lesson. They listened carefully and followed instructions. They learned how to make 'long thin' shapes and 'small round' shapes with their bodies. They are beginning to understand the reasons for 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions and observe the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Children with special educational needs are given good support and this helps them to achieve well.

Creative development

78. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and in some aspects, it is very good. Although children are unlikely to meet the nationally expected standards for their age at the end of the Reception class, they make good progress towards them. Most of the creative elements of the early years curriculum, including painting, drawing, role play, sand and water are available as part of the continuous provision planned in the Nursery and Reception classes. In the Nursery, children explore and experiment using a range of media and materials. They make constructions, paintings and collages and experiment using different textures. During the inspection children explored the effects of dripping colours on circular paper in a salad shaker. They expressed wonderment as they revealed the patterns and designs produced as a result of turning the handle. Children are beginning to learn how to co-operate as they play together and act out different situations. All staff display a perceptive knowledge and understanding about the educational needs of young children and provide direction and help. Children notice what staff do and sometimes imitate and act spontaneously when the adult is not present. For example, one child modelled the role of the adult in a dramatisation of the Three Billy Goats Gruff story.
79. As they mature, children make good progress in acquiring a range of creative skills. Areas of integrated activity sessions develop children's creative skills by a process of trial and error. In the Reception class, children enjoy playing in the toyshop. They take on the roles of customer and shop assistant. The provision of good quality materials and language resources helps them to play positively. They are given guidance so that their speaking skills and imagination develop well. The quality of support and the input of non-teaching staff are significant for those children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and have a positive impact on their progress. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children develop good musical skills and the quality of singing is very good. They sing tunefully and in time to CDs and are accompanied well by piano. Children have a wide repertoire of songs and enjoy accompanying their singing and the teacher's playing by clapping or by using instruments. The good quality and range of untuned percussion instruments encourages children to explore and experiment with different sounds and rhythms and contributes to their progress in music.

ENGLISH

80. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 the school's results were below the national average for reading and in line with the national average for writing. The results were well above those found in similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining a level above that typical for their age is well below national levels for reading and above for writing. Inspection shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are at the nationally expected standard for their age in reading and writing. The majority of pupils enter the school with attainment below that typical for their age and make good progress overall.
81. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 the school's results were below the national average. The results were above those found in similar schools. The percentage of those pupils attaining a level above that typical for their age is below national levels. Inspection shows that standards are broadly in line with those typically found at the end of Year 6. They continue to make

good progress.

82. The school has set challenging targets for this year's tests and inspection evidence suggests that they are likely to be met. The National Literacy Strategy has been well established throughout the school. This has had a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and standards. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects, with some opportunities for pupils to record information. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their non-fiction writing to the same level as their fiction writing. Teachers make unsatisfactory use of information and communication technology within English.
83. Pupils in Years 3 - 6 are grouped according to ability within their year groups for English. Pupils of all abilities have good access to learning, including those with special educational needs. Work in each set is focused on the needs of pupils and is supported by good teaching that shares clear expectations for pupils.
84. In the infants, the teaching of speaking and listening skills is unsatisfactory and standards are below average. Teachers do not plan effectively enough for speaking and listening and therefore pupils do not experience a wide enough range of activities. Teachers use rich and wide vocabulary to promote pupils' interest in new words and pupils are keen to listen to both adults and to each other and to share their ideas. They insist that proper terms for language are used and they encourage pupils to select descriptive words accurately. Although many pupils speak well and confidently, some have not learned to listen to their teachers or to each other consistently well so that they can share and build on each other's ideas.
85. In the juniors, pupils' speaking and listening skills continue to be just below the national standards expected but exciting lessons that inspire pupils help them to use a good range of vocabulary to explain their feelings. For example, less able Year 4 pupils talking about the poem 'An American sunset' said that phrases such as 'There was no-one else walking along the esplanade' made them feel empty and alone. In a Year 6 class discussion about whether evacuating children during the war was good or bad for them pupils presented well-reasoned arguments from the points of view of themselves and parents.
86. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and, as a result, pupils are developing quickly as readers and making sound progress. In Year 1, for example, pupils are being taught to build words with confidence using 'sound buttons'. Pupils enjoy reading in small groups with the teacher or teaching assistant, as demonstrated when pupils were reading enthusiastically about the story called 'The Grump' in Year 1. Most pupils demonstrate good attitudes to reading. Teachers are following the national guidance on the teaching of reading and writing and are keeping up to date well with new initiatives and this contributes effectively to the good progress pupils make.
87. Pupils from higher and average ability groups in Year 6 show attainment in reading that is in line with that expected nationally for their age, while the standards of pupils from lower groups are below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils talk in detail about their favourite books, expressing a preference for adventure and humour for example, or a preference for an author such as J K Rowling. They give good reasons for choices and explain clearly the plot and describe the role of characters in a story. They read accurately, fluently and with expression. Those pupils with typical levels of attainment read accurately and with expression, explain what they are reading about and what they do if they do not understand a word. Their knowledge of how to use reference books, use an index or table of contents and find specific information on the page is underdeveloped. All pupils' ability to use research skills, such as skimming and scanning, for specific information is unsatisfactory. The opportunity to borrow and read library books, that are available in school, is not sufficiently used. The guided reading session is taught outside of the literacy lesson. Pupils read their books, complete their reading records or read in a group with the teacher. While this is valuable time spent developing good reading habits, some pupils do not focus as well as they should when they are not reading with the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that outline a detailed programme. They are supported by learning assistants and through class work. This enables these pupils to make good progress in reading.
88. Standards in writing are satisfactory for most pupils in Year 2. Pupils develop a sound range of skills

and have opportunities to write in other subjects. Pupils use their reading skills increasingly to help them with their writing and they are developing their understanding of grammar and punctuation.

89. Pupils in the juniors develop their writing effectively through well-planned activities that encourage them to acquire new vocabulary. Year 3 pupils developed their use of adjectives and suggested phrases such as, 'gloomy light', 'miserable bark', 'bristly hair' and 'dark, dank tunnels'. Year 6 pupils have good recall of the technical vocabulary associated with English, for example: 'connectives', 'structure', 'formal', 'debate' and 'emotive language'. They understand that statements can uphold or oppose an idea and can accurately identify which are which. They can write in a range of genres – poetry, letters, story, non-fiction, play-script, review and argument. They use interesting vocabulary and adapt their work for different audiences. They write in paragraphs using a range of punctuation correctly.
90. Pupils are taught the skills of handwriting throughout the school. Some of the pupils in the infants hold their pencils incorrectly and this is hampering the development of a smooth writing style. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a cursive script and take care with the presentation of their work, although this is not as yet consistent. The presentation of written work in the juniors is good. Pupils take a pride in their work. Standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations.
91. Attainment in spelling is as expected nationally of pupils in Years 2 and 6. They make sound progress, with weekly spelling lists to learn at home and focused work in class. When writing pupils apply the spelling rules they know and most common words and those that have regular spelling patterns are spelt correctly. Pupils make good attempts to spell irregular words and are often correct. Pupils in the lower set in Year 6 reinforced their learning by drawing the outline shape of the words they learnt, emphasising the ascenders and descenders. They enjoyed this activity and made good progress within the lesson.
92. Overall, the quality of teaching observed in English lessons was good in both the infants and the juniors. No unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1 was observed during the inspection. Overall, teaching strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. In all lessons pupils are fully involved in their learning and there is good use of teaching assistants. Pupils generally listen well, make good relationships and work well together. Where teaching is less secure, teachers' subject knowledge is not as good as it could be and planning is not detailed enough. The marking of pupils' work is extremely variable across the school and some work is unmarked. Where work is marked well, staff give detailed feedback to pupils about how much they have learnt and also how they can improve their skills. Teachers do not fully assess pupils' understanding at the end of lessons. Good attention is paid to teaching pupils the elements of writing from the National Literacy Strategy. There is an emphasis on teaching skills, which develop pupils' use of vocabulary and sentence structure. Teachers regularly set homework tasks which contribute well to the progress pupils make.
93. The good and very good lessons share many features of effective teaching, with good relationships and effective behaviour management, so that pupils are keen to learn. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They know what their pupils can do and match activities to their differing levels of attainment to challenge pupils and ensure good progress. They plan effective tasks that interest pupils, are relevant and promote independence. The pace is brisk in lessons, with pupils making good progress. Good use is made of interactive questioning and explaining so taking pupils' thinking and learning forward. Teachers do not always emphasise the learning objectives of the lesson often enough and time limits are not given for specific tasks to ensure that pupils work at a good pace. In Year 3 the teaching was unsatisfactory because teachers' explanations to pupils were not clear enough for them to understand what they should be doing so pupils were not focused on the tasks and made too little progress. Sensitive questioning and explaining strengthens pupils' moral and social development. These instances are often incidental and not planned.
94. At present most of assessment is the result of testing the levels of pupils' attainment at specific points throughout the school year. Teachers make effective use of these scores to predict the levels pupils are likely to attain in national tests. Formal ongoing assessment is underdeveloped. Teachers make some evaluations and assessments in a variety of ways, after lessons and through marking, but this is not done in a consistent way across the school and, though some teachers use the information to inform planning for the next lesson, all do not. Teachers do not always comment in

books on the way pupils meet the learning outcomes of the lessons, though this is part of the marking policy. There is no evidence that pupils are expected to respond to the comments in their books and no evidence that they do so. Some pupils have access to additional support through specific initiatives, for example, 'Early Literacy Support' for Year 1 pupils. However, there are no outcomes from monitoring yet which show that these initiatives are impacting on the attainment of these pupils.

95. The co-ordinator has been in post for 12 years and has been instrumental in ensuring the successful introduction of the literacy hour. Her role in the monitoring and evaluating of the subject's performance is unsatisfactory. She is unaware of the latest developments in the subject and therefore unable to ensure that other teachers know and implement them. Recently the school has had a substantial input from the literacy consultant. This has ensured that every teacher's planning follows the same pattern.
96. The resources for English are satisfactory. There are two libraries, one for the infants and the other for the juniors, both well organised and inviting. However most of the stock is stored with the spine outermost. This limits the impact books can have on the younger junior pupils when they are browsing along the shelves. In the junior library there are only reference books and no computer. During the inspection, classes, groups or individual pupils did not use the library. This is a waste of good resources and accommodation.

MATHEMATICS

97. In the National Curriculum tests in 2002 for pupils in Year 2 standards were above average when compared to national figures, and for pupils in Year 6 the standards of attainment were below the national average. In both age groups the standards attained were above those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 gaining the higher level 3 was similar to the national average, but the proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining the higher grade of Level 5 was lower than the national average.
98. Currently standards overall are in line with national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils, many of whom enter school with mathematical skills below average, make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality of support they receive. However there is a significant minority of Year 2 pupils who are not attaining standards in line with national expectations especially in relation to number. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
99. The school has undertaken a number of initiatives to raise standards of teaching and learning in the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and staff speak enthusiastically of the training in which they have all been involved. Mathematics features strongly in the school development plan and the school maintains fruitful links with the numeracy consultant. The analysis of pupils' test results has been developed and the information used well in various ways such as identifying pupils for sets, for after school enrichment activities such as Springboard and for the mathematics 'extension club' for Year 6 pupils. These after school 'clubs' are keenly attended by those pupils selected.
100. By Year 2 most pupils have made good progress in acquiring basic number skills. Most Year 1 pupils read, write and order numbers correctly from 0 to 20. Many Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of ordering numbers to 100, can solve number problems involving money, know the name of two-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties accurately. In one group, each pupil has devised a word problem to be used by the whole class.
101. By Year 6 many pupils are quicker at working out calculations mentally and in the use of the four number operations. Year 4 pupils demonstrated their enjoyment of mathematics which is generally shared by pupils throughout the school, as they were challenged to think about choosing appropriate number operations and ways of calculating to solve problems. They recalled 'mental', 'mental with jottings', 'informal addition' and recognised a 'times grid' when responding to ways of calculating a multiplication operation. Partitioning and rounding to the nearest ten were also offered. Year 3 pupils are familiar with digital clocks and how digital time display is used for example, to show the times of

television programmes. Some convert these times to analogue clock faces. Many are developing an appreciation of place value up to 1,000 and higher attaining pupils understand the relationships between centimetres, metres and kilometres. Year 5 pupils have developed their understanding of fractions to include improper and mixed fractions and can plot and interpret temperature graphs for places such as Irkutsk and Brussels. Many Year 6 pupils develop their number skills well when working with percentages and fractions and higher and medium attaining pupils multiply three digit numbers by two digit numbers. Most pupils are systematically continuing to develop their knowledge of important facts and strategies to use number operations.

102. Skills using graphs are practised in other subjects such as science, but overall the opportunities for practical investigations involving mathematics are not fully exploited. Information and communication technology is not used well enough in mathematics. Mathematics makes a good contribution to literacy. From the early years there is an emphasis upon using the appropriate mathematical language and vocabulary and many teachers foster speaking and listening skills well.
103. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. It was very good in nearly half the lessons observed. Teachers typically show good subject knowledge. In the best lessons there is very good classroom management and teachers make very good use of a range of attractive resources. These not only provide a strong visual imagery of mathematics for pupils, but they also help to actively involve and thus include, all pupils in the learning. They ensure appropriate time for the plenary and challenge pupils to think about how successfully they have progressed with the learning objectives. Where lessons have weaknesses it is sometimes because the pace is too slow. Occasionally pupils are not sufficiently involved, especially in the introduction and the mental/oral mathematics session. At times learning objectives are not made sufficiently clear. Planning, which is often carried out in year group teams, makes good provision for different levels of attainment.
104. Class teachers work very closely with classroom assistants and they in turn make a valuable contribution in the good support they provide. Pupils' good social development is strongly evident in the way that, from a young age, they can work well together in pairs or small groups. Learning is further enriched by the good relationships between pupils and adults and pupils' confidence and endeavour is fed by the way teachers show they respect and value what pupils have to share. A Year 5 lesson on probability exemplified how humour and mutual respect, is often a successful ingredient. The teacher, holding up a card, 'Mrs..... will play for Liverpool', looked at the probability line and asked 'Where do I put this?' The immediate response from a pupil of 'I should bin it Miss' resulted in a peal of good-hearted laughter from all present. The strength of trust and of mutual respect ensured no loss of dignity or discipline. This also reflects the very good attitudes and behaviour commonly observed in other mathematics lessons.
105. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator offers good support to colleagues and their enthusiasm is reflected not just in the lessons, but also in the ways they have adapted new national guidelines and plans. The co-ordinator has developed resources in school and some of these will likely be taken up for use in other schools within the authority. Teaching in mathematics lessons is currently being monitored by the headteacher and the local numeracy consultant. Data from the analysis of the results from different tests are analysed. When the slower rate of progress was identified in lower juniors, plans and curriculum content were reviewed. The school has identified 'subtraction' as one area for particular emphasis and extending pupils' ability to understand 'word problems' in mathematics as another. Good systems for assessing pupils' progress have been developed. However they are not used consistently in all classes to provide a detailed record of each pupils' progress and to guide their learning. Junior pupils now have individual mathematics targets, but some are less aware of them than they are of their literacy targets.

SCIENCE

106. Results of the end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 indicate that the number of pupils attaining the expected levels is very much higher than that found nationally in other schools, although the numbers reaching the higher levels of attainment is lower. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently at the national expectation in each aspect of the subject. This represents good progress. Pupils know that eating the right foods and taking exercise keep them healthy and that young animals grow to become like their parents. They describe the effect of forces

and the way batteries and wires are connected to light up bulbs. This understanding grows from studies that, for example, include investigations such as seeking the warmest parts of their classroom. This was achieved by placing ice pops in different parts of the room and recording their melt rate. Pupils effectively utilise knowledge gained previously about reversible and irreversible changes to offer suggestions for the experiment and demonstrate a sound understanding of how to set up a fair test.

107. Results of National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 match the national average and are well above those for pupils in similar schools. Standards are currently in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 6. Many pupils create their own ways of recording the results of tests they have devised and conclusions they reach show that they are able to interpret data sensibly and to use their previous scientific knowledge to make sense of the experiments. Pupils use what they have learned in mathematics to draw and interpret graphs to analyse and communicate their findings. Many pupils use a wide scientific vocabulary in their descriptions explaining phenomena in terms such as 'transparent' and 'opaque', 'pitch' and 'volume', in studies of light and sound and are familiar with the concepts of thermal and electrical conductors. Achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through modification of the tasks they are asked to undertake and additional help is given to them by classroom assistants.
108. Such progress is the result of good teaching throughout the school with some pupils benefiting from very good teaching. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 1 and Reception the teacher capitalised on the windy weather by encouraging pupils to experience and contrast the effects of the moving air in the playground with conditions inside. They then went on to study the movement of items subjected to a blast of air by blowing through straws. Other very good and good lessons included investigations into how to keep the teacher's soup warm, where water left in the classroom disappears to and whether an advertiser's claims that his sugar dissolves the fastest is true or not. Such work absorbs the interest of pupils and increases the effort they make to uncover facts about science. However, teachers make insufficient use of non-fiction books and the Internet to enable pupils to find out more about the topics they have researched. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and as they mature, share more and more of their experiences, equipment and ideas.
109. Pupils have the opportunity to study all aspects of the subject systematically as they pass through the school. The school has adopted the national scheme of work and is beginning to adapt it to its own needs. Infant pupils, for example, were helped by the Ranger Service to learn practically about the planning and planting of a science garden outside their classrooms. This enabled them to observe the changes in spring, summer, autumn and winter. Older children benefit from drugs education as part of their studies. There are noticeable variations in the quality of feedback pupils receive through marking. Some teachers take care to give encouraging or challenging comments based on what pupils have written. Other pupils just receive a tick on the page or no mark at all. The school's marking policy is not sufficiently well monitored in relation to science. In some year groups there is also a large difference between the ways the topics are tackled and consequently the demands made upon pupils. In some year groups virtually all of the work in one of the classes is based on investigations where pupils gain the experience of making up their own research and writing extensively. In the other, pupils are frequently heavily guided by worksheets or from work on the board which specifies the questions and requires just one-word answers. Both methods of teaching have some merit but these findings show that teachers do not first agree the best approaches for the right purposes so that all pupils have access to different styles of learning. However, there is no difference between classes in the very little use pupils make of computers to record and analyse their findings and to present the results of their investigations.
110. The monitoring and evaluation of both teaching and the outcomes of teaching are unsatisfactory. The coordinator, a recently qualified teacher, has only taken on responsibility for the subject since the start of the year. She does not currently have training in either the subject knowledge, or techniques of middle management with which to be effective in the role. She is therefore not yet aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and how provision can be improved. She does know however that assessment and its use is currently unsatisfactory and does not yet properly guide planning in science. To tackle this issue she intends to introduce materials to match the scheme of work being followed. Her own good teaching skills show that she has the capacity to succeed in guiding others.

ART AND DESIGN

111. During the inspection, only three art lessons were seen in the juniors and none in the infants. Evidence is based on an analysis of children's work, policies, planning documents and discussions with the co-ordinator and with infant pupils. Judging by the evidence available, standards in art and design are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is largely due to the limited time allocated to the subject and the lack of checking of planning to ensure the systematic teaching of skills and techniques. As a result, pupils are not making the required progress in aspects of the subject.
112. In Years 1 and 2, previous work indicates that pupils use a range of tools and equipment appropriately. Pupils had drawn and painted satisfactory pictures of characters and events from stories they have enjoyed, such as the 'Spot' stories. They develop their skills of observation when painting self-portraits and portraits of others. Pupils in Year 2 had explored a variety of starting points for practical work designing, making and painting objects from the environment, including a range of vehicles such as a bus with windows and functional wheels.
113. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate their progress in sketchbooks. Some pupils had completed satisfactory drawings in art of movement on the football field or on a climbing frame but standards and progress across the ability range were unsatisfactory. There is no evidence to indicate that pupils have had opportunities to experience a range of media such as clay, fabric, threads and three-dimensional work or to study the work of artists and craftspersons. This element is unsatisfactory. Although older pupils have sketchbooks, these are not used consistently for pupils to practise and develop their ideas.
114. As only three lessons were seen during the inspection, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory. Good links with history were made when Year 6 pupils, using materials appropriately and tools safely, satisfactorily designed and made an Edwardian style hat using card and paper. Pupils' attitudes in the lessons seen were positive and enthusiastic. They behaved well and handled materials and resources with care. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but discussion with pupils suggests that the restricted range of interesting work limits their enthusiasm for the subject.
115. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator, who had responsibility for the subject in the junior school prior to amalgamation, has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the work across the school. The recommendations of national guidelines have been adopted to provide continuity in teaching and learning. Resources for art are adequate overall and are well stored and easily accessible to both teachers and pupils. An active art club is organised at various times during the school year. Success in local competitions is a feature of the school, including work produced for the Queen's jubilee and a local housing association. A laser-projected image onto the Liver building during the Millennium celebrations was chosen from a design produced by one of the school's pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and standards meet the national expectation in Year 2. Examples of pupils' previous work included the result of a project on vehicles. With adult help, pupils had designed and made a variety of cars, tanks, busses and trains which demonstrated skills in cutting and joining card, fabric and plastic. The pupils were clearly proud of the way their ideas had become a reality and told an inspector what they liked about the models. Pupils with special educational needs succeeded, with help, in producing models to an equivalent standard. Providing that these pupils carry on learning at this rate, they are likely to reach the expected standard by the end of the year.
117. Standards in Year 6 are below the national expectation. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress. No evidence of finished products was available for Years 3 to 6 and pupils' books had no work in them which indicated that anything had been made and evaluated. Time after time, units had been started in various classes but work stopped part way through. For example, pupils studied packaging, wrote about the principles and drew boxes of cereal. Some even copied a net which could become a box but did not do any focused work to learn how to construct corners, build joints, join edges, make folds

or to decorate the boxes when they had finished. They failed to make a product and so obviously did not get to evaluate whether the finished article was then fit for its purpose. One exception was where one class of Year 4 children had made purses and had commented upon the way they could be improved. Their books showed some evidence of other practical work. Overall however, the pupils are being let down as they study, write and discuss but very rarely get to make and try to use anything.

118. Based on the outcomes of pupils' learning, teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. However, of the two lessons observed during the inspection one was taught satisfactorily, the other was good. Planning shows that when lessons are undertaken teachers take care to match activities to pupils' interests and several have exciting potential. For example Year 5 children began a new project during the inspection by responding to a letter created by the teacher, which asks them to design instruments to be used in a youth orchestra. Year 4 also recently began a new project and are intending to create an eight page Origami book for younger children. In this way pupils of both genders, regardless of their special educational need are motivated to begin their projects. That interest wanes however, because pupils are rarely allowed to see the projects through to completion to develop the same pride in their work as shown by the Year 2 pupils in their vehicles.
119. Assessment in the subject is poor. The marking of pupils' work, especially in Years 3 to 6, is spasmodic. Teachers give no indication that they have looked at what has been learned in lessons and marking doesn't encourage pupils to do their best often enough. For example, in the work scrutiny in one of the two parallel sets of classes from Years 3 to 6 only 18 pages of work appeared in books. Furthermore, only five pages had been marked by teachers in any way and only twice were any comments made. For pupils to have done so little work and with such infrequent assessment or encouragement is unacceptable.
120. The work that teachers plan and pupils produce is not monitored or evaluated effectively enough to ensure the pupils' continuous learning throughout the school. Time is frequently taken away from the subject and this is not appropriate. The co-ordinator has some good ideas to improve this, for example, through teaching the subject in designated blocks of time. She has a sound understanding of the needs of pupils in Years 3 to 6 but is unsure of what is required in Years 1 and 2.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Having observed two lessons only, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. Judgements on attainment are based on the two lessons, on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and on discussion with teachers and pupils. Standards in geography are as expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. Boys and girls achieve at a satisfactory pace and pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive.
122. The school is in the process of using and evaluating topics from nationally produced guidelines (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) to provide the basis for the teaching and learning of geography. Resources have been effectively augmented to support pupils' learning using these topics.
123. Pupils in Year 1 develop a sound understanding of people and places as they study 'Around our school'. Year 2 pupils extend this understanding of places when learning about life on a Scottish island. They effectively identify differences and similarities between their own locality and a contrasting one when learning about life for a young schoolgirl living in Shanghai. The length of school day, the written language and the size of the Shanghai school are among features they identify.
124. Junior pupils continue to develop their knowledge of places and environments and map using skills satisfactorily. Year 3 pupils study landscape changes in the local area. In addition to a fieldwork survey, they devise questions to ask a visiting local resident. Good cross-curricular links are made with history and with English. Awareness of environmental issues is increased when Year 5 pupils engage in fieldwork to investigate local traffic. Pupils extend their understanding of communities, with different cultural traditions, in Year 4, when studying the life of villagers living in southern India. Year 6 pupils, talking about their work on rivers, show an understanding of physical processes affecting

landforms and an awareness of pollution.

125. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good and pupils responded well with interest and good effort. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Good use is made of maps and atlases, but globes are not so prominent. Information and communication technology is not fully developed to support learning in geography and opportunities to use mathematics are not fully exploited.
126. The subject is well led by a committed and conscientious subject manager. Support is readily given to colleagues, as is help with resources, including a set of photographs of the local area. Currently the co-ordinator does not have time available to monitor and evaluate teaching. The school has not yet adapted the national guidelines and incorporated them into a scheme of work, to underpin progression in pupils' learning. At present the assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. They do not provide the information necessary for staff to plan work based upon pupils' prior achievement, or help ensure that knowledge, understanding and skills are developed systematically from year to year. The use of the local environment, including permeability studies in the school grounds, is a strength of the geography curriculum. However, there are too few school field visits and insufficient emphasis given to using enquiry approaches and the study of people and environment interrelationships.

HISTORY

127. Only one lesson was observed in the infants during the inspection. Overall judgements about history are also based on pupils' previous work in books and displays and on discussion with Year 6 pupils and the subject co-ordinator. Standards match those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. In some aspects of the subject, junior pupils make good progress
128. In Years 1 and 2, pupils investigate the differences between old and new toys. Using a time line, they begin to show an emerging sense of chronology and recognise the differences between the toys children play with today and those in use in times past. Children identify changes over time as they write about things that happened to them in the past. They grapple with the concept of Remembrance Day and begin to recognise that there are reasons why people acted as they did.
129. In Year 3, in a topic about ancient Egypt, pupils learn about the use of hieroglyphics in writing. During the inspection, they enjoyed producing satisfactory representations of their own name in hieroglyphics following a TV programme. They consider the immense size of the Egyptian pyramids and record that they took many thousands of people 20 years to build. Pupils in Year 4 identify the reasons for invasions of Britain. They draw pictures on a map to show the location of items, which were the focus of early invasions, such as, farmland, coal, lead and the power of the crown. Pupils in Year 5 study exploration by sea and produce accurate structured work to compare and contrast the items, which would be considered necessary for a sea voyage in Tudor times and today. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils investigated the effects of rationing during World War 2. They were fascinated as they tasted the difference between cakes, made in the school kitchen, out of ingredients used today and those baked without the addition of such items as eggs, milk and butter, which were subject to rationing. Pupils enjoy their history lessons and are enthusiastic and interested to increase their knowledge about times in the recent and distant past. They usually have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons.
130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the lessons seen, one was unsatisfactory and one was very good. Where teaching is well planned, good use is made of resources and artefacts and activities challenge pupils to investigate and discover aspects of the past for themselves and progress is good. Insufficient use is made of historical artefacts and computer generated work to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
131. The history co-ordinator has been in post for only one term so has not yet had sufficient time to monitor and evaluate planning, teaching and pupils' work across the school. She is enthusiastic about the subject, has completed a recent audit and action plan and is due to attend a training course for history co-ordinators. Resources for the subject are barely adequate but are identified for development in the action plan.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. Pupils have started from a low base and although progress is sound in Years 1 and 2 standards by the end of Year 2 are still below average. Year 2 pupils use the mouse and keyboard effectively in order to access menus, move objects and draw on the screen. They write captions to accompany their teacher's pictures of Elmer the Elephant and successfully edited work when their teacher wrote a story of Goldilocks with many deliberate mistakes. Such work shows that pupils have made satisfactory progress since the start of Year 1. However, progress is not rapid enough for pupils to develop the expected range of skills which include using the computer to make things happen and the generation of tables, text, images and sound.
133. In Years 3 to 6 pupils progress little from the infants and standards are unsatisfactory. Year 3 pupils can create title pages for topics, make text-art headings for stories and use an appropriate range of fonts, sizes and layouts according to their intended audience. Pupils' own disks, which provide a record of their work, show that this same skill is repeated further up the school but they are not challenged to do more. For example, there is no evidence on disks or in printed form of extended writing to practise using the facilities of a word processor such as moving text, redrafting, or merging text together. Pupils have not experienced reshaping their work as they might by creating

newspapers or advertisements. Experience of using word processing is scant and largely consists of copying work from previously corrected text. Pupils have not learned to use email to communicate with others, to generate images beyond what they learned in the infants, to cut, paste and copy text or graphics from the Internet or elsewhere nor do they have skills in creating and using databases and spreadsheets. The little work there is, shows that some may have been shown the principle of these tools but none have mastered their use through practice. Unless these aspects are systematically taught to the oldest pupils in the next six months they will be at a serious disadvantage when they reach secondary school.

134. Teaching which leads to such standards is clearly unsatisfactory. However, individual lessons seen during the inspection were overwhelmingly good. Teachers plan what they would teach with clear achievable objectives. They understand the concepts and ways to operate computers, they motivate the pupils to complete the activities and have high expectations about what the pupils will achieve during the lesson. When the subject is taught the pupils learn at a reasonable rate. The reason behind the sound but insufficient progress for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and lack of progress in Years 3 to 6 lies in the infrequency of pupils' access to the subject. Year 6 pupils' disks, for example, indicate only four or sometimes five pieces of work saved over a period of more than 18 months. These have invariably been started and finished in the same session. Very few file records show any editing has taken place. There is little if any work on classroom walls, in corridors or in pupils' books to show that they have done anything else. Teachers say that the reason pupils lack skills is that they have had so little experience and this is confirmed by scrutiny of teachers' timetables. These show that most only plan to visit the computer suite for an hour a week but it is unlikely that even this takes place regularly. For example, four of the eight junior classes all have timetables which claim that each of their classes visit the computer suite for the last hour on Friday afternoon.
135. A second reason for the slow rate of progress over time is the ill thought out deployment of computers and their layout in the laboratories. In Years 1 and 2 the laboratory houses seven computers which are used by classes of up to 29. In one lesson, the teacher's explanation of what she intended pupils to learn was lost when after 55 minutes, substantial numbers of pupils had still not yet had a chance to practise the skill. They stood little chance of retaining the key elements of the teacher's demonstration in any case having listened to a story and played a game on the carpet whilst waiting for their turn. In the Years 3 to 6 laboratory only 11 of the computers are connected to the server and hence the Internet and these are sited tightly together in one third of the room. Hence pupils, who need to share two or three to a computer, cannot all participate as they are forced to sit behind one another in a line following the pupil whose turn it is to operate the keyboard. There is no whiteboard or projector so pupils are not always aware of what to do in any case. Thus through timetabling and location, best value is currently not being gained for this investment.
136. The use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Some classroom-based computers were seen to be used during the inspection and in the laboratory a Year 5 class searched the Internet for details of tourist attractions in Paris as a prelude to their French lesson. The BBC "Revisewise" website has been used by pupils in preparation for National Curriculum tests. These uses are rare however. In vain inspectors searched the samples of books that they had been given in each subject, for examples of the use of CD-ROMs to extend studies in geography and history; for word processed story or non-chronological writing; and for mathematical investigations using formulae developed in spreadsheets. Without the opportunity to practise and perfect the techniques and skills they have learned even the low level of proficiency pupils currently have will soon be lost.
137. The co-ordinator has not been effective in ensuring that the subject is taught systematically. She has worked hard to develop a policy and introduce a scheme of work which follows national guidance for the subject but this is not followed by all staff and therefore has had little impact on teaching and learning throughout the school. The junior department staff have not yet completed their training. The infant department of which the coordinator is a member has teachers with greater subject knowledge and who produce more acceptable outcomes. The opportunities afforded to the school through amalgamation may help it to overcome some of the difficulties outlined above.

MUSIC

138. Two lessons were observed as was an infant singing session. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of that age, but are below the national expectation for pupils in Year 6. This is due to the fact that insufficient attention has been paid to systematic teaching of the subject and its skills in the past. The wherewithal to raise standards exists but the coordinator is not yet empowered to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and outcomes in this subject.
139. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing well. They know a range of songs and can sing them with the accompaniment of the CD player. They can also sing in two parts as well as singing unaccompanied. This they do tunefully. They respond well to the signs that they are given by a conductor and so become aware of the dynamics of the piece they are singing. Pupils in Year 6 have little consolidated musical experience and do not know enough about different musical styles or the music of other cultures and lands. They have had very little exposure to live music. Musical terminology is little understood and there has been little opportunity for pupils to compose and record their efforts.
140. Of the two lessons that were observed one was satisfactory and the other was very good. Both lessons were based on sections of the school's commercial scheme which is soundly structured to meet the required national standards. The difference between the two lessons lay in the interpretation of the lesson plan and results were also influenced by the pupils' previous achievements and their confidence in those achievements. The composing lesson was taught very imaginatively and the pupils were asked to evaluate what they were hearing. This they did very sympathetically and effectively. The singing lesson showed that pupils do not have a tradition of singing other than hymns and this inexperience led to very apprehensive responses. The attention to evaluation was not there and so pupils, whilst learning and consolidating the words of the song they were later to sing for the school, were not challenged or shown how to improve what they had done.
141. The coordinator is well qualified but has been in post for one term only and so has had no opportunity to make an impact on the way the subject is taught. She has had no opportunity to see how well the subject is being taught or to check the outcomes of teacher assessments. There is only a draft music policy and proposed assessment procedures are not yet in place throughout the school. There is a good commercial scheme but teachers left on their own devices will not be able to get the best out of it and so there is also a need to share and show good practice where using the scheme of work is concerned. The coordinator has the skill and enthusiasm to raise standards but must be allowed the opportunity to do so.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Standards of attainment are below those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6. This is because until recently pupils have not been systematically taught the necessary skills for all areas of the curriculum. Teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge, especially in the areas of gymnastics and dance, to teach effectively. However, pupils in Year 6 are on target to meet the expected standards in swimming by the time they leave school.
143. Pupils in Year 2 know that they need to warm up their bodies at the beginning of the lesson. They know that their hearts beat faster when they exercise. They can move satisfactorily to music and some are able to keep in time to the staccato style of the music. They do not have many original ideas and tend to copy each other. They are not confident or competent in the skills of dance and tend to be embarrassed. Pupils in Year 4 behave in a similar manner. They have few ideas of how to use their bodies to simulate machines and again copied each other. Some girls quietly persisted in producing a neat, though limited, routine while the boys made more flamboyant, though equally limited, movements. All pupils listened well to the music but lacked a range of movements to interpret it and perform to a satisfactory standard.
144. Pupils in Year 5 practised netball skills. They were keen and enthusiastic throughout the lesson, practising newly taught skills to a good standard. By the end of the lesson they were able to throw and catch with some accuracy. They could dodge to intercept a pass. They further developed these skills in short, fast five-a-side games towards the end of the lesson. They jumped to catch the ball and learned to pivot with it before passing. Pupils, who were watching, when their team was not playing, were involved well by the teacher and classroom assistant through challenging questions.

Overall their standard of attainment in this area of the curriculum was good.

145. Pupils in Year 6 practised gymnastics skills. These pupils have had very little experience of gymnastics and their standards are below those expected. They are able to perform a limited range of moves such as rolls, jumps, turns and balances. However, they work hard and by the end of the lesson produce a routine that comprises a roll, a jump and a balance. This they perform with a partner in unison and canon. They are pleased with their efforts and become more confident in performance.
146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and varies with the confidence and subject knowledge of the teachers. The quality of those teaching dance is unsatisfactory because they have little subject knowledge and are not able to teach the pupils well enough for the pupils to improve their performance. Teachers are unsure about how to inspire pupils and their reading of poems or setting of a scene is not sufficiently interesting to give pupils ideas to develop. Their tentative delivery of the lessons prevents pupils from challenging themselves and becoming confident in their abilities.
147. The teaching of gymnastic and games is good overall with very good teaching in the games lesson seen. These lessons have good pace, high expectations of pupils' efforts and very good management of the pupils. The clear teaching of basic skills enables pupils to make progress. Support staff are used well to help pupils focus on the tasks and time is also well used.
148. Pupils enjoy the games and gymnastics lessons where the ethos is supportive of their efforts and they feel comfortable trying new skills. They tend to be disaffected when the teaching does not give clear expectations of the task. However they still behave well and do try hard to do what is asked of them. In every lesson some pupils were not participating. This was usually because they had forgotten to bring their kit. This is unsatisfactory and the school needs to have a clear policy to ensure that all pupils have full access to the physical education curriculum. Pupils with earrings are a potential hazard to others and this again underlines the fact that the policy of the school is not well enough known and implemented.
149. The subject is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. She knows the limitations of the staff and tries hard to support them. She has bought a scheme to support the teaching of dance and teachers have begun to use it. She has monitored their planning and produced a useful list of suggestions to improve the delivery of lessons. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning through observing lessons. Not all staff dress in a way that is suitable for the lesson and therefore do not provide a good role model for pupils. The resources are satisfactory for the subject and there is planned provision for a new hall to provide a better teaching space.