

INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCH DRIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wirral, Merseyside

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105053

Headteacher: Mr Nigel Long

Reporting inspector: George Derby
25349

Dates of inspection: 28 - 31 October 2002

Inspection number: 251703

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Drive
Port Sunlight
Wirral
Merseyside

Postcode: CH62 5EF

Telephone number: 0151 645 5527

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs C Molyneux

Date of previous inspection: 1 May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Registered inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Science	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19343	Marion Howel	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32168	Ann Keen	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Foundation stage Special educational needs Art and design Geography History	
21910	Gordon Longton	Team inspector	English Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11419	Jeanie Underwood	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Church Drive Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school. It is very popular with parents. Currently, 321 pupils from three to eleven years of age are on the school roll. There is a 52 place nursery, which children attend part-time, one group every morning and another every afternoon. At present, over 22 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. This is broadly in line with the national average. A significant proportion of pupils attend from areas such as New Ferry, Rock Ferry and Bebington; very few live in the immediate locality. In some of these areas there is high unemployment, severe deprivation and child poverty. The overall attainment levels of pupils on entry to the school vary from year to year but are generally below those found nationally and locally. Currently, 10 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is below the national average. These have a wide range of needs, including autism, physical disability and other learning difficulties. Currently, a very small percentage of pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups and just three of these are at an early stage of learning English. At the heart of its work, the school has as its core value, *'only our best is good enough'*.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where all members of staff have a very strong, shared commitment to the pupils and to making the school a better place to learn. Church Drive provides a high level of personal care for its pupils, and there are very strong relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils. There is strong celebration of pupils' personal achievements and pupils feel valued and enjoy school. The teaching is good, overall, with some very good features in Years 1 and 2. This enables pupils to make good progress during their time in the school, and to attain standards which are mostly above those of pupils in schools with similar characteristics. The headteacher, staff and governing body work successfully to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment. The school is led and managed effectively and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well through good quality teaching and attain standards which are usually above average when compared with similar schools.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their work and their behaviour is of a high standard; relationships are very good.
- The way the school values pupils' achievements and raises their self-esteem is very strong.
- The teamwork among staff is very strong, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team is good.
- The work and support by governors is of a high calibre.

What could be improved

- Standards – these could be raised even further, especially for higher-attaining pupils, and for children in the Foundation Stage (for children in Nursery and Reception).
- The way the school uses the data it collects to set targets.
- The amount of time for learning in Years 3 to 6.
- The monitoring role of co-ordinators and the way they plan for the development of their subjects.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection in 1998. The quality of teaching has improved, despite staffing changes over the last two years; the percentage of good and very good teaching has significantly increased. The teaching of ICT is no longer unsatisfactory – quite the opposite. Teaching and the provision for the subject are now good. Assessment procedures have been further strengthened and a portfolio of written work guides teachers to make more accurate assessments of pupils' performance. However, there are no samples, as yet, to guide teachers'

assessments in mathematics and science. The book stock for English and the range of literature for the library have both increased and resources for these are good. Clear learning outcomes are very specifically stated for the separately taught activities in the nursery – a good balance between these and those that are ‘self-chosen’ now exists. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level and above for their age at the end of Year 6 has increased well since the last inspection, although, there has not been as great a proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. This is partly because the Year 6 cohorts taking the tests since 2000 were weaker, overall, in terms of ability, than those of previous years. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	C	B
mathematics	B	B	C	B
science	E	C	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In the national tests in 2002, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) and above at end of the **Year 2** in reading was well above the national average; it was above average in writing and mathematics and average in science (on the basis of the assessments made by teachers). However, not enough pupils achieved the higher grade in writing and mathematics. Consequently, when all the different levels reached by pupils in the tests are aggregated, the attainment of pupils, overall, is average (but above average when compared with similar schools). For pupils taking the tests at the end of **Year 6**, the results showed the best percentage ever reached for the expected level (Level 4) and above in English. This was above the national average, as was the percentage in mathematics. In science, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level for their age was average. However, the percentage of pupils exceeding the expected level was again well below the national average, and particularly low in science, which affected the overall grades, particularly in science. This partly reflects the wide range of ability of the group taking the tests but the school has recognised that there needs to be more attention given to higher-attaining pupils. In addition, specific weaknesses in science affected the results. The way it plans for, and teaches, the pupils in these subjects has now been modified. **In the work seen during the inspection**, standards for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 were in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills, and their scientific understanding. This includes the few pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those with special educational needs (SEN), who make good progress in subjects and towards the targets identified in their Individual Education Plans. There is no significant difference in the standards for boys and girls compared with the national picture. Standards have been maintained or improved upon in all subjects since the last inspection. Pupils' progress in some subjects is hampered by a lack of time, however. In ICT, standards are in line with what is expected by Year 6 but younger pupils' skills exceed expectations. In other subjects, standards are appropriate for the pupils' age. Children in the Reception class are currently on course to reach what is expected for their age in all areas except writing. Children's progress in the Foundation Stage is sound, overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. They show interest and enthusiasm, respond well to challenging work and are keen to take part in all school activities.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently of a high standard in classrooms and other areas of the school, including the playground and dining-hall.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show confidence and are keen to accept responsibility. They work effectively, independently and in groups, and show respect for other pupils' values and beliefs. Relationships are very good
Attendance	Satisfactory, currently, although this was below average for last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good, overall, with the greatest proportion of high quality teaching seen in Years 1 and 2. It is also regularly very good or excellent in classes for the oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6. It is sound in the Foundation Stage. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen and this was in Reception. Expectations of what Reception children can learn could be higher and planning and organisation of activities does not always meet the learning needs of these children. This results in pupils sometimes not being gainfully occupied. Teaching is particularly effective in English, mathematics and science. This good quality teaching promotes consistently good learning by pupils and is effective in developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In science, good teaching helps pupils to learn well, extending their scientific knowledge, understanding and interest. The good teaching enables pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with learning difficulties and the small number of pupils at the early stages of learning English, generally to learn effectively. However, there is further scope for teachers in some classes to reinforce subject vocabulary, spelling and use of vocabulary. There are many good examples where this is done but it is not consistent across the school. In all subjects, the teaching and support staff work together very effectively, and this helps pupils at all levels of attainment to make good progress. Pupils are managed particularly effectively through Years 1 to 6; management of pupils is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, overall, but needs to improve in Reception. In Years 3 to 6, planning for what different groups are to achieve is less specific and the learning intentions of lessons are not always made clear to the pupils'. Planning is satisfactory, overall, and very good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, planning for what different groups are to achieve is less specific and the learning intentions of lessons are not always made clear to the pupils'

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Overall, the opportunities for learning are broad and relevant. The balance of activities has been well thought out. It meets all the legal requirements to provide the National Curriculum and religious education. The continuous development of skills is somewhat weakened by a lack of time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 – this is below recommendations. Although good provision is made for ICT as a subject, its use to support work during lessons in other subjects is underdeveloped. Good provision is made for extra-curricular sport activities but there is a narrow range of other activities.
Provision for pupils with	Good. Very good management of the provision and help by a designated

special educational needs	teaching assistant provides effective support for pupils. Tasks are set at an appropriate level, based on clear targets in Individual Education Plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Highly effective provision for pupils' moral development, contributes significantly towards very good standards of behaviour. Spiritual development is reasonably promoted through assemblies and in some work across the curriculum. However, only a few subjects recognise the need for such opportunities to be promoted in lessons. Opportunities for social development are sound; those that there are, such as team sports, and older pupils helping younger ones, benefit the pupils well. Cultural provision is satisfactory; pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture. Opportunities for understanding other cultures could be better planned.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures exist for supporting pupils' personal development and academic progress. Sound procedures are in place for monitoring welfare and safety, for child protection and for promoting attendance. There are highly effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. Assessment is good but more use could be made of the information collected. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is very well monitored.

A good partnership has been developed with parents; parents view the school's work positively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior management team work together very effectively. The headteacher's passion for improvement has 'won' a very strong commitment from staff in pursuing high standards. Senior staff provide strong, purposeful leadership. Co-ordinators for subjects and aspects work hard and very effectively but need to be more involved in checking on the teaching of their subject and strategically planning for its development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is very successful in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. Governors work effectively with the headteacher to provide clear direction for the work of the school. They know very well the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. They have a very good range of expertise and commitment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring of teaching is undertaken mainly by the headteacher. Use is made of local and national comparative information to evaluate performance and to set targets for improvements in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher provides governors with regular information about the school's performance. Data the school has could be used more effectively to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Effective school improvement planning enables money to be spent wisely on sound educational priorities. All resources are managed efficiently.

The accommodation is satisfactory, although some classrooms are cramped. Staffing levels are adequate; support staff are skilled and experienced. Learning resources for subjects are sound. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most parents like nearly everything about the school and are highly supportive of its work.• They particularly identify that children like school, they work hard and that it is easy to approach the school with an issue or problem	<p>A few parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• more information about their children's progress;• more activities outside the classroom; and• better provision of homework.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find the provision of learning activities outside the classroom satisfactory - very good for sport but there is only an ICT club in addition at present. The arrangements for informing parents about their children's progress are generally similar to most schools and include some very good features. Information is generally of good quality. Homework follows the school's policy but it would help parental involvement if more was set on a regular basis.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The pupils' results in the recent National Curriculum tests

1. Although the school did well to get as many pupils as it did attaining at the level expected for their ages or above in the 2002 National Curriculum tests in Year 2 and Year 6, the school's overall results (as shown by the grades shown in the standards table in the summary report) were affected by not enough pupils' attaining at the higher levels.
2. The pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) and above for their age was above the national average in English (the highest percentage ever for this subject) and mathematics and average in science. However, because the percentage of pupils attaining above the level expected for their age (Level 5) was lower than the average (and lower than the previous year), this affected the school's overall grades. To some extent this reflected the make-up of the classes taking the tests and the few higher-attaining pupils the school had at the time. However, the school has recognised that more needs to be done to challenge pupils to do better and to stretch those who are capable of reaching the higher level (Level 5). In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' attainment was above average in English and mathematics and average in science.
3. The performance for Year 2 pupils was much better but, similarly (although to a lesser extent), a lack of pupils attaining at the higher levels, and particularly in writing, reduced the school's overall grades. The percentage of pupils who reached the level expected for their age (Level 2 or above) in the 2002 Year 2 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The assessments made by teachers in science indicated that pupils' attainment was average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was lower than average in writing and mathematics, was average in reading and well above average from the teachers' assessments in science. Taking together all the aggregated levels attained for each subject, pupils' attainment was above average in reading, below average in writing (largely because there were no higher grades), and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, the pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and science, average in writing and above average in mathematics.

The pupils' attainment over past years

4. Over the past three years there has been no significant difference in the performance of Year 2 boys and girls compared with the national picture. Nationally, girls do better in reading and writing, although there is no difference in mathematics. It is the same for this school, with the exception that the pupils' results, on average, have been above the national averages for both boys and girls. At the end of Year 6, for the past three years, boys' and girls' attainment has also been similar.
5. Over the past few years, with the exception of science, the school has achieved its planned improvements to raise the attainment of pupils reaching the expected level and above for their age. Provision in science has been weaker for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and pupils' attainment has, therefore, not improved. This is now getting better through the determination of the new co-ordinator, and the increased emphasis on practical work. Over the past two years, however, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels has generally declined. Some of this is because of the variation in the attainment of different year groups and the numbers of pupils with special educational needs over the previous years. From the school's analysis of its results and its monitoring, it has recognised that this underachievement needs to be rigorously tackled and has identified that there needs to be greater challenge for higher-attaining pupils. It has put in place plans to address this.

6. The trend in standards for English, mathematics and science has been below the national trend over the past five years, although the school's own recent analysis and the good support through the school's local education authority adviser alerted the school that positive action was needed.

Standards in the work seen during the inspection

7. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and science by Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in lessons, and in pupils' previous work, are promoted through good provision and teaching, overall, which is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Overall, the pupils are making good progress over their time in Years 1 to 6 and achieve well; this is especially the case in English, mathematics and science.
8. Realistic, but challenging, statutory targets for Year 6 have been agreed for 2003 and from inspection evidence these are likely to be achieved. In 2002, the targets set for English and mathematics were exceeded. Challenging, targets for Year 6 pupils have also been set for 2003 to raise the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or above. They represent an especially large increase in mathematics and science on 2002 figures. Targets are set for groups for Year 1 and 2 pupils and are focused upon well where relevant. Pupils are aware of these and strive to meet them. A similar system for Year 3 to 6 pupils could usefully be implemented.
9. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception classes is generally below average, although more recently this has varied and some groups are now nearer the average. There is also a similar picture when the pupils enter the Nursery. Children's communication skills on entry to school are one of the weakest areas, with attainment often below that of children of a similar age elsewhere. The provision for this has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be in need of improvement. The children's progress, including those with special educational needs, and the small group of children with English as an additional language, is satisfactory in all areas of learning and they are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of Reception. However, the writing skills of higher-attaining pupils in Reception classes are not sufficiently developed. Informative profiles of pupils' achievement help staff to keep abreast of the progress the children have made, but the information could be used better to plan activities and to ensure that expectations of what children can achieve are high enough.
10. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The well-targeted support given by teaching assistants in class generally, and the support given by the assistant specifically designated to work with individuals, helps the pupils to make good progress towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans. These are clear, specific and achievable and focus on the pupils' most important needs. The school's good focus in literacy and numeracy is also having a positive effect on learning and standards. There is long-standing provision of high quality for pupils who struggle with reading. The very good teaching of the *Reading Recovery* programme enables a very small number of pupils who can benefit from this to make very good progress. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They are well supported by the school's staff, other pupils and their parents. There is a comprehensive policy guide to the identification and work for pupils designated as gifted and talented. However, at present, the school has not identified any pupils with this level of attainment.
11. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in art and design are on course to be in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils show a good eye for detail and make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and the techniques they use. In design and technology, pupils attain above the level expected for their age by Year 2, largely because of the very good and systematic teaching. They make good progress. The work is now being planned and taught much more coherently than in the past and very good links are made to design and technology in subjects such as English. This has yet to make an impact on standards but, if the quality of teaching and planning is maintained, standards could be even higher. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain expected standards for their age. In geography and history, standards are in line with those expected for pupils' ages at both Year 2 and Year 6.

12. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' standards by the time they leave the school are as expected for Year 6 pupils, but for Year 2 pupils they are above the expected level. This represents good improvement as pupils' attainment, at the time of the last inspection, was unsatisfactory. The systematic and knowledgeable teaching, using the facilities in the relatively newly developed ICT suite, has significantly raised pupils' attainment and enabled them to make good progress. This has affected the youngest pupils the most, as the older pupils have not had the benefit of this until recently and their skills have previously been under-developed.
13. In music, the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their musical skills and their attainment is that expected for their ages for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Good progress is made in developing pupils' skills in physical education, particularly for the older pupils through the activities they undertake outside lessons. Overall, the pupils attain the skills they should for their age by Year 2 and Year 6; those who are regular participators in sport after school achieve especially well and attain good standards in activities such as cricket, swimming and football. The school is particularly successful in gaining awards for sport and is rightly proud of pupils' sporting achievements. Good standards are reached in swimming; all pupils attain the minimum requirements to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6 and many exceed this well. Standards for the majority of pupils are reduced by the school's lack of large indoor apparatus and its outdoor facilities. Pupils attain standards which are expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by the end of Years 2 and 6 and they make sound progress. This is an improvement, as pupils' progress and their attainment was unsatisfactory by the end of Year 2 at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The school's philosophy underpins the pupils' very positive attitudes and values. The pupils are hardworking, happy, have respect for each other and display politeness. This aspect of the school's mission statement is fulfilled very well. Pupils also have very good attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good. The pupils' relationships within the school are very good. The attendance figures for the school are generally in line with the national average. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their good personal development, and are a strength of the school. This is an area which has improved well since the last inspection, when it was also a strength.
15. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and show a lively interest in their work. They are enthusiastic, and are very willing to take an active part in all their activities. This enthusiasm was seen in many lessons and in all the class groups. They concentrate very well and show a great keenness to do their best and achieve as well as they can. Occasionally, when the lesson pace slowed, some pupils became a little restless. However, this was a rare event. In the majority of lessons seen during the inspection, the pupils had very good or excellent attitudes and behaviour. As a result, pupils and teachers make very good use of the lesson time available. There is good support for the extra-curricula activities and, again, a keenness by pupils to attend activities, such as lunch-time computer club or to help in the library as book monitors.
16. The pupils' very good behaviour, during lessons, break and lunch-time are a product of the school's high expectations and the school's moral code. Pupils know and understand the school's rules, and live up to the high expectations their teachers have of them. The school's code of behaviour helps set the school's moral tone well and the atmosphere created within the school (the school's 'ethos') engenders values such as respect, support and care for others. The children in the Nursery, who have only been in the school for half a term, are well aware of the classroom routines and the way they are expected to behave. The pupils play well together during their breaks and at lunch-time, and move around the school in a sensible manner. They are polite and courteous, and very welcoming to visitors. There are very few incidents of oppressive behaviour or bullying and no incidents were observed by the inspectors during the inspection week. Pupils trust their teachers and know that they will deal with any issues quickly and firmly. There have been no exclusions at the school for a number of years.

17. Pupils' personal development is good. Many of the opportunities they have to aid their development are informal. However, through the very strong relationships pupils have with their teachers and the good personal support they receive, they quickly become mature, sensible and polite children, and are well prepared for their next school at the end of Year 6. All relationships within the school are very good. The teachers act as good role models for the pupils, and there is a calm and friendly atmosphere within the school. The teachers know the pupils and their families well, and the pupils know that they can turn to the teachers for help and support. During the lunch-time break the pupils are well supervised by midday staff. However, the school provides limited play equipment for the pupils, and there are few opportunities for the staff to join in the pupils' games.
18. They work well together in pairs or small groups. In practical work, such as scientific investigations, they work sensibly and co-operatively. Their willingness to share resources and help each other is a strong feature. They show very good concentration and listen to the views of their fellow pupils. The Year 6 pupils help the younger children during break times, by encouraging them to join in the general play, and by giving one-to-one support if a child appears to feel 'lonely'. They set a good example to the rest of the pupils in general. However, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to make decisions and to be even more involved in the life of the school, for example, through a school council. There is an adequate range of duties for them to carry out, such as welcoming visitors, supervising the gates at break and lunch-time and acting as librarians, and they carry out such roles very well.
19. Although attendance was below average last year, the current attendance levels at the school are satisfactory. The figures are now generally in line with the national average, and there are no unauthorised absences. Very few pupils arrive late to school and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching across the school

20. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Although no specific judgement was made in the last inspection, the percentage of good or better teaching and very good or excellent teaching seen in this inspection was much higher than previously. Teaching is best in Years 1 and 2, where the highest proportion of very good teaching was seen during the inspection. Very good or excellent teaching was also seen for pupils in Years 5 and 6, but not to same extent as in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is satisfactory, overall, although during the inspection a very small amount was unsatisfactory in the Reception class. Expectations of what these children can attain were not always high enough; insufficient attention was given to the management and organisation of some pupils and so opportunities were missed to stretch those who were ready to undertake more formal activities.

How teaching has improved since the last inspection

21. There have been a number of changes of teaching staff since the last inspection. This has not affected the quality of teaching – in many respects it has enhanced it. Some teachers now working in the school were newly qualified teachers in the past year. These have been well supported and have gained a great deal from the assistance they have received. This has helped build on their initial training and contributed successfully to the quality of teaching.
22. The school has addressed well the points for improvement identified in the previous inspection and the teaching of ICT is now good. It was unsatisfactory previously, mainly because of lack of teacher knowledge and planned opportunity for pupils. The teaching of under-fives was sound, but specific outcomes for children to gain from activities were not always planned. These are now very clear and there is a good balance between 'focused' activities and those where children choose themselves.

The quality of the teaching of subjects

23. The teaching of English (including literacy skills) and mathematics (including numeracy) is good and follows the principles laid down by the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The teaching of many other subjects also follows the structure of these lessons, although there is great variation in the attention given to the sessions at the beginning and ends of lessons. In some the plenary part at the end of the lesson is far too short; in others the introduction is occasionally too long. The teaching of science is good; much more attention is now given to the use key vocabulary and to pupils learning the methodology of practical investigation. However, in Years 5 and 6, there is sometimes incorrect spelling of complex scientific words and not enough rigour in the reinforcement of important scientific ideas.
24. The teaching of art and design is satisfactory, with some good features; a particular strength is the use of visits and visitors and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. In design and technology the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good. The way design and technology ideas are also linked to literacy lessons, for instance, when pupils examine instructional texts, supports pupils' learning well. There was insufficient evidence, however, to make a judgement on the quality of teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The teaching in geography is sound and in history it is good. A strength is the way teachers pose searching questions to make pupils think deeply about sources of evidence and what these might reveal. The teaching of music is good, overall; the good relationships that teachers have with pupils gives them the confidence to perform. Good teaching in physical education is the result of good planning of a range of skills to support pupils' learning; however, the use of pupils to demonstrate their skills could be more consistent across the school – in some lessons this is quite limited. The management of pupils during lessons is good. This was a feature of lessons identified as unsatisfactory in the last inspection. The teaching of religious education is good, mainly because of teachers' good subject knowledge and the way they reinforce key ideas and vocabulary.
25. Literacy is usually well promoted in lessons and teachers take good opportunities to reinforce, correct or develop pupils' understanding of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. However, this is not always consistently planned for, and occasionally glaring errors in pupils' spelling of 'technical' words are missed. Phonic skills are promoted effectively and teachers now provide good opportunities for extending pupils' writing in other subjects. Pupils' numeracy skills are utilised well in other subjects such as science, design and technology and ICT. Although teachers use a variety of resources to enliven their lessons and to help pupils understand what they are learning, there is a lack of use of ICT in general to support pupils' learning in subjects and to reinforce pupils' ICT skills. There are some limited examples of pupils having searched web sites to find information, such as in history, and where pupils write stories and poems on a word processing program in English.

The features of teaching

26. Teachers' management of pupils is very good. It is very effective in Years 1 to 6. It is built on the very firm foundations of the very good relationships that all staff have established with pupils and also on the 'care' that staff have for them. There is a shared commitment to wanting to help pupils to do their best. Pupils respond positively to this and put great effort into their learning as a result. Relationships are similarly very strong in Reception, although more could be done to improve staff expectations of what children could learn, how they should behave and how they should be organised. For instance, children previously seen working hard, well focused, and learning well in some lessons in Reception were observed aimlessly undertaking unchallenging activities in others.
27. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects and how to impart knowledge to the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very strong. Similarly, the way literacy and numeracy skills are taught, developed and supported across the activities in these year groups is very good. Planning is very well-developed and what pupils are expected to learn and the activities to support these are clearly stated for the different ages of pupils in the classes. Activities match the pupils' needs and abilities very well indeed. They are very well thought out and the use of group targets to reinforce ideas to do with

- literacy and numeracy also help improve pupils' skills well. A great deal of thought and hard work goes into planning, which is shared across the classes and led by the highly skilled co-ordinator.
28. Planning is satisfactory elsewhere in the school, although there is not always enough attention given to the needs of higher-attaining pupils. This is improving, but is not yet consistent across classes. Sometimes, what pupils are to learn is not shared with pupils or is not re-visited during lessons so that pupils are clear about how much they have achieved. Teachers do challenge pupils and ask probing questions which are relevant to their needs and abilities. However, activities planned and outcomes stated are often for all pupils and planning for groups of pupils of differing attainment is limited. Furthermore, the school's planning format does not draw teachers' attention to key features in lessons that need to be promoted, such as the use of ICT to support learning, key vocabulary for pupils to learn (including spelling) and how spiritual, moral, social and cultural development might be promoted.
29. Time is productively used for pupils' learning, although there is some slippage with lessons after the morning and afternoon break time starting late (due to the distance pupils have to get to the playground) for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are usually very 'busy' in lessons, however, and the pace of working in Years 1 and 2 is particularly swift. Pupils enjoy this and no time is lost for these year groups. Occasionally, in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not plan enough practical work for pupils in lessons which last all afternoon and there is not enough variation in activity. For example, in a science lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils on how the earth orbits the sun and the features of day and night, they were unable to sustain the whole afternoon working on this topic and the teacher drew the lesson together early. Their recall of what they had learned was limited as was their ability to pay attention.
30. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils in lessons is a strong feature of their work, and the planning sessions they have together help them to share ideas and reflect on how activities might be modified or how particular pupils' needs might be provided for in the forthcoming lessons. Their review of how the lesson went and which pupils met the expected outcomes is good.
31. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and their learning is good. There is an effective working relationship between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff and in the drawing-up of Individual Education Plans, which outline how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs. Pupils are generally well supported in class or when withdrawn to work with the special educational needs assistant. Her work is effective and helps to support pupils' learning well. At times, more effective ways of supporting pupils' in class could be sought, especially where teaching assistants are present. The school's provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language is good and it ensures that pupils are well supported in the classroom and through activities elsewhere in the school. This is mainly achieved through informal, but effective, support and also involves help provided by other pupils.
32. Homework is satisfactory. It is set regularly for Years 5 and 6 pupils at the start of the spring term but is also provided throughout the year in the form of reading and writing activities for pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2, and in the sharing books and the very good material from story sacks in the Nursery.

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

Pupils' opportunities for learning

33. The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides a broad, relevant and generally well-balanced curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and those governing religious education. It meets the needs of all its pupils and provides them with an appropriate basis for learning.

34. The curriculum is enriched through a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons. There is a wide variety of very good sporting opportunities. The school is regularly represented in local team competitions that cover a wide range of sports. These include football, rugby and cricket; football coaching is also provided by the local club. Very recently the school was awarded a Sport Activemark by the Sport England. This recognises the time and effort that teachers and parents put into the sports provision the pupils enjoy. However, other types of extra-curricula activities are limited. There is a lunch-time computer club on two days each week, and the school has a choral group that entertains in the local area. No residential visit is organised and there are few after-school clubs with a non-sporting connection. Pupils could benefit from experiencing a wider range of extra-curricula activities.
35. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good, particularly in the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 and 2. Attention is paid particularly to planning for differing levels of prior attainment. The teachers have worked hard to resolve the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and several improvements have occurred. A key issue concerned provision for ICT and planning. This has been addressed with the development of the ICT suite and more computers in each classroom. However, there is still insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in others subjects. A new scheme of work has been produced to ensure appropriate coverage across the year groups. The Foundation Stage (for Nursery and Reception children) curriculum for children under the age of six, is good. This is because of the way it is planned for the six areas of learning and the detailed knowledge and understanding staff have of individual children's learning needs and how to adapt the curriculum for them. This enables teachers to plan accurately for their children's needs.
36. Subject planning, throughout the school, is based mainly on national guidelines supplemented by the Wirral LEA guidance or published schemes, which ensures good coverage of all the elements of the National Curriculum. Learning generally builds well on what pupils have been taught before but there are fewer opportunities for continuous development of skills in some subjects because the time allowed for each subject is limited. This affects science and has affected design and technology in the past, although this is improving. Overall, the teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is currently below the minimum recommendation and time is also lost through the time pupils take to walk to the playground and return after break in the afternoon. Consequently, lessons which occur during the last period of the day are shorter than the rest and if a subject is only taught at this time, then the overall allocation for the subject is lower than the new national recommendations. In the previous report, planning for Years 3 to 6 in geography and art was criticised; this too has been addressed and has improved well.
37. There are good, clear and detailed policies for all subjects, encompassing many aspects of the school's work. The long-term planning shows clearly what will be taught in a particular half-term. However, this is kept by each subject co-ordinator and is not easily or quickly accessible for teachers. Teachers produce more detailed planning for each half term, working effectively as teams in each department. Similarly, short-term lesson plans are drawn up weekly and the previous week's plans are evaluated.
38. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies are well established and have been implemented effectively throughout the school. The provision for both numeracy and literacy is good. For example, a wider range of books for group reading, including plays and information text, is now available for pupils. The lack of such books was criticised in the last report. Teachers feel more secure in their knowledge and use of both strategies because of very good input from co-ordinators and the support from the local education authority.
39. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory, overall. A formal programme is gradually being introduced, although much informal work is regularly and successfully carried out. Much of this is incidental in lessons but does contribute well to pupils' personal development. Lessons in PSHE are timetabled in Years 1 and 2, but have yet to be implemented for pupils in Years 3 to 6. However, informal opportunities for pupils to understand citizenship exist through the life of the school. 'Circle time' (when pupils sit together to discuss a range of personal and general issues) is planned well and makes a positive contribution to pupils'

personal skills. Aspects such as drugs awareness or healthy eating form part of a science topic about 'ourselves'. Sex education is provided for Year 6 pupils by the school nurse, otherwise questions about this are answered sensitively when they arise.

40. The school meets the needs of all groups of pupils well and all pupils generally have full access to the curriculum. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well-informed and pupils are included well in lessons and also have their needs met by specific good quality support. Teachers are supported by advisory staff from the local education authority to provide for the few children who come into the school with English as an additional language.

Links with the community and partner institutions

41. The community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. There are regular visitors into the school, including speakers for assemblies, theatre groups and visiting musicians. The school makes good use of local museums and art galleries and places of interest. Local companies, such as Port Sunlight Industries (Unilever) are represented on the governing body, and such strong industrial links provide the school with both financial and practical benefits. The strong community links help to broaden the pupils' experiences and enhance their education. Links exist between other nearby primary schools and the schools to which most of the pupils move. Information is shared between the schools and some curriculum links exist.

The opportunities for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development

42. Overall, the school provides satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This area of the school's work was good in the last inspection. However, the provision for pupils' moral development is now very good and strongly underpins the school's values. Much of the work promoting pupils' personal development is informal but, nevertheless, is effective. It is based on the school's underlying values and the very strong relationships between pupils and staff.
43. The school provides satisfactory provision for spiritual development. There is an act of collective worship during the daily assemblies, with regular contributions from the local church minister. Pupils join in enthusiastically with the hymns, and the service ends with the school prayer. The use of music and singing is a strong feature of the school and supports pupils' spiritual development well. Occasionally, pupils are asked to reflect on what they have learned and in some subjects to say how they could do better. However, few instances of lessons having a spiritual dimension were seen during the inspection. There were some examples in ICT, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 discovered what a formula in a spreadsheet could do, and a 'magic moment' in a Years 3 and 4 science lesson, when the teacher tapped a tuning fork and watched the ripples when it was placed in water. However, there is no policy to guide staff as to planning for these opportunities and only two subject policies (religious education and science) mention how spirituality could be promoted.
44. The very good provision for the moral development of the pupils is underpinned by the school's code of behaviour. Teachers act as very good role models, and the pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. The weekly award assemblies help to re-enforce the value not only of good work, but of effort and care for others. The headteacher explains how the individual pupils have earned their awards. The importance of the awards is also highlighted by the occasional use of visitors to the school to make the presentations. The weekly themes, used in the assemblies, mainly relate to moral or social issues and help to reflect the school's values and aims.
45. The provision for social development is satisfactory. The school makes good use of the local area and regularly welcomes visitors into the school. However, no residential visit is organised for the pupils, which could further benefit their personal development and independence. There are good opportunities for pupils to join in team sports, and such activities clearly help the pupils to understand the importance of co-operation and the needs of others. The school celebrates its history and its continuing connections with the community. Pictures covering the history of the

school are proudly displayed throughout the building, as are leaflets relating to local galleries and museums. The previous report mentioned the limited opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life. This situation has not changed. Pupils are given few chances to show initiative or take responsibility, but when they are, they clearly enjoy the challenge and take their responsibilities seriously. The Year 6 pupils who help with the younger children during breaks, are enthusiastic and more than willing to take their turn in the playground.

46. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about their own culture through their visits to museums and art galleries and the pupils enjoy 'living history days' at a nearby hall. A theatre group visits the school and the pupils play an important role in the Christmas celebrations at the nearby church, enhancing their ability to work together as well as learn about religious customs. The need for a greater emphasis on multicultural education was mentioned in the previous report and this is still the case. During religious education lessons pupils learn about other faiths and cultures, but there are few opportunities provided in other lessons for pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of our multicultural society. Opportunities for a multicultural dimension to some lessons could be improved if it was included more formally in the curriculum planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's pastoral care and welfare

47. The educational and personal support for pupils and guidance for pupils is good and is a similar strength to that identified in the last inspection. The school provides a secure and stable learning environment for its pupils. The teachers know their pupils well and play an important part in monitoring and promoting their personal development. There are effective methods used to check the pupils' development, and teachers share relevant information as pupils move through the school.
48. There are effective policies in place relating to health and safety and child protection. Procedures are sound, and a designated person has been appointed for child protection and training provided. The governors take an active interest in the safety of the school and health and safety audits are carried out by them regularly. A newly appointed representative for health and safety intends to target certain areas for special monitoring from time to time, such as food hygiene. The caretaker is also fully involved in checking on health and safety matters and bringing these to the attention of the headteacher. Good procedures are in place for the necessary records to be kept, with particularly good risk assessment records in place. Some minor health and safety matters were brought to the attention of the headteacher.
49. There are very effective policies in relation to the behaviour of pupils and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. These underpin the school's work and the 'ethos' which pervades the school. These policies are used fairly and consistently across the school and pupils know they can turn to their teachers for help. The effectiveness of these policies is evident through the very good behaviour of the pupils.
50. The school has a sound attendance policy and frequently reminds parents of the importance of the regular attendance of their children at school. Parents are discouraged from organising family holidays during term-time and the school has had some success in this area. However, it is mainly this which caused attendance to be below average last year.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance and support for pupils' special educational needs

51. Overall, there is a good range of procedures established for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the information gained from these is well used. Assessment was an area that was identified as needing strengthening in the last report and, overall, satisfactory progress has been made, although there is room for even further improvement. A guide for helping teachers with their assessment in writing has been produced and this helps teachers well. Although there is no such similar system for other aspects of English, or for mathematics and science, the school has focused on producing a portfolio of written work representing the different levels of attainment, as writing has been an area that has been targeted for improvement by the school over the past few years. Because of this, teachers are now more consistent in making their assessments and accurately focusing on what needs to be improved.

52. A great deal of hard work has been invested in strengthening the assessment and monitoring arrangements for subjects such as English, mathematics, and science, which are of good quality and are effective. A carefully planned programme of statutory and non-statutory tests is followed throughout the school in these subjects. The results are analysed carefully, and used effectively to set whole-school targets, to track individual pupils' progress and to set challenging targets for improvement. Good use is made of this information for identifying pupils who need additional support for literacy and to assist pupils' further progress through the school's 'booster' groups. Most teachers also make good use of the information gained in their weekly planning for these subjects. The school is now developing further its procedures for other subjects. Although there are some teacher-devised assessments linked to what pupils have learned at the end of a topic this needs to be linked to whole-school assessments for the subject and more systematically tied into National Curriculum levels.
53. The school monitors pupils' achievements adequately and supports them well in their academic progress. The school is updating its procedures so that recording of pupils' progress can take place electronically in order that the assessment co-ordinator can more easily analyse the data. This is an opportune moment to devise more sophisticated tracking procedures to identify those pupils who do not make enough progress or those that make more than expected.
54. Systems have been strengthened significantly, particularly in relation to assessment and monitoring in the Nursery and Reception class and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in ICT. The information gained is used particularly well for monitoring pupils' academic progress. There is, however, a weakness in the ways in which the school assesses and monitors pupils' progress in other subjects, which limits teachers' ability to match work to pupils' differing needs. Procedures are beginning to be put in place but are in an early stage of development.
55. Assessments, made shortly after the children enter the Reception class, are carried out effectively. The school also uses a local education authority scheme for assessing Nursery children. This is very positive in supporting children's transition into the main school and ensures that the work there builds effectively on children's known skills and understanding. The assessment is well designed to track children's progress towards the early learning goals and, for higher-attaining pupils, into the early levels of the National Curriculum. It is currently being used well to inform the teacher's knowledge of children's strengths and weaknesses. However, the information gained is not yet used sufficiently in teachers' weekly planning, to plan the work for different groups and abilities of children.
56. Good support is provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to enable teachers and teaching assistants to produce clear targets for those pupils who need support. Staff are very aware of the needs of pupils with SEN in their class and generally work well towards their individual targets. A teaching assistant works effectively with individual children and withdraws them from their class to undertake work specified in their Individual Education Plans. The school involves parents of these pupils well in the setting and reviewing of targets. Parents are routinely invited to meetings, creating an effective partnership in providing for pupils' needs.
57. Procedures for the Annual Review of the progress of pupils with a Statement of Educational Need are carried out appropriately. New procedures which involve parents in setting targets for their children are appreciated by parents, who welcome the opportunity to become involved in their children's progress.
58. The few pupils with English as an additional language are generally supported well; this is mainly informally by their class teachers and assistants, but also, at times, by advisory staff from the local education authority. However, specific targets for these children are not as clear as they could be and support staff could be used more effectively to meet those pupil's needs. All pupils from different ethnic groups are welcomed and are very much part of the school's family. They are often well supported by other pupils. The school provides some examples of multi-ethnic awareness, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year in the Foundation Stage, but the diversity of our multicultural society could be more in evidence to ensure full inclusion of pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. The school's partnership with its parents is good and, as in the last inspection, is a strength. There was a good response to the pre-inspection parent questionnaire and a substantial majority of the parents indicated strong support for the school. There was an equally positive response from the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting. The parents were particularly pleased with the way they are made to feel welcome in the school. They also said that their children like going to school and are expected to work hard while they are there. The inspection term supports these positive views. Some concerns were expressed about the amount of homework set and the extra-curricula activities provided. The homework set matches the school's policy. However, the team agreed with the parents that a more regular pattern would help both the parents and their children. The school provides very good sporting extra-curricula activities, but other areas are not well represented.
60. The quality and amount of information provided for parents is good. They receive regular newsletters informing them of forthcoming events and staff news. They also receive information concerning the topics to be covered in the following term, and advice as to how they can help. The annual reports give clear information about progress made in English, mathematics, science and ICT and also set targets for the coming year. There is less information about the other curriculum subjects. However, parents are given regular opportunities to meet the teachers formally, and can discuss problems or worries at any time during the term. The governors' annual report to parents is very informative.
61. A number of parents and other adults, including some governors, regularly help in the school, both in classrooms and with sporting clubs. There is also good support for events and outings, with many parents offering their help. The Home-School Partnership organises social and fund-raising events and these are well supported. The involvement of the parents in the life of the school is good and makes a valuable contribution to the learning and development of the pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

62. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good. There is a very strong commitment to improving pupils' academic attainment and progress and for ensuring that pupils gain the best pastoral support they can. The headteacher is hard working and very passionate about the school. His leadership provides a clear view about where the school needs to develop and how the 'best' for pupils can be achieved. He maintains a supportive environment in which all pupils feel secure and valued, where pupils work hard, enjoy very good relationships and show respect for their friends and adults. There is a strong emphasis on personal, as well as academic, development. Parents agree that the school is well led and managed. The school's aims and mission statement are easily seen in the daily routines of the school, which has a very good ethos.
63. The deputy headteacher shares responsibility for the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Working with the senior management team, he ensures that good systems of communication and support are maintained for all staff. He has clear, delegated responsibilities, such as supporting finance, although his monitoring role is yet to be fully developed.
64. The headteacher and the governors have worked hard since the previous inspection to address all the issues raised with considerable, but not total success:
- there have been very good improvements in the provision and in raising standards in information and communication technology;

- good improvements have been made to resources for English literature and the school library;
- improvement has been made to the exterior of the building;

- the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level for their age in the National Curriculum tests has improved;
- the percentage of good and very good teaching has increased considerably.

However:

- there is a need to continue the work begun in the assessment of pupils' attainment to ensure that pupils' progress is tracked in detail and that this leads to more rigorous target-setting for each year group;
- due to budget restrictions it has not been possible to provide extra teaching and non-teaching staff in the juniors.

65. In English, mathematics and science, co-ordinators check curriculum planning and pupils' results are recorded, analysed and evaluated. There has been some monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and the local education authority adviser. The school is aware that subject co-ordinators should be involved in more direct monitoring and that this also needs to be extended to the other subjects of the curriculum. Monitoring of planning (although this is retrospective) and of pupils' work has helped improve what is taught and to raise standards.
66. Planning for school development and improvement is thorough and there are relevant, fully costed priorities to move the school forward. The plan would benefit from a simpler, clearer format to enable the reader to gain a quick understanding and all staff to track progress in their areas more efficiently. Subject co-ordinators have various ways in which they plan for the development in their subjects; for example, in ICT there is a thorough, detailed plan, whilst for design and technology the plan is an informal 'wish list'. The time is ripe for a consistent way of planning for subject development that identifies all the features of a good plan, such as clear and measurable criteria for success.
67. The new systems and procedures for performance management have been implemented successfully. The headteacher and staff all have school and personal targets that are reviewed and assessed on a regular basis.
68. The work of the governing body is very good. Governors have a valuable range of expertise and provide very good support for the school. The chair and all governors are committed to ensuring the highest quality education for all pupils and they work very closely with the headteacher to achieve the school's aims. They have a very good working knowledge of the school and this directly affects their decision-making. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and maintain a successful approach to meeting their responsibilities. For example, after a long period of consultation with all interested parties, the governing body has recently decided that a separate Foundation Stage provision will be established in the school from September 2003 and a decision regarding the provision of a Reading Recovery programme will be made in the very near future.
69. The proceedings of the governing body are conducted very efficiently and committees are very well organised and meet regularly. There is a very positive relationship between the governors and the school. Teachers are welcomed at governors' meetings when reports are presented relating to their special areas of curriculum responsibility. Governors have full confidence in the headteacher but expect him to be accountable. The governing body fully fulfils its statutory responsibilities. The governors are considered by the staff to be critical friends whom they trust and they appreciate their support and advice.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

70. The school has sufficient, suitably qualified staff; overall class sizes are adequate and staff have a good range of curriculum knowledge. An increase in the number of teaching assistants has been made since the last inspection. They have had significant training on behaviour management, which has led to much improvement. In the Foundation Stage, particularly, the teaching assistants are often used to good effect as they work with small groups of children, directing the children's learning. In some classes the assistants are not always used as well as they could be

while teachers are taking whole-class sessions. All teachers received computer training and evidence of their knowledge can be seen in the school, either in the classroom or for administration purposes. The school has a very well-qualified and conscientious special educational needs co-ordinator, who supports staff, parents and pupils well. The combination of school staff and outside agencies provide suitable provision for children with learning difficulties. The site manager and administrative staff receive appropriate training but the new lunch-time supervisors are still awaiting training.

71. Induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers is good. The school had three newly qualified teachers last year, all of whom were supported well by a member of the senior management team. The local education authority inspector monitored them all and mentors were provided for them. As a result, they are in a position to develop their teaching careers and many showed strong teaching during the inspection. The arrangements for teachers' professional development are good and are linked to the priorities identified in the development plan. The school recognises the need to continue focusing on areas prioritised for improvement.
72. The accommodation is used effectively to support learning. The school is housed in a Grade 2 listed building, which is very attractive, but imposes strict regulations on the school. Good improvements have been made to increase the provision. A new classroom now ensures that the children have more space, providing a more appropriate learning environment. As a result, the space in the hall which was used as a classroom at the time of the last inspection has a relatively new computer suite, which is well resourced. The library is also housed in the hall space. Although the arrangement is a considerable improvement, the acoustics are still not ideal, although the school has done everything it can to alleviate the problem. A new toilet block has also been built.
73. The classrooms are generally light and spacious; however, one 'outside' classroom which accommodates a Years 3 and 4 class and some classrooms for the large number of Years 5 and 6 pupils are cramped. The Years 3 and 4 classroom is very small for the number of pupils and only has access from the outside. It is also isolated from the rest of the school. A new and well-thought-out Foundation Stage 'Unit' has been discussed and agreed with the governors; it is planned for September 2003. This will mean that Nursery and Reception children will be located near each other and enable facilities to be shared.
74. Improvements have been made to the outdoor accommodation since the last inspection. The playground attached to the nursery has been developed, allowing free access from the Nursery, which is enclosed and therefore safe and secure. The school still does not have its own field, although it uses the grass directly outside the school perimeter. However, as it is public land it is also use for dog-walking and, consequently, not sufficiently clean to use on a regular basis. This limits the facilities for games.
75. The school is very conscious of the new legal requirements for disabled pupils and is doing everything it can to try to overcome restrictions, but the strict regulations which apply to the building would cause problems in the event of needing wheelchair access, for example.
76. The learning resources, overall, are satisfactory. Improvements have been made to the library ensuring that there are adequate books to use for literacy, including 'Big Books'. The range of non-fiction is adequate and the computers are used to some extent for research purposes, and supporting areas such as art and science. However, they are generally underused to support learning in subjects. The computers are used effectively to support administration and to produce special educational needs Individual Education Plans. Resources for physical education are just satisfactory but large apparatus is limited as are facilities for sport, other than in the playground.

The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning

77. The headteacher and governors have effective procedures to plan and oversee school finances and the budget. Governors have a good strategic oversight of finances and are fully involved in development planning, linking monies to necessary improvements. The work of the finance

committee is effective. Governors regularly review the school's spending and keep a careful track of expenditure. Since the last inspection, they have spent their money wisely on a new computer suite; its use is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment. Governors' work would be even more effective if they could assess the cost-effectiveness of expenditure such as this in terms of the effect such spending had on pupils' progress.

78. Financial control is good and the school's administration on a day-to-day basis is very good. The issues from the last financial audit, carried out by the local education authority, have been addressed satisfactorily. Governors are beginning to use best value principles in the decisions they make and this is effective in the way procedures for obtaining services and supplies for the school take account of getting the best value for money. The identified priorities and associated actions in the school development plan are carefully costed with an agreed time-scale. Grants obtained by the school (through the 'Standards Fund'), including those for pupils with special educational needs, are wisely spent on the areas for which they are designated.
79. The school's finances are tight. Although an average amount of funding is received from the local education authority, a slightly below average amount is spent on staffing. Unforeseen expenditure on sickness absence, not covered by the sickness insurance scheme, and unexpectedly significant increases in the costs of the delegated services (essential in relation to the school's plan for raising attainment) has meant that the school's funds for contingency are minimal (0.6 per cent estimated). An assessment of the building condition has identified a significant need for essential repair and maintenance work to this leased Grade 2 listed building. The school has undertaken some of the absolutely vital repairs such as replacement windows, but will be unable to find the quoted sum of four million pounds to fully re-furbish the building.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:
- (1) Improve standards further, especially in relation to higher-attaining pupils and for children in the Foundation Stage by*:
- improving the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, so, that it is of the same quality as seen elsewhere in the school, and especially the management and organisation of pupils in Reception;
 - improving the opportunities for written work to be spelled and punctuated accurately, handwriting joined and subject vocabulary to be consistently promoted throughout the school;
 - ensuring that the learning outcomes for the different groups for pupils are specifically identified in lesson plans and pupils are clear about these;
 - increasing the amount of time pupils have for learning in Years 3 to 6;
 - improving the role of subject co-ordinators in the planning for the development of their subjects and in monitoring all aspects of these, especially standards and the quality of teaching;
 - improving the use of the data collected by the school, especially for tracking pupils' progress more thoroughly and for whole-school target-setting, for groups and for individuals.
- (2) Improve the use of ICT across the curriculum to support learning in other subjects and to reinforce the development of pupils' ICT skills.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- Provide more planned opportunities to support pupils' personal development;
- Speedily implement the planned proposals for making assessments of pupils' attainment and the monitoring of their progress in art and design, design and technology, geography,

history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

** recognised by the school and identified in the school development plan*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	36	17	2	0	0
Percentage	1	23	49	23	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	264
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	57

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	0	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.4

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	23	18	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	21
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	39	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (88)	93 (95)	95 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	21
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	40	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (88)	95 (95)	95 (100)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	25	15	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	21	22
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	34	33	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (73)	83 (85)	88 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	23
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	34	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (83)	85 (88)	93 (95)
	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
256	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	632976
Total expenditure	643721
Expenditure per pupil	2090
Balance brought forward from previous year	15474
Balance carried forward to next year	4729

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	321
Number of questionnaires returned	118

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	38	8	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	44	17	8	7
The teaching is good.	61	31	6	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	37	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	25	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	52	41	4	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	66	28	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	1	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	42	17	1	23

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

81. Children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis (either five mornings or afternoons) following their third birthday and are taught by one teacher and supported by a nursery nurse. The children with autumn and spring birthdays who are approaching five years of age enter the Reception classes on a full-time basis from the start of the academic year in September each year. Children with summer birthdays attend the Reception on a part-time basis until the end of the autumn term. They are taught in mainly two groups, by a full time teacher, two part-time teachers and two nursery nurses.
82. The school provides the children in the Foundation Stage (the Nursery and Reception classes) with a satisfactory start to their education. The children's level of attainment on starting the nursery is currently about the same as children of similar ages. This varies from year to year and in recent years children's attainment has been below the level that would normally be expected for their age. By the time the children leave the Foundation Stage, at the end of Reception, they have made satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and have attained what is expected as laid down in the early learning goals. However, there could be greater challenge for higher-attaining pupils who could attain more. The children with special educational needs are taught satisfactorily and the few children who come into the school who do speak English as an additional language have adequate provision. Staff ensure that all children have full access to the curriculum.
83. The Nursery accommodation has been improved since the last inspection; a playground designated for Foundation Stage children has been developed. This has enabled the staff to provide effective outdoor play facilities so that the Nursery children have free access to the outdoor environment at certain times in the day. Reception children also play in this area at specific times. Well-prepared resource boxes are used so that the children benefit from a range of outdoor experiences, such as riding cars down ramps. Plans to create an indoor Foundation Stage 'Unit' have been discussed and agreed so that the Nursery and Reception children will form a more coherent group in the future.
84. Overall, the quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and pupils' learning is sound. Staff form good relationships with the children enabling the children to feel secure and happy. The teaching assistants are often used to support a small group so that the children have direct help from an adult, which ensures that children are receiving adequate attention. Children with special educational needs are generally well supported. Parents are welcomed into both the Nursery and Reception classes to allow the children to settle and feel secure. Consequently, the children arrive and quickly become involved in activities. The staff work extremely hard to plan a varied and interesting programme of activities and their written planning is thorough and clear. It relates appropriately to the early learning goals and clearly illustrates the teachers' good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
85. The co-ordinator clearly has the children's best interests in mind and the team plan together well. Sometimes the way that the children are organised, and how their behaviour is managed in the Reception classes, means that they are not as productively occupied as they could be. Children are assessed on entry to the Nursery; further assessments and observations are made regularly. These observations are used on a regular basis to plan daily activities. Children also have profiles showing records of their achievements. These are informative and are an indication of the progress that children have made, although they are not sufficiently matched against rigorous expectations of the children's attainment. The data obtained when the children start school could be used to help teachers to plan activities matched to children's attainment.
86. Satisfactory improvements have been made to the Nursery since the last inspection. Staff plan activities knowing what they expect the children to learn and give voluntary helpers clear

instructions to help them teach the children appropriately. Once the children have settled into

school, a balance between the time that adults work with the children and times when the children work on their own is achieved. This ensures that the children are taught new skills but also have time to experiment and use these.

Personal, social and emotional development

87. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and emotional development throughout the Foundation Stage. The children learn to play well together and adults encourage them to share. Incidents when children take other's toys are dealt with appropriately, which means the children learn that other people have needs which have to be met as well as their own. Children are able to sustain concentration in the Nursery in group times because they are interested in the stimulating stories and discussions. Assemblies are also used to build the children's confidence and Reception children happily stand in front of a large group of children in the hall to receive their certificates.
88. All the staff provide good role models for the children by treating them kindly and with respect. In turn, the children learn how to treat each other. Children who have recently started in the Nursery begin to show high levels of self-care; they identify adults who can help them get a drink when thirsty or help them put their coat on. Children in the nursery persevere with activities and happily spend some time at an activity to bring it to a conclusion. Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with their children, creating an atmosphere where the children comply with acceptable standards of behaviour. Voluntary helpers are well supported to help the children achieve their objectives. By the time children leave Reception, most attain the early learning goals in this area.
89. A wide variety of activities is provided for the children to develop this area of the curriculum. Role-play is used well to ensure that the children learn to work together, taking turns and being a member of a group. When working on the computer, children will often sit together and co-operate with each other to succeed with a program.
90. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good in the Nursery and satisfactory in the Reception classes. The staff place great importance on settling the children into school life, ensuring that the children have a good understanding of the classroom routines. In the nursery, the children come into school confidently and the way that the staff have organised of the room provides the opportunity for children to be independent and choose what they want to do. Adults help to develop the children's self-esteem by praising them so that they learn that they are able to achieve.

Communication, Language and Literacy

91. In the Nursery, this area of learning has improved since the last inspection and the children now make satisfactory progress. Children are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents. Staff help the children to understand the layout of books by pointing out words, indicating the direction and writing words to show them how writing 'works'. They often write what children have said under their pictures and drawings, for example, so that children are being helped to understand that the written word has meaning. Some of the children attempt to write their names and are beginning to form letters correctly. They have the opportunity to experiment with writing in different forms such as checking names on lists and 'writing cards'.
92. On entering the Nursery, the children's skills of communication, language and literacy are varied, ranging from average to below and are below average, overall. Staff use the activities to encourage the children to communicate and use language for thinking. Stories and group times are sometimes used well to extend the children's ideas. During the inspection, a teaching assistant took full opportunity to ask the children why the balloon that she was blowing up kept

going down. Detailed discussions ensued and the children contributed effectively to the conversation. The Foundation Stage children quickly develop confidence and chat to visitors enthusiastically, which helps to support their language skills and enables them to express their ideas. Some of the children can link ideas together and initiate exchanges of conversation, which means that they are able to consider what other people are saying.

93. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books; by the end of the Reception some children are beginning to read for themselves. They are aware of print and many will start to read 'Big Books' with the teacher. A few of the children can identify elements of books such as the title and author. Most of the children in Reception are enthusiastic about mark-making and some can write their names accurately with correctly formed letters. During the inspection, the children enjoyed the theme of parties, which was used effectively for the children to encourage children to write cards.
94. In the Reception classes, progress is not as advanced as it could be. Expectations of standards for the more able children are not high enough so that by the time those children leave the Reception, they are not achieving as much as they could. Some children learn to write letters accurately but writing skills for the more able children are not as advanced as they could be by the time they leave Reception.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, in both the Reception and the Nursery. Staff, assess the children's contributions and use their observations to plan the next step in the children's learning. The organisation of the teaching and management of the children's behaviour in the Reception is not always sufficient to raise standards adequately. In group times, the children's attention is not always sustained because teachers do not always ensure that the children are quiet enough to benefit from the lesson. Although the children in Reception are introduced to the literacy strategy, expectations of the pace at which they achieve are not adequate to ensure that those who are able attain the early learning goals and progress as far as they are could.

Mathematical Development

96. By the end of Reception, the children's mathematical development is about what is expected for their age. Sound teaching throughout the Foundation Stage results in satisfactory progress being achieved. One or two high attaining children are able to count well beyond ten and to use numbers naturally and confidently without the teacher's assistance. In one Reception class, the children played number games competently and were very well supported by adults to count, recognise numbers and use them in context. Good emphasis is placed on the use of numbers. In the Nursery, two children were able to state the number on their front door and indicate what it looks like with their fingers. Many of the Reception children can recognise some numbers up to 10 when written down. They have a growing awareness of vocabulary. Attention is drawn to mathematical language and ideas, such as 'fewer'; this is supported by children seeing the word written as it is used. In the course of group activities Reception children begin to check what is said and recognise when six 'cakes' have been selected and not five. They are also aware that one more would be seven.
97. Nursery children are supported well through focused group work and independent learning. In using bricks children identify shapes such as squares and know that a 'circle' shape is needed for a wheel. Focused activities with a teacher or teaching assistant are used effectively in Reception to concentrate on specific mathematical teaching points.
98. All children participate in sessions and children with special educational needs are supported by their Individual Education Plans. The computer is available as a tool for learning numbers, which the children enjoy using in independent learning sessions.
99. The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is sound. Assessments are clearly linked to the early learning goals; consequently, staff plan with these outcomes in mind. They record the children's progress and provide direct teaching to specific children. Suitable methods of teaching

mathematics are provided and children's interest is stimulated by involving them in practical activities such as putting candles on cakes, *pinning the tail on the donkey* or adapting well-known songs to their own party theme.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

100. Sound teaching through the Foundation Stage, based on a well-planned range of activities, ensures that the children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. Natural objects, such as cones, are used effectively for the children in the Nursery to investigate, using a magnifying glass. Children spontaneously comment on what they see. They are aware of the effect of a magnifier and extend their own learning by looking at skin more closely. Adults use good questioning to encourage the children in the Nursery to think about what is happening. As a result, the children's curiosity is aroused and they start to ask pertinent questions for themselves.
101. By providing the children with a range of materials so that they use their senses, they are learning to explore and investigate successfully. The soapy sand in both classes provided the children with an opportunity to feel its texture and realise its properties. *Playdough* was used by a child with English as an additional language, not only to investigate its properties as a material but also to promote language.
102. The Nursery children have a good range of construction toys, which are use effectively to initiate their own learning. Reception children experience a range of materials that they use purposefully to join, shape and assemble constructions. Observations are regularly used to assess the children's development and to move them forward; for example, they are assessed on their ability to use scissors. The computer is regularly available in the Nursery and some children are very competent at manipulating the mouse. Overall, children's skills develop well in the Foundation Stage and the range of activities and software could be extended to develop their skills even further. Children enjoy operating a tape recorder to listen to the stories and responding to the music. A range of activities is planned for the children to learn about past and present experiences, which will provide a sound background for future opportunities to realise that events happened in the past.
103. The quality of teaching in the Reception and Nursery are sound. Children are helped to experience a range of activities to stimulate their natural curiosity.

Physical development

104. By the end of Reception, the children's physical development is as expected for their age. The children use a selection of simple tools and small equipment to develop their fine manipulative skills effectively. The children enjoyed 'cooking' activities, and the icing of biscuits during the inspection proved to be a fascinating experience for them. It gave them a good opportunity to practice gripping small objects, so increasing control of their movements. In both Reception and Nursery, children show control and accuracy when using the computer mouse. Inside the Nursery classroom, children have daily access to the climbing-frame. They enjoy using it to move over, balance and climb through and the children are very confident on this equipment. Good use is made of the facilities available to them outside and the children experience a variety of both large and small equipment on a daily basis, enabling them to develop their co-ordination. They work productively both independently and with good adult support to increase their skills.
105. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in both the Nursery and Reception is satisfactory in this area of learning. The children develop skills through a wide range of activities. The hall is used regularly to play ring games, like *'Here we go round the Mulberry bush'*, for example, showing an awareness of space and others around them. The children in Reception are beginning to become aware of the changes in their own bodies that take place after exercise.

Creative development

106. Overall, the children's progress in Nursery and Reception is sound. Children's development is promoted through a wide range of experiences, including art, music, developing their senses, using their imagination and stories. The children in the Nursery enjoy creating their own ideas and exploring different materials. They play enthusiastically with *Playdough*, creating shape and form. They are able to complete their own drawings and are given many different experiences to learn about textures and colours. They experiment with paint to see how colours can be mixed together. The Nursery children learn effectively through using their senses; feeling the texture of icing sugar and the soapy sand or listening to music on the computer.
107. In Reception, the children continue to develop their imagination through role-play and 'small world' play. Stories are used successfully to help the children to expand their imagination and express their thoughts. When their attention is held the children sit spell-bound listening to stories. The children know songs and rhymes by heart and participate enthusiastically singing them. However, in Reception opportunities are missed in music lessons to extend children's learning to name instruments or develop rhythm. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in both the Nursery and Reception classes and children enjoy a wide range of experiences which support sound learning.

ENGLISH

108. Since the previous inspection, the pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 for both reading and writing has been mainly above the national average but was close to the national average in the 2001 National Curriculum tests. In the 2002 tests standards in reading improved for those achieving the level expected for their age (Level 2) and above and was above average. However, for writing, although there has been an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level and above, the lack of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 results in the overall standard was below the national average. This can be partly explained by the variations in ability in different year groups and especially the numbers of pupils with special educational needs; the base-line assessment on entry shows a range of starting points and attainment generally below that expected for children's ages.
109. Standards found during this inspection show that the Year 2 pupils are on course to achieve similar results in 2003, although there is a small number of pupils that should achieve at the higher level. Overall, the pupils' attainment is close to the national average in reading and writing and above average for speaking and listening.
110. Since the previous inspection, attainment for Year 6 pupils has been below the national average but from 2001 has risen to be in line with it. The 2002 results show that this improvement has been maintained. Standards found during inspection show that pupils are on course to achieve similar results in 2003 and are in line with the national average.
111. The pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. Those with special educational needs receive good support, as do those few with English as an additional language, and as a result also make good progress towards the expected standards.
112. Areas of weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this has had a positive impact on ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning has been maintained. Literacy is given a high priority throughout the school and there are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum. The school continues to give considerable focus to ensuring that pupils use their literacy skills in other subjects, for example, in writing a job application for a post in a large Victorian house; in writing up science experiments; in geography, describing the characteristics of another country; and in religious education, recalling events from stories from different faiths. This approach is helping to raise the standard of writing across the school, a focus already highlighted for further development. The school has also implemented an additional literacy scheme, 'booster' classes to provide support for those pupils needing extra help to reach the

expected standard, and Reading Recovery. The latter supports younger pupils who are struggling to make the expected progress in reading and is very successful.

113. Pupils in the infant department (in Years 1 and 2) make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Those in the juniors (in Years 3 to 6) make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. As a result, by Year 2, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is about what is expected for their age but by Year 6 it is above expectations. Throughout the school, the emphasis is on encouraging pupils to think about their work, and to express themselves well, using interesting, 'technical' and grammatically accurate language. In assemblies, most pupils listen attentively to the stories. In lessons, pupils have good opportunities to express and develop their ideas and opinions, confident that they will be listened to and their contribution valued. They listen carefully to their teachers and appreciate the contribution others make to the lesson. During a Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils were able to suggest appropriate labels, captions and headings for a class reference book about school life. Pupils understand the need for these to be brief and relevant to the pictures. They recognise the importance of clear, concise instructions for making things such as a sandwich or milkshake. The older pupils discuss at length an extract from *Macbeth* and how it can be rewritten in the style of an American detective story. Their ideas show that they appreciate the differences in style, noting similarities and differences. By Year 6, the pupils are confident, articulate speakers, eager to answer questions and talk about their work.
114. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is in line with the national average, overall. They are encouraged to read for a wide variety of purposes, including information and pleasure. Books are well-matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels and pupils are enthusiastic readers. By Year 2, pupils' attainment is about average. Higher-attaining pupils are reading fluently, confidently and with expression. Lower-attaining readers are accurate but lack fluency and expression. Pupils talk about their favourite stories but are not aware of authors' names. They are becoming familiar with non-fiction text and how to find information in reference books. Pupils take books home regularly and family members are encouraged to hear their children read in order to improve their progress in reading. A Home/School reading record is provided for parents to make their comments. Throughout the school effective strategies are used to develop a secure understanding of phonics, word families and picture cues. These skills give pupils confidence to tackle unfamiliar words and have a positive effect on the progress they make in becoming fluent confident readers.
115. In the junior classes, pupils continue to make good progress in reading. The older juniors are encouraged to read challenging text in improve their confidence in performing. In Year 6, pupils understand the *plot, settings* and *characterisation*. They show an understanding of different writers' styles. They talk with enthusiasm about different authors and why they enjoy their books. The favourite author seems to be Roald Dahl. However, there is an inconsistent approach to reading in the upper juniors; expectations and encouragement to read for pleasure and on a regular basis varies between classes. Where pupils read more frequently they are developing a wider appreciation of authors and styles. Pupils are developing independent research skills but these are limited to specific tasks within the classroom. This is an area that could be developed further.
116. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. Their attainment is just about in line with the average for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. From Year 1 pupils are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes, such as recording in history, writing instructions and imaginative stories. By Year 2, they are beginning to write interesting sentences. However, the rules of punctuation, such as the use of full stops and capital letters are not always observed. Accuracy in spelling is varied, although words are often spelled as they sound. Higher-attaining pupils use appropriate layouts, interesting vocabulary and connectives but still miss out the relevant punctuation and find spelling correctly difficult. No joined script is taught in the infants so pupils continue to print. The standard of presentation is, therefore, not as high as it should be and limits the school's capacity to attain at the higher level in the tests at the end of Year 2

117. In the junior classes, pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes, using a range of styles. However, although pupils use well-chosen vocabulary to capture the imagination of the reader, spelling varies in accuracy and punctuation is often used incorrectly, particularly in free writing. They write poems, character descriptions, letters in history, newspaper reports and information for science.
118. Teaching is good, overall, and ranges from satisfactory to very good. This enables pupils to learn well and make good progress. All teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy confidently. Teaching is carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of most pupils of all attainment levels. However, there are instances when the tasks set for the higher-attaining pupils are not well matched to their needs and do not extend their learning. Planning is particularly good in Years 1 and 2, where, despite the mixed ages, each year group within the class has separate learning objectives and tasks. Where teaching is very good, teachers have a great enthusiasm for the subject and this motivates the pupils to achieve. An example of this was seen in a Year 5 and 6 lesson where pupils were studying *Macbeth* and had to retell the story of the extract as if they were an 'American detective'. The results were good and some effective writing was completed. Although writing is a focus for improvement in the school, there are still aspects that need more work on them: spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Rarely during lesson observations, were references made to the need to spell or punctuate correctly. Opportunities were missed when these tools of writing could have been highlighted. Occasionally, the pace of the lesson dragged and pupils remained on the carpet for long periods. Teachers use praise, comments and questions effectively to check understanding and to extend or reinforce learning. Relationships are very good and teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour, resulting in good discipline. The use of support assistants in Years 1 and 2 is good but, at times, they could be used more effectively to develop aspects of the lessons and work with individuals when the whole class is taught.
119. In English lessons, behaviour is good and often very good. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy the activities and the very good relationships with their teachers. This makes a positive contribution to their progress. Pupils are keen to learn, stay on task, and show good levels of concentration and the ability to work with minimal adult intervention. However, where the tasks are less challenging pupils tend to become a little restless and move off task. Pupils are confident when responding to teachers' questions and listen with respect to the views of others or when play scripts or stories are being shared.
120. Assessment procedures are good and provide teachers with a range of information. However, this data is not used as effectively as it might to track individual progress in order to raise standards or to predict each child's level of attainment and area of weakness accurately. There are examples of effective marking, which helps pupils to improve their work, but this is not applied consistently. Homework for infants is reading regularly and learning weekly spellings, but for the juniors there is no weekly spelling or expectation that they should read at night, although some teachers encourage their pupils to read at home.
121. There are two co-ordinators, one for each department. The subject is enthusiastically well led and managed and the co-ordinators are knowledgeable about the subject. However, they could be more effective in further improving the standards if their monitoring role was extended. The curriculum is enhanced by visiting theatre companies and termly book fairs. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in English.

MATHEMATICS

122. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, taking all the levels together (the 'average points score'), the pupils' attainment was average when compared nationally. The percentage of pupils obtaining the expected level (Level 2) or above, was above average, but because the percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level (Level 3) or above was well below average, the overall grade for Year 2 pupils' attainment was heavily influenced by this. Overall, the pupils'

performance in the mathematics test, by the end of Year 2, was above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.

123. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, for pupils at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was average. Although the percentage achieving the level expected for their age was above the norm, the proportion exceeding this level was well below the national average, bringing the overall point score to average. When compared with pupils from schools of a similar type, however, overall, standards were above average.
124. Since the previous inspection, the attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 has varied, mainly due to the variations in ability of the pupils in the year groups and the differing numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented in all classes and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, now make good progress.
125. For the current groups of pupils, evidence from the lessons observed, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is improving, especially for those at the higher levels. Pupils' attainment is currently average in Years 2 and 6 and pupils are likely to exceed the targets set. Pupils' mental skills are being sharpened in all classes and pupils are gaining more confidence in using mathematics in other subjects. Teachers employ good strategies to enable all pupils to be involved at the same time during quick-fire mental sessions when they are very careful to provide questions well suited to the different age groups. In a Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils gave answers on their number fans which made sure that every member of the class was actively engaged and they were able to think and answer every question independently.
126. All elements of the National Curriculum Programme of Study are covered well and good opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' understanding by referring back to previous work. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to practise different elements of mathematics. For example, at the beginning of the term every class revised the four rules of number very effectively before moving on to problem-solving activities.
127. By the end of Year 2, pupils have adequate opportunities to investigate the properties of number. Through regular practice, they quickly calculate six ways of making 49 using six numbers. In simple algebra they recognise the missing number from a simple equation such as $? + 1 = 6$. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes well and higher-attaining pupils know some of their properties. Estimation of length and weight is becoming secure in broad terms, for example, estimating less than one metre and more than one kilogram. In practical work, role-playing shopping, the pupils state how much the items they have bought have cost and which coins can be used to make a particular amount. Pupils are confident with number and their early knowledge of tables is good. They produce simple bar graphs to represent data and increase their knowledge of co-ordinates by using all four quadrants of a graph to translate and transform a pre-determined set of co-ordinates.
128. By Year 6, good links with other subjects, such as the study of Victorian history gives rise to the meaningful use of mathematical ideas such as simple probability, resulting from a photograph of a Victorian school and children and the calculation of weight in a recipe for scones. They produce simple graphs of the investigation into dice and the numbers which can be made from the faces. Their skills develop well and their ability to solve mental problems is good. They are familiar with the properties of odd and even numbers and have carried out investigations to examine patterns using these numbers.
129. In both the infant and junior departments, the teaching and learning of pupils in mathematics, including pupils with special educational needs, is good. Factors aiding learning include the positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils, the very good relationships between pupils and their teachers, and the overall good standard of teaching. In all lessons, teachers plan very well for pupils of all abilities and ages within the class. Classroom assistants in the infant department, including those who work with pupils with special educational needs, support teachers well. As a result, all pupils make good progress within the targets set for them. Teachers are enthusiastic,

have high expectations of standards and behaviour and use their good subject knowledge and questioning skills very well to confirm their assessment of pupils' understanding. Every teacher provides opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson, Year 2 pupils described a two- or three-dimensional shape and other pupils named it. This provided a lively start to the lesson and captured all the pupils' interest and attention immediately. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils looked at shapes displayed on the overhead projector and discussed their properties, as part of a warm-up exercise. Pupils in the junior department generally have a sufficiently good knowledge of their multiplication tables, because they are practiced throughout the school with sufficient regularity. Pupils are expected to use correct mathematical vocabulary and this extends their knowledge and understanding. They develop their own strategies when solving problems in their heads, and are very keen to explain their chosen strategy and why they have chosen it.

130. Teachers are very familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply very effectively. The teaching was excellent in one lesson observed, very good in two lessons, and good in all other mathematics lessons. In the lesson where the teaching was excellent, in one of the Years 5 and 6 classes, the co-ordinator for mathematics had a very good rapport with his pupils which made them want to work well for him. He expected the pupils to work hard when moving shapes around their graphical quadrants and used praise and encouragement to boost their self-esteem. Most teachers outline the lesson objectives clearly at the beginning of the lesson so that pupils know what they are about to learn. In the plenary session at the end of the lesson, the objectives are checked and good questioning helps teachers assess pupils' understanding of their new knowledge. Teachers begin with very effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and this leads to them working with quiet concentration and producing work which is very well presented in most books.
131. The leadership and management of the subject is good. The experienced and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator has a very clear overview of the subject and of the pupils' attainment throughout the school. Assessment procedures are good. Results of all tests are carefully analysed and targets set for pupils throughout the school. Assessment is also well used to inform future plans. For example, the school identified problem-solving as an area in need of improvement and this is being addressed effectively at the present time.
132. Numeracy is used most effectively to support other subjects, as well as aspects such as speaking and listening in literacy. In science, pupils use their mathematical knowledge to record their results of experiments. In history, they produce time-lines around the walls of their classrooms to help them understand the passing of time, and in geography they find their way on maps with coordinates. Pupils are beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) more effectively now that the new computer suite is being used. Pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class presented the results of a class survey on how to prepare for a party on their computers and were thrilled with the colourful presentation of their results. Pupils enjoy presenting their findings in the form of graphs. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 class, the Year 1 pupils produced a graph of their traffic count on a quiet road while their Year 2 friends recorded their results based on traffic on a busy road. They then compared the two graphs and discussed the different results. Resources are satisfactory. The school is well placed to improve further.

SCIENCE

133. Since the last inspection, standards in science have varied considerably for pupils taking the Year 6 National Curriculum tests, although they have been much steadier for pupils from the Year 2 assessments. In the last three years, 95 to 100 per cent of Year 2 pupils have reached, and often exceeded, the level expected for their age. In the 2002 assessments, the percentage reaching the expected level was average and was above average for those reaching the higher level. In the previous year those reaching the expected level or above was very high.

134. The standards for the Year 6 pupils taking the tests have fluctuated markedly from well below average to well above average. Some of this has related to the range of needs and abilities of the different groups taking the tests. However, the school's own analysis of standards has indicated that for pupils in Years 3 to 6 too little time has been spent on practical work in science and that more challenge needs to be planned for higher-attaining pupils. In the 2002 tests, although an average percentage of pupils attained the expected level for their age, the percentage exceeding this level of attainment was very low. Because of this, the overall standards for science were well below average. The school has responded positively to the weaknesses identified as leading to low attainment and standards are now rising. Standards seen during the inspection are average for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and pupils are on course to exceed the targets set. These standards reflect the make-up of the current groups of pupils and the numbers of pupils with special educational needs; there is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys.
135. The school is now providing systematic opportunities for practical investigative and experimental work. In addition, the use of specific scientific vocabulary, and the emphasis on understanding the scientific ideas related to this, helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. This is not consistently promoted and presented in Years 3 to 6, however. Overall, pupils' achievements (including those pupils with SEN and the small number with EAL) are good. All achieve well due to good or very good teaching and a strong willingness by the pupils to learn.

136. In Year 2, pupils achieve well and the teaching is good and often very good, leading to pupils building well on what they have learned previously and making good progress. Pupils identify healthy foods and undertake a taste test, comparing the flavour of crisps. They also compare food eaten by different animals, suggesting reasons for differences. They use a Venn diagram to identify differences and similarities in the features of a human being and a hamster; in the 'intersection' of the diagram they include items such as *smell, playing, having babies* and *eating* as common features. Pupils have a good understanding of the sources of light and can identify those which are 'man-made' and those which are natural. Good links are made in literacy lessons, using texts to reinforce ideas of coloured light and the effects of filtering light. Pupils test out the effects using different coloured features and record their conclusions accurately.
137. By the time pupils are in Year 6, the majority can identify what constitutes a healthy life-style; they identify the things that can cause long-term illness, such as taking drugs, smoking and solvent abuse. Higher-attaining pupils go on to identify food groups and know that vitamins and other foods are necessary for a balanced diet and healthy living. Lower-attaining pupils struggle with labelling the different groups. They label parts of the heart and begin to identify the effects of exercise on the circulatory system. Pupils think about the things they need to find out in an investigation, such as the relationship between pulse and heart-rate, and begin to plan such an investigation using a planning board (a guide which helps pupils to plan what they want to find out). This leads well into the planning of a 'fair test' and identifying the variables to be checked. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 begin to know that the earth spins on its own axis and around the sun. They develop their ideas about the seasons and relate this to the tilt of the axis. Higher-attaining pupils have a good factual knowledge about key times (such as the time it takes the earth to rotate around the sun) and how these relate to the motion of the earth. Lower-attaining pupils still struggle to understand why night and day occur. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 progress well in their understanding of sound and how it relates to vibrations in the air; they investigate the effects of using thick and thin string when trying to make a 'telephone'. They say what they must keep the same and what they can vary when devising a 'fair test' for this. Across Years 3 to 6, the use and interpretation of data collected by pupils has been a weak area. This is now improving through more opportunity to record, deduce and infer.
138. The teaching of science is good and is best in Years 1 and 2. The pupils enjoy lessons which challenge them to think and this feature is strongest in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. Deeply probing questions are asked, particularly relating to the necessary features for planning or carrying out a 'fair test'. There is particularly good emphasis on practical work and the ways this can be achieved. The school is now using 'writing frames' to aid pupils in planning and recording an investigation, and these have been designed well to cater for different age groups. There is still some time wasted, however, when pupils colour diagrams/drawings unnecessarily. Good planning helps teachers to be clear on what is being taught and learned and objectives for the lessons are stated well. Teachers in the infant and junior departments plan together regularly; senior staff use this time for informal monitoring, and teachers' evaluations of what pupils have learned and what went well in lessons helps them modify their planning effectively. Learning outcomes clearly specify what pupils are expected to learn. In Years 1 and 2, there are clear expectations as to what different year groups will learn and do, whereas in Years 3 to 6, there tends to be one outcome for all, with different levels of questioning provided for the mixed age and ability groups. The match of work has improved for these different groups but could still be further developed with specific planning for them. Vocabulary is well explained and well displayed in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 the pupils are provided with a range of scientific terms associated with what they are learning. However, there is limited display or systematic recording of these to teach what they mean or how they are spelled. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' spelling is particularly inaccurate and words such as *dangerous, veins, and saliva* are frequently spelled as *dangerouse, vains* and *sliver*. Good attention is given to layout and quality of presentation of pupils' work, and especially of their diagrams, in many classes. However, this is not a consistent feature of teaching throughout the school. Teachers' marking is constructive and praises well what pupils' have understood or have produced, but there is a missed opportunity to guide pupils' further and to set targets for improvement. Sometimes, in Years 3 and 4, when lessons are whole afternoons, teachers misjudge the need for sufficient varied activities to sustain pupils' interest.

139. The co-ordinator is very new to the post and has a good science background and knowledge. Her leadership and management of the subject are sound. Together with the help of the local education authority adviser, she has identified the key features of the subject that need improvement, given the school's recent low attainment in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' plans are examined after the lessons/programmes of work have been taught and weaknesses have been identified. However, this means that planning is not likely to be rectified until the work is taught again, which in most cases would be two years. Furthermore, there is no time set aside for the co-ordinator to check directly on the quality of teaching in science. The school uses a combination of the national scheme of work and the Wirral science planning. Teachers plan well from these and the school's own planning has been improved to ensure that more consistent and coherent opportunities are provided for investigation and experimentation, especially in Years 3 to 6. Equipment is often borrowed from the local education authority resource unit. However, the use of ICT for recording, or for use in practical work, where monitoring of events such as temperature is to take place, is very limited. The subject, and pupils' progress, suffers from the insufficient time allocated to learning it.

ART AND DESIGN

140. Standards in art and design have been maintained since the previous inspection and are on course to be in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. All groups of pupils make sound progress in developing skills and techniques. During the inspection, only two lessons could be observed, both in Years 3 to 6. Inspection judgements have been made on the basis of this evidence and examination of pupil's previous work and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils. Improvements have been made since the last inspection; some evidence of three-dimensional work was seen, although the emphasis is still predominantly two-dimensional work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 carefully constructed masks of pigs and bears and a giant picture of the Iron Man was created illustrating collaborative work.
141. By the end of Year 2, pupils have appropriate skills in designing and making. These skills are developed through the use of a range of materials and media. Pupils are introduced to experimenting with colour by creating pictures in the style of Kandinsky, for example. By adding white or colour to existing colours they create new shades and tints. They are introduced to the work of 'real' artists by seeing how professionals work. A variety of starting points, such as stories, are used to stimulate pupils' imagination. Pupils demonstrate an eye for detail in drawing self-portraits.
142. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain appropriate standards for their age and their progress is satisfactory. Teaching is most successful in promoting pupils' skills and techniques, for example, when the younger children are taught skills like stencilling. The teachers have a good understanding of the processes involved in artwork and communicate them well to the pupils through providing a wide range of opportunities to experiment with a variety of tools and techniques and to learn through careful observation. Pupils use a variety of materials to create detail and texture to illustrate literature like the work about '*Jabberwocky*'. There are often good links made between art and other subjects, such as history, where the pupils make 'Mexican Eyes' and Aztec dress. Pupils' artwork is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. They have a secure understanding of a variety of skills and techniques. In their work on famous artists the pupils use their techniques and the stimuli of their work to develop their own skills. Pupils use computer packages to investigate colour and enhance their experience.
143. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have some good features. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard. They concentrate for extended periods and are keen to improve and refine their work. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and lessons are planned well. Good use is made of resources. A strength in the teaching is the use of visits and visitors to support the teaching. These local visits stimulate the pupils' imagination. The local education authority advisory teacher has worked in the school with all the pupils on a collaborative project about *High Tide*. As a result, the pupils produced a giant piece of work representing the sea and sea creatures. Pupils are starting to use sketch-books to practise and refine skills. In a lesson

based on *The Willow Pattern* story, the children interpreted a description of part of the story into a drawing. The teachers question the pupils and skilfully this helps to promote pupils' thinking about the process and purpose of design. Teachers manage behaviour well and the pupils respond by listening carefully and co-operating well. The teachers give good guidance by working alongside the pupils and making suggestions for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. The school is fortunate in being close to the Lady Lever Art Gallery, and they have made full use of its facilities. A visit to the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition was used to make careful sketches based on pupils' accurate observations.

144. Leadership and management of art and design are sound; the co-ordinator is keen to develop her role and has recently taken a course to increase her own knowledge. Teachers record pupils' progress through the end-of-year report, but there is no systematic assessment of pupils' progress against specific learning outcomes for each year group. Systems for developing this are in the early stages of development throughout the school and their use would help to ensure that pupils' progress is clearly monitored throughout the subject. Learning resources are satisfactory and there is a clear policy for the subject. Time for learning art in some classes is quite short and below the amount in the new national guidance. Since the last inspection, planning has been improved and the scheme of work is based on national guidelines. Apart from the use of the Internet for research and incidental use of 'art' software in ICT lessons, there is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

145. Standards in design and technology are in line with what is expected for pupils' ages by Year 6 but above this for pupils in Year 2. This is because of the high quality teaching for Years 1 and 2 pupils with work which is planned very well, to challenge pupils' ideas and thinking and to help them to solve specific problems which are set. Only two lessons could be observed during the inspection, both for Years 1 and 2 pupils. From pupils' work and teachers planning, the quality of teaching is good, overall; it is very good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The effects of the good and very good teaching are not yet fully realised in relation to pupils' attainment and progress, however. This is because the programme of work is relatively newly set up and some classes have a limited amount of time to study the subject, especially when the subject is taught during the last part of the day. Overall, the time for learning in design and technology is below that set out in the most recent national guidance.
146. By Year 2, pupils produce simple 'structures' for their playground which are strong. They have observed how play equipment is designed and assembled and understand the necessity to have 'strengtheners' in simple designs which contain, for example, rectangle shapes. They brace their constructions with a diagonal bar and some add extra strengtheners; they know that where and how these are positioned will make the structure even stronger. Pupils know that fastenings such as nuts and bolts add strength but realise well that without additional supports simple structures will collapse when force is applied. Higher-attaining pupils gain ideas about making even more complex, but strong, constructions.
147. Pupils in Year 6 investigate the design of slippers; they look at a range of different design features considering the material, the appearance, the durability (including how the materials are joined) and the safety of the items. Different slippers are tested and good, well-considered evaluations lead to the points awarded. Good attention is given to the production of data using charts but there is a missed opportunity to use ICT to produce this. However, some pupils use ICT (a digital camera/scanner) to record their findings and this aids the clarity of their presentation. Good progress is made in relation to making judgements and evaluating products.
148. The features of the good teaching are the good depth of planning, with teachers planning together, ensuring there are clear and carefully considered ways of getting pupils to think about product design and how to evaluate systematically. Lessons are very well organised and pupils well supported. Suitable challenges are provided for different groups of pupils and the needs of higher-attaining pupils are well considered. Questioning is probing, and key thinking and planning skills

are very well promoted. Subject vocabulary is well emphasised verbally, although at times, the pupils do not always use this in written form.

149. The confidence with which design and technology is taught depends very much on teachers' own knowledge. This is generally good, although the co-ordinator has identified areas where subject knowledge is weak, such as in the use of pneumatics and control. These are areas which are currently under-represented in the planning.
150. The leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. The very new co-ordinator, who is a design and technology specialist, has been supported by the local education authority adviser and has undertaken training in the role of a co-ordinator. An outline plan for the development of the subject has been made. There are clear, relevant priorities. However, at present, this is mainly a 'wish list' and needs to be enhanced; it lacks criteria for improvement and the cost of the actions. The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring pupils' work and the quality of the teaching is underdeveloped. Ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress is carried out through assessments made, which relate to the activity undertaken at the end of a module of work. These are not sufficiently tied in to National Curriculum levels so that teachers can make a well-considered assessment of standards at the end of the year. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in design and technology. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing the provision since the previous inspection; teaching, learning and pupils' progress have all improved, but overall attainment could be better – it is limited by a lack of time for studying the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

151. It was only possible to observe two geography lessons during the inspection, but evidence from another classroom observation, planning documents, displays, analysis of work and discussions with staff and pupils were used to form judgements. The pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards in geography meet those expected for pupils by Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained in Years 1 and 2, and, since the last inspection, some improvement has been made in Years 3 to 6.
152. Pupils in Year 2 are able to ask and answer questions about their environment. They have studied the locality and noted the types of buildings in the area. Their subject knowledge and vocabulary are increased when they identify the need for traffic lights and zebra crossings, for example. They have learned the skills of recording observations and use geographical knowledge to consider change, such as how their local environment can be improved.
153. As a result of sound teaching, pupils in Years 3 and 4 show increasing knowledge of geographical skills to obtain information from a variety of maps. However, their knowledge of their own location in relation to the rest of Britain is limited. Aspects of other subjects, such as mathematics, are used in lessons to support pupils' learning, although computers are not used as effectively as they could be in lessons. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils develop an increasing understanding of locations other than their own. They use photographs, for example, as sources of evidence to compare and contrast their own area with that in a less economically developed country. Pupils make good contributions to their work in geography; they listen to the views of others and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, participate fully in extended discussions. Pupils work co-operatively in groups to share and record their ideas.
154. Although no lessons could be observed in Years 1 and 2, judgements on teaching have been made from an analysis of the planning and the resulting work that the children produced. From such evidence the teaching is at least sound. Overall, the teaching of geography in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned and organised and good use is made of resources to support pupils in their learning. For example, assisted by class discussions, pupils are able to make secure deductions about other environments, based on photographic evidence. Teachers make good use of appropriate vocabulary and use questions well to remind pupils of work they have previously covered and to encourage them to share their ideas. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 have a good pace, which enables pupils to remain focused throughout the lesson and to

complete their work. Marking, although positive and encouraging, could be used more effectively to extend pupils' ideas and show them how to improve their learning. Children with special educational needs participate fully, although at times they may miss parts of lessons to concentrate on their own learning targets.

155. The leadership and management is satisfactory. The subject leader has sound plans to develop her awareness of the work in the subject by monitoring and evaluating the planning of geography. The intention is also to collect samples of children's work as guidelines for standards. A sound policy for geography is in place and a useful scheme of work is used to ensure continuity throughout the school. However, no lesson observations take place and the co-ordinator does not have first-hand experience of the quality of all of the provision. The school is in the process of trialling assessments related to what pupils are intended to learn by the end of a module of work. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in geography.

HISTORY

156. At the time of the last inspection standards in history were in line with the expectations for pupils' ages by the end of Years 2 and 6. From the lessons observed, curriculum planning, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff, it is clear that pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and attain the level expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their agreed targets.
157. In Years 1 and 2, pupils understand about changes over time and are involved and fascinated by artefacts from the past. Excellent resources are available to the pupils so that they are able to investigate and form their own lines of enquiry. They discuss accurately the comparisons and differences between 'old' and 'new' household objects. They find out about peoples' lives in the past, such as that of Florence Nightingale.
158. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to deepen their understanding of past times and by Year 6 have a sound understanding of historical ideas and sources. A satisfactory range of knowledge and skills is provided in the Years from 3 to 6. Staff use 'living history days', where the pupils, for example, dress up in appropriate costumes, to help make the experiences come alive. The topic on the Aztecs in Years 5 and 6 fired the pupils' imaginations and they successfully incorporated artwork into their historical enquiries. They understand and remember information about everyday life, supported by practical activities such as eating food to compare their food tastes with those of the Aztecs. Discussions on customs, such as making human sacrifices, ensure that the lessons are memorable. Younger pupils were introduced to the Romans and enjoyed producing scrolls. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils understand some of the processes used in the past, such as mummification.
159. The overall quality of teaching seen across Years 1 to 6 is good and pupils learn well in lessons. Teachers, particularly in Years 1 and 2, have a secure subject knowledge, which they use well to motivate pupils. Teachers pose searching questions to make pupils think deeply and increase their understanding of their work. They manage pupils' behaviour well and generally use appropriate methods to support pupils' learning. In the best lessons, teachers remind pupils of their earlier work and put the period in context. They explain to pupils what they are going to do in that lesson and recap on what has been learned at the end of the lesson. They select and use interesting and thought-provoking resources to enhance pupils' learning and check carefully that pupils understand what they are doing. Aspects of other subjects are incorporated into lessons, such as art, or in English when historical texts are studied. The project books used for Years 1 and 2 pupils are not used solely for a particular topic, which loses some meaning to its purpose and pupils do not see the continuity. Pupils behave well in lessons, take care of the resources that they use and listen carefully to others' ideas.
160. The school uses a scheme of work, based on national guidelines, to help teachers in their planning, ensure appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum, and help to make sure that pupils' skills are developed in a logical sequence. The school organises educational visits to places of historical interest, which enrich the curriculum.

161. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. There are clear plans for developing the subject. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to check on teaching and learning. There is a clear policy for the subject and the co-ordinator monitors the planning in the sense of co-ordinating its use as scheme. However, the checking of planning is not done in a systematic way. Teachers record pupils' progress through the end-of-year report, but there is no systematic assessment of pupils' progress against specific learning outcomes for each year group. The development of such systems throughout the school is at an early stage but the school sees this as necessary to help ensure that pupils' progress in the subject is properly tracked. Resources for pupils' learning are satisfactory and readily available and staff use other sources, such as the LEA resource centre, to provide some excellent objects from the past. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in history and time for learning the subject in some classes is below national guidance.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

162. The provision for ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils are now taught in a well-equipped computer suite which has been in place for a year. This, together with teachers' increased knowledge (a result of the national training programme), and a coherent programme of work, has led to pupils' much improved progress and attainment. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' skills and knowledge were below what was expected for their age and the quality of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching is now consistently good throughout the school and pupils' progress, including the progress of pupils with special educational needs, also good. Pupils learn well in lessons and attain what they should by the time they are in Year 6. However, because of the considerably increased opportunities to learn and the consistent way this is now tackled, the youngest pupils, by the end of Year 2 have skills and knowledge above that expected for their age. Pupils' attainment and progress is strongest in desktop publishing and weakest in the use of control technology and equipment to monitor changes of events. The latter is more weakly represented in the Programme of Study, although the school has plans to improve teachers' knowledge and computer resources in this area.
163. Challenging targets have been set in order to raise pupils' attainment. Pupils' level of attainment was checked prior to them being taught in the ICT suite and again at the end of the first year. Pupils' attainment showed considerable increase over that period, with the greatest rise being for Year 2 pupils; the school's figures show that over four tenths attain at the higher level (Level 3) in that year group. Inspection evidence concurs with the school's assessments.
164. In Year 2, pupils are confident users of ICT, especially in word-processing/desktop publishing. They select items from a toolbar and know that icons represent actions which can alter what is on the screen. They use these purposefully to create and amend their work and, with reasonable scientific accuracy for their age, create quite 'artistic' pictures of skeletons. They consider the relative colours for the background and foreground so that their pictures 'stand out' and use icons representing 'undo' to rub out the last action, and higher-attaining pupils deduce that this can also be used to delete a sequence of previous actions. They save their work (some with help) and know where previous work is located on the computer.
165. By Year 6, they use a range of tools quite naturally to 'draw' and construct plan views of an imaginary bedroom, using shape and geometric tools (such as a rectangle which can be 'dragged' and altered in size). They consider the needs of the user of the bedroom and linking and adapting their design ideas well. They are confident and competent users of design software and can use techniques such as *flood fill*. Past work on display shows pupils' ability to integrate a number of aspects of ICT when undertaking research. In considering which drinks/foods might be favourites of pupils when preparing for a party, they successfully used database and spreadsheet applications to record and analyse data. Current Year 6 pupils are beginning to use formulae in spreadsheets to calculate sums; they have a good grasp of the vocabulary and know that formulae can apply to a single cell.

166. The good quality of teaching is based on thorough planning, a good knowledge of the skills to be learned, and the software used. Careful introductions with step-by-step instructions are given. Although this gives pupils confidence, it does tend to slow the initial parts of lessons and does not allow higher-attaining, more confident, pupils to proceed as quickly as they might. Occasionally, demonstrations are given by teachers but only on the standard equipment in the computer area, which can be difficult for a class of 30 or more pupils to see. A strength is in the individual support given to pupils (by teachers and support staff) and the way that pupils are encouraged to think and try things for themselves. Those who find a procedure difficult or who have special educational needs are focused upon well and this enables them to learn at the pace relevant to their needs and abilities. Sometimes, because of the difficult layout of the ICT suite, staff find it hard to move around to pupils as quickly as necessary. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas among themselves and to collaborate when working. This aids their social skills well. There is also good attention to the 'mechanical' skills of using ICT, and to the design, and layout of the finished 'product'.
167. Teachers usually plan well for the range of pupils they have in their classes and often specify what different groups will learn. This meets the pupils' needs well. Teachers plan from a number of sources; these are mainly from national guidance as well as local and published schemes. There is scope for teachers to be flexible (as well as confident enough) to modify activities when these are considered to be at too low a level for the pupils. This was particularly the case for some skilled and confident Year 1 pupils who undertook a fairly mundane task which could have been extended or developed quickly. In addition, the programme of work undertaken in the Foundation Stage could be extended; children there show good and rapidly developing skills and would benefit from an increased range of software appropriate to the age of the children together with activities to extend their already good knowledge.
168. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has worked hard to develop the subject. Planning generally has been very well thought out and financial planning and decision-making good. The subject development plan is a thorough document which clearly states where the school needs to improve further in ICT. It would benefit from clearer criteria to measure its success against, and financing on, a long-term basis so that there is an even better understanding of ICT development. Monitoring of pupils' progress is based on end-of-year assessment. There is no ongoing assessment system at present, although this is currently being planned. The co-ordinator examines teachers' planning but there is no checking on the quality of the teaching in ICT. Looking at pupils' work and feedback from teachers are the main ways the co-ordinator knows how pupils' skills are developing. A weakness is the limited use of ICT for support learning in other subjects. There are some good examples where this occurs, such as in mathematics for displaying data, and to some extent in science for recording the work pupils have undertaken. Some pupils have used the Internet for research purposes, such as in art. However, this is generally underused, even though time is allocated for different classes to use the computer suite at times other than for ICT lessons.

MUSIC

169. Satisfactory progress has been since the last inspection. Since then, standards in music at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been maintained; they are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Although it was not possible during the inspection to observe all the features of the music curriculum taught, the scheme of work shows that a wide range of musical aspects are covered. The quality of singing, particularly in assembly, is good: pupils participate with enthusiasm and sing in tune with clear words, producing a pleasant sound. In the junior department assemblies, two teachers playing their guitars accompanied the tuneful and enthusiastic singing very effectively. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 recognise *rondo* form in music when an initial theme is continually repeated with different tunes in between; they recognise the musical pattern of ABACA.... A variety of music is used for this activity ranging from classical to modern-day popular music, giving the pupils wider experience of different types of music. Pupils are beginning to appreciate form in music and to understand the different elements such as *pitch*, *tempo*, *dynamics* and *rhythm*. Younger pupils are in the early stages of developing singing in parts. This

they do by reciting in rhythm the railway stations from Port Sunlight to Liverpool, each group beginning at a different time. This proved to be a very effective method of introducing pupils to part-singing and the need to keep their part going. The infant pupils explore rhythm patterns through clapping their names and the idea of silence through action songs, where words are missed out. Pupils use untuned percussion to accompany their singing.

170. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their musical skills and all have equal access and opportunities to perform in class. Music is enjoyed by all. Pupils participate in musical activities with interest and enthusiasm. This was particularly evident in the lessons

seen in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils listen carefully and, because of good relationships with the teachers, are willing to clap rhythms or sing simple responses on their own. During these lessons pupils are well-behaved and on task; this helps them to learn well.

171. The quality of teaching across the school varies from satisfactory to very good and is good, overall. Where it is very good, teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm motivate the pupils to succeed. Activities are challenging and demanding and move at a good pace. Questions are used effectively to extend or reinforce pupils' knowledge and appropriate vocabulary is taught. All teachers have good relationships with the pupils and this gives them confidence to perform on their own. In other lessons the pace sometimes drags and opportunities to develop pupils' skills are missed.
172. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and has developed a scheme and guidance for the staff. Leadership and management of music are good. At present, a new assessment format is being tried out by the co-ordinator with a view to introducing it across the school. Opportunities outside lessons are limited to a choral group, which is formed specifically for concerts. However, this group performs in a variety of locations such as the local church, art gallery, senior citizens' home and social club. Instrumental tuition is available for violin, clarinet and flute. Musicians visiting the school include a *didgeridoo* player, who also brings other instruments. Although the taught lessons are supplemented well by all this, the time available for learning is limited and by the time pupils have returned from afternoon break this is just over half an hour, considerably below the new national recommendations. This limits the effect of the good teaching.
173. Since the last inspection improvements have been made in the use of information and communication technology. Programs to aid composition and for exploring musical ideas and information are planned for future use. However, assessment procedures, 'at an early stage of development', in the last inspection are still being developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and they remain in line with expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. However, the school's success in winning Dolphin swimming awards suggests that the standard of swimming by Year 6 is good, with all pupils being able to swim at least the minimum requirement of 25 metres.
175. As in the previous inspection, no lessons could be observed in gymnastics or dance. The lessons observed in the infants were based on ball skills, throwing, catching and aiming a ball or beanbag. Younger pupils in Year 2 show developing skills of throwing and catching balls and a greater accuracy when aiming at a hoop with a beanbag. They find it more difficult to throw a ball into a hoop. They are beginning to demonstrate good techniques. Older pupils are developing these ball skills even further, so that they can use them for team games. During a lesson observed outside, pupils' skills with a plastic tennis racket improved during the session as they began to hit the ball with more control and accuracy to their partner. The oldest pupils in Year 6 learn how to control a ball with a hockey stick (in the hall); this they did confidently. They also know how to hold and use the stick safely. All pupils understand the need for warm-up exercises and what happens to the heart during exercise.

176. Pupils make good progress in developing their skills, especially those who represent the school in competitions and inter-school matches. There are many occasions when there is a successful result.
177. Pupils enjoy physical activities and the majority participate with enthusiasm and interest. They listen carefully to the teachers and are well-behaved. They work well together in pairs or teams.
178. The quality of teaching is good, overall. In most lessons skills are well-taught and good teaching points made. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher showed the pupils the appropriate techniques to use when aiming a beanbag at a hoop. Lessons are well planned and offer pupils a range of activities to encourage the development of skills. Opportunities are made for pupils to demonstrate their successes but in some lessons these are limited. All teachers reinforce the need for warming-up before taking part in activities and the effects this activity has on the body. For example, at the end of a Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils were asked to feel their heart beats to see if they were faster. Unlike the previous inspection, there was no lesson observed where class management was judged to be unsatisfactory – pupils are now well managed.
179. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The dedicated and committed co-ordinator has spent time preparing the necessary paperwork for the *Active Mark* – awarded by the National Sports Council – and the school has successfully achieved this award. Much time and effort has been put into preparing for the award as well as developing a detailed scheme of work based on both the local and a published scheme. This scheme provides teachers with a good basis from which to plan their lessons and ensures that all appropriate activities are taught in the school.
180. Resources are just about adequate, although large apparatus is limited. However, the accommodation suffers from a lack of a grassed playing-field, although the playground is used as a substitute. This means that inter-school matches are always played away. The local green area has been used for sports day. The lack of facilities limits the effect of some of the good teaching and means that pupils do not attain as well as they could, especially given the good teaching. Those who take part in the good range of sporting activities after school, which often involve coaches from outside the school, show good performance; this is enhanced by their extra opportunities. Competitions and matches are played regularly and the pupils are often successful. However, such opportunities are only open to the older pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

181. The observation of lessons, displays of work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers, as well as an analysis of pupils' work, indicate that pupils are on the way broadly to attain the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all ages make at least sound progress. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 2 was unsatisfactory.
182. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a secure understanding of Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and harvest festival, which is held in the local church. In a Years 1 and 2 lesson observed, pupils thought about celebrations such as birthdays, weddings and christenings and learned how people in other faiths celebrate their festivals. Pupils have some knowledge of Bible stories and could retell in some detail the story of *The Good Samaritan*.
183. As they move through the junior department, the pupils gain knowledge of simple Bible stories and the meaning of the Bible to individuals in history. In the Years 3 and 4 class, they listened spellbound as the teacher told the story of *Mary Jones*, which was part of a series of lessons on the 'Christian Bible'. The pupils were fascinated by the collection of Bibles the teacher had brought in, and included one owned by his family which was nearly 100 years old and printed in Welsh, very like the bible Mary Jones wanted to buy. As they were passed round the class pupils examined them very carefully and were in awe of its style.

184. Pupils throughout the school are provided with opportunities to learn about different faiths. By the time they have reached the end of Year 6, the pupils have gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of these and can speak sensibly about them. During the inspection, both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher included stories from other cultures in their assemblies, which all pupils listened to very well. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher captured the pupils' interest well by providing excellent artefacts, which the pupils handled with great care and respect. For example, a Muslim prayer mat and a full set of clothes Muslims might wear in their Mosque were examined carefully.
185. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use precise, specific language in their discussions with the pupils in order to increase their vocabulary in a structured way. Teachers incorporate questioning well to stimulate thought and to capture the interest of pupils. Questioning is used at the end of lessons to assess that all pupils understand the work. Teachers use discussion in the subject as another way of improving pupils' skills of speaking and extending their vocabulary. Group work is planned so that activities are sufficiently challenging and motivating and well-matched to the abilities and the ages of the pupils in the mixed-age classes.
186. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and this helps pupils to learn effectively. This is because teachers make lessons interesting. Pupils show great interest, especially in the artefacts provided and the religious 'stories' told. They are attentive in lessons and confidently offer views and opinions. Responses to questions are thoughtful and relevant. Pupils are well-motivated and able to work in pairs and small groups with minimum supervision. The behaviour of pupils is very good. They respect each other's work and contributions and take good care of resources.
187. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Overall, resources are satisfactory when those that are borrowed are taken into account. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve school-based resources, although the school makes very good use of collections of artefacts from the local education authority resource centre. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning in religious education but the subject supports pupils' literacy well. Assessment is at an early stage of development; pupils' skills are assessed annually, but as yet there is no ongoing assessment or systems for checking teaching or for tracking pupils' progress, although these are planned. The time available for learning is limited; by the time pupils have returned from afternoon break, this is just over half an hour, considerably below the new national recommendations. This limits the effect of the good teaching. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.