

INSPECTION REPORT

**LEAMINGTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

NORRIS GREEN, LIVERPOOL

LEA area: LIVERPOOL

Unique reference number: 133333

Headteacher: Mrs M. Egerton-Jones

Reporting inspector: Stuart Dobson
18074

Dates of inspection: 9 - 12 JUNE 2003

Inspection number: 255150

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:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Leamington Road Norris Green Liverpool
Postcode:	L11 7BT
Telephone number:	0151 284 7848
Fax number:	0151 284 7849
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Marlene Williams
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable – new school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18074	Stuart Dobson	Registered inspector	English as an Additional Language	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19419	Susan Boyle	Lay inspector	Equality Issues	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
22330	Laurie Lewin	Team inspector	English, Geography, Religious Education Special Educational Needs	
32604	Susan Manning	Team inspector	Mathematics, History, Information and Communication Technology,	
32596	Gill Philips	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage Art, Music,	
4350	Clive Whittington	Team Inspector	Science, Design Technology, Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Leamington school is a larger than average community primary school and there are 385 boys and girls attending the school, mostly from the Norris Green estate. A very high number of pupils come from economically disadvantaged homes and over 50% are entitled to free school meals. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and most of these have general learning difficulties. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. When children join the school in the nursery class, few have had any form of pre-school education and their attainment on entry is well below average. The school has recently become part of an education action zone.¹

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. In less than one year since the new headteacher arrived, very good management structures have been put in place to help improve all aspects of provision. It is very clear that standards have already risen considerably and the school is very well placed to improve a lot further. Teaching is predominantly good. The pupils have been very well supported in developing positive attitudes towards learning and behave well. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and is the major force behind school improvement.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning and they are making consistently good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good and supports good learning in Years 1 to 6.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils personal, including spiritual, moral and social education

What could be improved

- Standards of achievement in art and design, geography, physical education, design and technology, and religious education.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage², especially the nursery.
- Assessment in the foundation subjects³ and science.
- The balance of the curriculum

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

¹ Government funded additional support for schools in areas of challenge.

² Foundation Stage in this school is education in the nursery and reception classes.

³ Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music, physical education and religious education.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was subject of amalgamation in 2001 and therefore it is not possible to make this judgement. However, it is clear that in the last year, great improvement has been made in putting in place management initiatives to support school improvement.

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				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	n/a	n/a	E*	C	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	n/a	n/a	E	C	
Science	n/a	n/a	E	C	

In the first national tests taken by Year 6 pupils at this school in 2002, the results were well below average in all three subjects and were in the lowest 5 percent nationally in English. When compared with similar schools the results were average. The results were low because there were very few pupils reaching the higher level 5 in the national tests. Since September 2002 there has been a tremendous effort on the part of the school to raise standards and ensure that pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable.

Inspection evidence indicates that the standard of work at the end of Year 6 is now as expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. This is a tremendous achievement in the last year and is due to considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Standards are as expected nationally in information and communication technology (ICT), history and music. In art and design, design technology, geography and physical education standards are not as high as expected nationally and in religious education they are not as high as expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus.

In Year 2, standards are as expected nationally in English, mathematics, ICT, art and design, design and technology, geography, music and religious education. They are below national expectations in science, history and physical education. In national tests in 2002 results in reading, writing and mathematics were above average for similar school and similar to the national average. At the end of the Foundation Stage⁴ children's attainment is close to the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development but below expected levels in all other areas of

⁴ Foundation Stage in this school is education in the nursery and reception classes.

learning. However, overall they make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 1-6 make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning and to each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good both in the classrooms and when mostly when less closely supervised on the playground and in the dining room.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good; the pupils and the staff clearly respect each other. Personal development is good; pupils are learning to learn.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory being well below the national average. Lateness at the start of the school day disrupts pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was good or better in three quarters of the lessons seen and in very many of the classes teaching and learning is never less than good. In some classes teaching is predominantly very good. The satisfactory teaching is confined to a minority of classes and the nursery. The majority of teaching in the reception classes is good.

Teaching is good in English and mathematics. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well and this has resulted in a huge improvement in the last year. Pupils have learnt to use their developing skills well. A particular strength of teaching is the management of pupils. The teachers show great respect for the pupils and this is reciprocated. In most classes, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching though there are still some areas of literacy skills, where, for example in lower Key Stage 2, some teachers' knowledge is limited. The staff's understanding of the learning needs of the youngest children is limited and therefore appropriate teaching methods and classroom organisation are not always in evidence. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good range of learning opportunities is provided though the time available for many foundation subjects is insufficient.. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is not satisfactory, in part because there is insufficient learning in the outdoors and the

	opportunities for children in the nursery to work independently are too restricted.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for these pupils is good and they are catered for well. Once identified the pupils have very helpful targets for achievement. Opportunities to assess children in the nursery are missed and some children's special needs could be identified earlier.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils who require additional support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good overall. In particular the school, through its values, has a high impact on the spiritual development of the pupils and there is very good modelling of moral and social values. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The general level of care for pupils is good. They are supported and guided very well in English and mathematics, though assessment of their academic performance in the foundation subjects ⁵ and in science is unsatisfactory.

The school works well with parents. The school has recognised the need to make improvements to the Foundation Stage provision especially the nursery.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives excellent leadership which has resulted in very rapid school improvement and a clearly established sense of direction to which the staff and governors subscribe. The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher, other members of the senior management team and the governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are fulfilling their responsibilities well. They have rapidly developed a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The evaluation of school performance by the senior managers and the governors is very good and they have shown in the last two terms that they are capable of taking very effective action which has brought about rapid school improvement.
The strategic use of	Very good use is made of every available resource and the headteacher is very good at acquiring additional resources to support

⁵ Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music, physical education and religious education.

resources	school improvement. This has brought about great improvement in a very short time.
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There is a generous number of teachers for the number of pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory but the classrooms are small for children in reception classes and the outdoor areas are under-developed. Learning resources are good. The school has very strong and effective management. In all major spending decisions the head and governors seek best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Parents are pleased with all aspects of the school and are particularly pleased with the way in which the school is improving.	There was very little criticism the school though some would prefer to see a different amount of homework and a few others want more out of school activities.

The inspectors agree that the parents are right to be pleased with the school. The pupils get a suitable amount of homework and there are a lot of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Early assessment indicates that children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Many of the children have poor speaking skills. In other areas of their learning, their skills on entry to the school are similarly low, though this description is not applicable to all children and some very quickly show that they can learn rapidly. By the time they reach the end of the nursery year, they are likely to have made satisfactory progress in personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and some aspects of literacy. In other areas of learning however, they generally make less than satisfactory progress and do not sufficiently develop independent learning skills or a 'thirst' for learning. This is partly due to the organisation of the nursery classrooms and the very limited provision out of doors. In the reception classes they make better progress but nevertheless their attainment on entry to Year 1 is still below average in all areas of learning except for personal, social and emotional development and for physical development.

2 In 2002, the pupils achieved results which were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. Too many pupils failed to reach the nationally expected levels and too few pupils reached the higher levels. This was particularly the case in mathematics. At the end of Year 6 in the same year too few pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

3 The issue of too few pupils reaching higher levels throughout the school has been addressed. It is now very clear that pupils who are more able are supported in producing work of higher quality. In all classes this is clear in English, mathematics and science. The good quality of teaching now seen and the challenge for all pupils has accelerated their progress which is now good. However, whilst it is possible to see the immediate impact of better planning and higher expectations, it will take some time before this impacts fully on national test results at the end of Year 6.

4 By the time pupils begin Year 1, most pupils are developing in confidence when speaking and this enables them to question and explain their views and ideas. The main focus has been on reading and more recently on writing and pupils learn quickly between the ages of five and 11. By the age of seven, many of the pupils have made progress and reach average levels in reading. This is consolidated and further developed in Years 3-6 and some are good readers by the time they leave the school.

5 There has been rapid progress in writing as this has been a focus for development in the last year and continues to be so. Pupils now generally construct sentences well and the pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made very good progress in developing spelling through focused work on phonic skills. In Years 3-6 pupils write accurately and the school now has the opportunity to encourage the use of pupils' literacy skills to support their development in other subjects. This improvement in skills has been achieved by devoting a lot of time and resources to writing and other literacy skills.

6 In mathematics, teaching is mostly good and the standards which are now being achieved throughout the school are better than in 2002. There is generally rigorous teaching in mathematics and this is raising standards. Both reading and numeracy skills are developing well though these skills are not yet best used and developed in other subjects.

7 In science, there has been very good improvement in standards in the last year. Compared to national averages, the performance of eleven-year-olds was well below average in 2002. The quality of work which the pupils are now producing is much better and in particular they have developed good investigation skills. This is due to a more concerted effort to teach the curriculum fully and much more challenging work for the pupils though there is still a need to improve the quality of assessment to sharpen the teachers' planning focus even more.

8 Recent test results show that the performance of boys and girls is similar in English, mathematics and science and the inspectors found no significant differences in the performance or participation of boys and girls.

9 The necessary and heavy focus on literacy and numeracy, science and ICT skills in the last year has meant that the quality of work in other subjects has not yet been fully addressed. However, improvements in the pupils' literacy skills have supported better recording in some subjects. A lot of time has been devoted to literacy and numeracy and as a result pupils' achievements in physical education, geography, design and technology, art and design and religious education have not risen significantly. Standards in these subjects are below expected levels at the end of Year 6, mainly because they have not spent sufficient time on them. They do however, reach satisfactory levels in science, ICT, history and music.

10 Pupils with special educational needs who have learning difficulties make good progress from the reception year to Year 6 but too few children in the nursery who have special educational needs are identified early enough. The good support that individuals receive helps them to cope effectively with all areas of work so that they mainly achieve well. In particular, the successful work done with pupils who have behavioural difficulties helps these individuals to focus on building their skills and gaining confidence in all subjects. The school's 'talking partners' initiative is an effective strategy that helps pupils with special educational needs (and other pupils lacking in confidence) to widen their vocabulary and develop the confidence and skills to participate more effectively during class discussions.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They respond well to the school's very positive and welcoming ethos. They like school and they get on well with their teachers. They feel well supported in school and this, together with the very good relationships they have with their teachers, makes them feel valued and helps to give them a good sense of belonging to and being part of the school community. They come to school in the morning chatty and lively, and looking forward to their day. They are happy in school, and enjoy their work because they find it interesting. In lessons, they are attentive, keen to answer questions, and give careful thought to their answers. These very positive attitudes are clearly evident throughout the school. However, there are times when some of the older pupils do not demonstrate such strongly positive attitudes. For example, sometimes in assemblies, some of the older boys whilst generally polite are somewhat dismissive of actions designed to get everyone's attention.

12 Pupils' behaviour however is good. The behaviour of the youngest pupils is often very good. According to parents and governors, pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved greatly in the past year because of high expectations and the positive whole-school approach to encouraging good behaviour. Pupils move around the school well. They know they must keep to the left-hand side of the school corridor, and they do, only rarely needing reminders from their teachers. Similarly, they know they must not go over the yellow lines that demarcate the Infant and Junior playgrounds. Pupils are polite, and some of the older children have developed a good sense of courteous behaviour so that, for example, they stand aside to let visitors pass. Less good behaviour, when it does occur, is usually

because the lessons are not as interesting as they might be. There are some older pupils who do not behave as well as they might in the toilets. This has been something that has been a concern for the school council who have taken steps to address it.

13 Relationships and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils get on well with each other. They readily share equipment and are generally polite to each other. They are often very sensitive to the feelings of others. For example, in a lesson in Year 1 when pupils were talking about times when they did not feel safe, other pupils sat very quietly and listened without interrupting. Pupils like helping their teachers and sensibly carry out their monitor duties, taking the register to the office and helping in the classroom. The school council is giving some pupils the opportunity to take a responsible attitude towards school life. The council discusses issues that are significant for pupils, such as the small amount of bullying, and tries actively to deal with them. Older pupils have responsibilities around the school; for example, Year 6 are compiling the school photograph album. These pupils think carefully about potentially suitable pictures and ensure that the album is kept up to date. In the playground, pupils generally play well with each other. Staff keep a very vigilant watch on playground behaviour but, despite this, there are sometimes incidents of older pupils being overly aggressive and unkind towards others.

14 Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities and they generally interact well with other pupils and collaborate with them effectively.

15 Attendance at the school is well below average when compared with similar school. A number of pupils are late for the start of the day, most of them arriving during the registration period. The school takes every opportunity to remind parents about the importance of punctuality but it takes the view that it is better for pupils to arrive a few minutes late than not at all. Whilst it is vigilant about following up pupils who are persistently late, the main focus for its efforts has understandably been raising attendance. There are many initiatives and incentives to encourage pupils to come to school, and attendance for the first half of the year has improved. However, although the early signs are encouraging it is too soon to assess the impact of the school's approach.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16 Teaching is good overall and in almost all lessons pupils learn well. There is some variation between classes. In some, particularly with the older pupils, the majority of teaching is very good and occasionally good, whilst in others, mostly with pupils in Years 2-4, it is mostly good and occasionally satisfactory. In a minority of classes the teaching is mostly satisfactory and very occasionally unsatisfactory, though this is rare. During the inspection as a whole nearly a third of lessons were very good or excellent and just under half were good. Only 2 lessons were unsatisfactory. This profile of teaching is a significant achievement as many of the staff are new to the school and some are new or relatively new to teaching.

17 In most English and literacy lessons the quality of teaching is good and in Years 1 and 2 it is often very good. In mathematics and numeracy lessons the quality of teaching is mostly good and often better in Years 3-6 though there was some satisfactory teaching and one unsatisfactory lesson. These two subjects have been at the forefront of development work in the last year and a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the development of literacy, particularly writing skills, and mathematics, particularly number skills. This effort has paid off and pupils are learning well and often very well in these areas. There has been considerable training for the staff in teaching successful literacy and numeracy lessons and all teachers are guided well. The teachers are therefore developing real confidence and good knowledge and they are able to maintain a good pace to lessons, ask challenging

questions of the pupils to guide their thinking and are able to offer support where it is needed. Pupils are kept busy and thinking for most of the lessons and therefore they learn well.

18 The teaching of the youngest children is variable but is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. However, teaching in the reception classes is somewhat stronger than that in the nursery. Throughout the Foundation Stage the adults have positive relationships with the children and manage them well. There is mutual respect and children feel safe and are therefore able to work well. The direct teaching of children in groups is often good but, particularly in the nursery, the adults provide a restricted range of activities through which children can learn, and the large outdoor area is poorly used. The teachers do not plan for its use as a learning resource and the children are usually only allowed outside for 15 minutes of physical 'playtime'. This is a waste of a very significant resource which is easily accessible from the nursery classrooms. The reception class, similarly, do not arrange activities out of doors and, though access is more difficult, they could use the nursery playground. A very large area of the nursery is taken up with large physical play materials and again this is a waste of space as the children do not use it other than in wet weather for playtimes. The teachers are not making best use of space and resources to support children's self-initiated learning or indeed to support the other areas of learning.⁶

19 However there are examples of very good teaching in individual lessons in the Foundation Stage. This is seen for example in a music and dance lesson. The teacher explained new actions and sounds clearly, talked about aspects of the work with the children whilst they were learning and the children gained and retained knowledge. By the end of the lessons the children could very clearly link actions to sounds and demonstrate their 'best' animal actions.

20 The quality of teaching in the remainder of the school is predominantly good and pupils learn well, most often being engaged well with their lessons and activities. Most teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and sometimes, as in music, one teacher's special skills are used well to help other teachers to improve their subject teaching. All of the teachers plan well, particularly for literacy and numeracy, and the targets for each lesson are clear. These targets are also very clearly matched to the needs of the pupils being taught and for literacy and numeracy in some parts of the school, pupils are grouped by earlier attainment. Almost all of the lessons are challenging with a brisk and sometimes very brisk pace being maintained. The teachers use a good range of teaching methods, using discussion, drama, investigation and research as well as more formal instruction. It is clear that when pupils are engaged in practical tasks, for example in Year 6 science undertaking a microscopic investigation of powders to solve a riddle, the pace of their learning and their level of engagement rise.

21 There are some examples of excellent teaching. In one lesson, the teacher took the part of a Victorian schoolteacher as a part of a history lesson. The pupils responded 'in role' and learnt a great deal by experiencing the situation of Victorian pupils. This lesson was so successful not only because of the role play, but because the teacher knew exactly what he wanted the pupils to learn, conducted the lesson at a good pace, gave opportunities for the pupils to participate and gave very clear and precise historical questioning for example about chronology. In an equally good lesson, a teacher used very well prepared matching cards to support work on compound words, led a very good discussion, used technology well to support learning and used role play (answering questions as a story character). This range of teaching methods, the pace of the lesson and the teacher's very clear learning objectives meant that they learnt a great deal rapidly.

⁶ Personal social and emotional; language, literacy and communication; mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development.

22 When teaching is less successful, the main cause is usually that the teacher talks for too long and the pupils lose interest. When this happens, teachers have to repeat the instructions and information again and there is a long delay in letting the pupils start the work which will extend and consolidate their learning. This was observed in both physical education and mathematics lessons.

23 The short periods following break and registration are used well by some teachers and less well by others. These periods are up to 15 minutes long prior to the start of the literacy and numeracy lessons or prior to the first lesson in the afternoon. In one class, the teacher used the session for formal handwriting instruction, finished at the allotted time and then gave a crisp start to the next less. Too often however, these sessions are fairly low key, for example the whole class seeing how many words they can make from a longer word. Most pupils learn very little from this and then start the next lesson in a rather listless manner, as they are already bored. It is notable that the very best lessons do not follow these short sessions.

24 In the short sessions noted above, work is rarely matched to different needs of pupils in the class. This is in sharp contrast to the full lessons which are very well matched. Activities and teaching are changed so that pupils of differing abilities are suitably challenged. Most teachers have very good questioning skills and they match the difficulty of the questions to pupils' capabilities. The staff are clearly aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and give, or arrange for good support.

25 Class and support teachers plan carefully to ensure that work matches precisely pupils' special educational needs. Comprehensive individual education plans are written that contain precise and sharply focused targets that teachers review on a regular basis. Teachers and teaching assistants are good at ensuring pupils' individual targets are linked securely to work in all lessons. Teaching assistants play a key role in supporting individuals and groups of pupils effectively. They provide strong support for pupils through guiding and monitoring the progress of individuals and maintaining a close liaison with teachers to ensure the needs of each individual are met. Teaching assistants often provide good support for individuals during whole class teaching sessions – sitting beside them and prompting as necessary. However, occasionally assistants are insufficiently involved during these introductory sessions and this is not effective use of their time.

26 In literacy and numeracy, teachers make good use of assessment activities to inform their subsequent planning, but in other subjects this is less well developed. They mark work well and give good feedback to pupils. They manage pupils particularly well. They are all very good role models of appropriate behaviour, showing high levels of consideration for pupils and adults alike. Most of the pupils follow this lead and are learning to become valuable members of the school society. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework.

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

27 The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the curriculum are unsatisfactory for children under the age of five. Mostly this is due to the lack of planned use of the outdoor provision and lack of clarity about the purpose of some of the activities that are provided.

28 The school provides all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 with a good range of learning experiences in all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, the overall quality of some of these subjects, such as design and technology, art and design, geography, physical and

religious education, is weakened by the shortage of time allocated to them. Pupils receive appropriate sex education but education in drugs awareness is insufficient.

29 The school follows the guidelines for teaching English provided by the National Literacy Strategy, which is fully embedded in the curriculum and has been very successful in raising standards. The concentration on phonics has been especially worthwhile. In the same way the National Numeracy Strategy is followed effectively. This style of planning, focusing on what the pupils will learn rather than on what teachers will teach has had a beneficial effect on other parts of the curriculum and developments are planned to extend learning through cross-curricular links, (for example, linking literacy and numeracy with other subjects).

30 There is a very good range of activities provided beyond the classrooms and outside school hours. These include sports and games, music (including both learning instruments and choral singing), and drama. There is a very wide range of activities provided in the form of visits and visitors. This is a real strength of the school and ensures that the curriculum is greatly enriched. A great many of these activities are provided through the school's excellent links with the local community. There are residential experiences provided for pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6. Activities provided include 'The Learning Game' – an experience for Year 5 pupils which shows that an understanding of how the brain works can lead to improved performance. From the very wide range of activities, only a few can be mentioned here. Local supermarkets are involved in developing topics on weights and measures and healthy eating and pupils in Year 6 have been involved in a science workshop. Pupils visit museums and art galleries, Liverpool's cathedrals, a conservation centre, safari park, farm, local parks, theatres and Speke Hall. A number of pupils in Year 4 and 5 are involved, with their parents, in the 'Children's University'⁷: a project intended to raise their aspirations.

31 The school makes good overall provision for pupils with special educational needs. At the Foundation Stage, the provision is satisfactory with children having good general support. However, the lack of appropriate assessment information in the nursery means that intervention and support are not diagnosed sufficiently early. Provision throughout the rest of the school is good. Teachers carefully identify pupils requiring support, and the school has established a wide range of support systems to help pupils. For example, pupils are not only well supported during class lessons but are given extra support in groups withdrawn from class on occasions. Particular care is taken to ensure these individuals do not miss important work in the classroom.

32 The school is fully inclusive. All pupils are highly valued and no one is excluded from any area of the curriculum. Withdrawal for extra support is organised so that the times rotate – ensuring that no pupil regularly misses the same activity.

33 There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and this has led to improvements in behaviour, self-esteem and relationships throughout the school.

34 The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. It is a part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) which provides considerable support. There are useful links with local secondary schools: for example, a teacher comes to take physical education with pupils in Year 6 and the school borrows equipment to enable a Year 6 – 7 'Bridging Unit' to be covered in science.

35 Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. There is a strongly valuing whole-school ethos that permeates all aspects of school life, and it is this, above all, that supports pupils' personal development so well.

⁷ A project run jointly with Liverpool University and the EAZ

36 Provision for spiritual development is very good. The quality of this provision is implicit in the positive and supportive approach taken by staff who listen carefully to pupils, and respect their views. This helps pupils to develop a positive self-image, gives them a sense of their place in the world, and gives them a model for relating to others. Spiritual development is fostered in lessons, such as a lesson about mini-beasts where pupils were encouraged to marvel at the wonders of the natural world. Sometimes it is the choice of topic such as work about the slave trade in history that lends itself so well to the development of spirituality. Acts of collective worship are satisfactory. They are strongly Christian based, have a good sense of community, and give pupils good opportunities to reflect.

37 Provision for moral development is very good. It is particularly evident in the daily life of the school. Pupils are frequently offered choices, and this helps them to understand that there are choices in life. There are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour and think about how they might have behaved differently. Teachers have high expectations for how pupils should behave and classroom rules are clearly displayed. Pupils know about the rules for the use of the playground and do not transgress them.

38 Provision for social development is very good. Pupils contribute well to the running of the school community. Throughout the school they have the chance to show that they can be responsible by helping their teachers as classroom monitors. The school council is extremely effective; the council members debate, and take the appropriate actions, with very little intervention from adults. Through this, pupils learn about responsibility and citizenship. Older pupils help to run the tuck shop and are responsible for the school photograph album. Through initiatives such as 'talking partners'⁸ and 'special friends' pupils are taught explicitly about social skills.

39 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. There is a good emphasis on local culture with pupils learning about the history and culture of Liverpool. Pupils visit museums and places of interest and have opportunities to see live performances such as ballet. Pupils perform in whole school assemblies and this is to be extended to include weekly class assemblies. However, there is very limited provision, outside religious education, for pupils to learn about other cultures in ways that will equip them for life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40 This is a very caring school where pupils are valued as individuals. The school's support for pupils through such initiatives as the 'learning mentors'⁹ is a particular strength.

41 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent. The procedures are extremely thorough, and the school works well with agencies such as the educational welfare officer to support families. However, it is too early to assess the effects on rates of attendance.

42 The school works hard to eliminate bullying. Pupils know about bullying and feel they can go to their teachers if they have a problem. There is also a 'bully box' which is used by pupils who feel they are victims. The bullying support group works effectively with both victims and perpetrators helping them to modify their behaviour.

43 The school's positive approach to behaviour management works very well with the great majority of pupils. Pupils with particular difficulties are helped to behave through various initiatives such as

⁸ A national project to develop speaking skills.

⁹ adults employed to support particular pupils at school and at home.

groups addressing anger management and the raising of self-esteem. However, although these procedures have already had a significant impact, with no exclusions in the past year, they have still to impact fully on the behaviour of a minority of pupils.

44 The school makes effective use of a range of organisations such as the children's university. This aims to raise pupils' educational aspirations and awareness of further education. One particular initiative involved a visit to a university and was particularly successful because many parents accompanied their children for the visit.

45 Pupils' welfare is a high priority and the school works well with the school nurse and educational welfare officer to give support to families. Staff know pupils well and are concerned for them as individuals. The success of the breakfast club is just one illustration of this.

46 Child protection and health and safety procedures are satisfactory. Staff are reminded regularly about child protection, and pupils know they can go to their teacher if they have concerns. The school considers the risks implicit in the events and activities it organises, but the formal risk assessment required by statute is not yet in place. The school is aware that it is required to do this and is taking appropriate steps to implement it.

47 Pupils with special educational needs receive strong support and guidance through a good range of support systems. The special educational needs integrated support services teacher visits for one morning each week to carry out assessments on individuals and to provide feedback and support for individual members of staff. This support is of good value in providing the school with an extra layer of advice and expertise. Similarly, the school also benefits from its close liaison with and extra advice and guidance from the educational psychologist. In addition, the school has two 'mentors' who work for 3.5 days per week and focus upon checking pupils' attendance and improving pupils' self esteem and behaviour where needed. Discussions with the staff and pupils show clearly that the mentors have had a very good impact upon improving pupils' behaviour especially during the lunchtime break, with an overall emphasis on providing positive support for pupils in situations where their behaviour breaks down.

48 The playground is large but rather featureless. But the school has plans to address this. In the meantime, staff help pupils with skipping and other games. Some pupils feel that not all the mid-day supervisory staff listen to them appropriately.

49 Procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory with some clear areas of good practice in aspects which have been addressed in the last year. Procedures for monitoring the progress of all pupils in English and Mathematics were introduced in September by the new headteacher because prior to this, teacher assessment was sporadic and there was no systematic means of tracking and recording pupil progress. Rigorous teacher assessment in these subjects is now in place and pupils have individual targets for improvement. A thorough review of the 2002 national test results identified areas of weakness in pupils' learning in English, Mathematics and Science. As a result whole school targets for improvement were identified which are being addressed through the school's Raising Achievement Strategy. This has led to an increase of curriculum time for English and Mathematics and improvements in teachers' medium and short term planning to ensure that work is better matched to pupils' needs and to ensure there is more challenge for pupils.

50 As part of their planning, teachers now evaluate and record pupil progress on a daily basis in English and Mathematics. This information is enabling teachers to identify and target pupils for additional support with greater accuracy. Year group targets are now in place and pupils have

individual targets for English and Mathematics which are reviewed each term. As a result underachievement is now identified quickly. This has raised the rate of pupil's progress in English and Mathematics since September.

51 By contrast, assessment of pupils' progress in Science is unsatisfactory. Pupils are assessed at the end of Year 6 by national tests and are assessed by teachers at the end of other years. The school does not yet have a systematic means of assessing pupils' achievements against key scientific skills or monitoring their progress across the year. Similarly assessment in the foundation subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils are assessed at the end of each year and this information is recorded and passed on to teachers in subsequent year groups. Pupils' acquisition of key skills is not recorded and there is no whole school policy or practice for teacher assessment in these subjects.

52 The good use of on-going tracking and assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics is an appropriate model for assessing pupils in science and the foundation subjects.

53 The arrangements for the assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers know their pupils very well and classroom assistants are able to provide good support. Tasks are matched well to pupils' needs. Individual education plans are well structured and targets are specific and measurable. Pupils' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding are good. These pupils are monitored regularly and are making good progress in English and Mathematics. The school has plans to improve practice further from September 2003. Liaison with outside agencies and external support staff is very good and helps to support pupils.

54 There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress in English and Mathematics through standardised tests, as well as the use of optional national tests at the end of years 3, 4 and 5. In English these are supplemented with half termly writing assessments which are moderated and levelled against national curriculum level descriptors. Each pupil has a reading profile and a reading journal which is enabling teachers to track progress and identify pupils for intervention strategies. Pupils are assessed termly in Mathematics against national curriculum key objectives.

55 The school is developing a good system of marking and teachers are beginning to make developmental comments in pupils' books. However, this has not yet been implemented consistently in some classes and is an area for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56 The school has established a very good relationship with parents, and parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents feel particularly positive about the many changes in the past year. The school intends to build on the relationship it has with parents to encourage them to be more involved in its work.

57 Links with parents are good. Parents help their children with homework, and this is particularly so in the Nursery. The school gives parents information to help them support their child with work at home, and there was good attendance at the meetings for new parents about reading. Generally though, curriculum events are not well attended, and the school would like to involve parents more in such events. Parents are kept well informed about what is happening in school through the regular newsletter. The newsletter is used well to give reminders about school routines and expectations; for example, the importance of children arriving on time for school. Each half term there is information about what children will be learning in school and how parents can help, although not all of these expectations are easy or practical for all parents. Pupils' annual reports vary in quality. Some have

lots of information whilst others have very little, and in some there is a tendency to emphasise attitudes to work, rather than how well pupils progress. The school has not asked parents to sign a home-school agreement this year as it plans to write a new agreement in consultation with parents and pupils.

58 The school involves parents fully in all reviews of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and strives to maintain good liaison with them.

59 The involvement of parents in the work of the school is good. The parent teacher association, although run by a very small committee, works hard and raises a great deal of money. This money is used effectively for events such as the annual puppet show and disco, as well as purchases that help to supplement the school's resources, such as a £1000 spent on books. A small number of parents help in classrooms, and a very small number of extremely committed parents help with the breakfast club and tuck shop. Their support is invaluable.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60 The headteacher gives excellent leadership to the school. In less than three terms she has given the school a very clear view of its own performance, defined the many areas which needed to be improved and helped the staff and governors to develop a clear, achievable but extremely challenging plan to raise achievement and the quality of education. Most crucially, her leadership has empowered other staff to take on leadership and management roles for themselves and this has developed teachers who are completely committed to the tasks of school improvement and enthusiastic about the prospect of making a difference for the pupils.

61 The results of this are already visible in the school. The quality of teaching has improved dramatically and pupils have learnt what they are capable of and are producing work of good quality especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science where standards previously were not good enough. At the time of the headteacher's appointment, the standards achieved by the pupils were a significant concern and in particular there was a pressing need for the potentially higher achieving pupils to be suitably challenged. This has been taken on by the staff and in each class the work is matched well to the needs of the pupils and there is now some work of a good standard.

62 Very good planning, in a very short time, has led to the fabric of the school being improved and there are now good resources available to support learning. There has been a high level of investment in good ICT resources and pupils are making rapid progress. There has also been high investment in good quality reading material and it is obvious that pupils are enjoying developing this important skill. There have been improvements to the reception class areas and there are plans scheduled to improve the nursery classrooms.

63 The headteacher has given very good guidance to the governing body who are now able to support the school by seeking their own evidence of quality. They are now operating well as partners in the development of the school.

64 There is a very rigorous and demanding 'Leamington Achievement Strategy' (School Development Plan) to which all staff have contributed. This has led to the school and its organisation changing at a very rapid pace; many staff have had to change their practices but almost all feel that this has brought about improvement. There is a great sense of achievement amongst the staff. The pupils consider the school to be improving commenting that behaviour is better and that in some subjects they are learning a lot. The school celebrates success in learning and is fast becoming a learning community that includes parents, governors, staff and pupils.

65 The teaching staff are developing well in their roles as curriculum co-ordinators. However, this is a relatively new development and, although they are gaining an overview of the subjects, they do not yet sufficiently monitor the quality of teaching and learning and there is too little specific assessment in many subjects. However, the school has planned for monitoring and assessment in the next year of the school development plan and the co-ordinators have a good understanding of how they will carry out their roles.

66 The two special educational needs co-ordinators carry out their roles effectively, liaising closely with all colleagues and ensuring that full support is effectively deployed to help all pupils with special educational needs. They make full use of all assessment information to help identify the needs of pupils and rightly see the importance of making fuller use of such information as the school's new system for tracking pupils' progress becomes established. In particular, the co-ordinators have worked very effectively during the period of amalgamation to ensure the establishment of a successful whole school approach to working with special educational needs. The co-ordinators now rightly recognise the need to establish clear parameters to indicate how their individual roles will operate in the future.

67 The governing body has embraced change readily and has been guided well. Members are now very clearly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and independently monitor the quality of overall provision. There is a very close and developing liaison between the teachers and the governors.

68 Resources are used very well and financial management is very good. Strategic planning for the use of resources is very good. There is very clear management of the school budget to gain good value for money and best value is sought effectively. All available resources have been used over the last year to up-grade the school to a decent standard. The school links very well to a good range of initiatives available in the community and the pupils benefit. There are particularly effective links with the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and work with the EAZ is adding significantly to the enrichment of the curriculum.

69 Modern technology is used well for the management of the school finances, curriculum planning and preparation of work for the pupils. The school makes very good use of specific grants especially in the areas of continuing professional development of staff and to by employing support assistants to help pupils reach targets.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

This is a very rapidly improving school. In the last year the leadership of the school has built a capacity within the school for sustained improvement. The issues which are listed below are all contained in the school's own development plans. As a priority, the school should now:

Improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:

Planning a curriculum which delivers all 6 areas of learning in the outdoors as well as in the classrooms. (*para:72,27*)

In the nursery:

Better organising more resources to support both adult-led and child-initiated learning;
(*Para27,72*)

Better organising existing space and time to make more efficient use of staff time and resources; (*Para 72,73,18*)

Assessing children's capabilities and needs more regularly and accurately so that the curriculum can be better planned to support children's learning and to identify their special educational needs. (*Para 72,18*)

Improve standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education by giving more time to these subjects in Year 3-6. (*Para 28*)

Improve assessment of the foundation subjects and science:

To give co-ordinators good information on which to plan improvements

To give teachers better information to plan a curriculum to meet individual needs

So that the school can track and thereby ensure pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics where this already happens. (*Para 51,52*)

Improve the balance of the curriculum by:

Reviewing the timetable to create more, clearly defined learning opportunities

Seeking opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills whilst teaching other subjects. (*Para 28*)

In addition to the above the headteacher and Governors should consider the following minor issues.

There is currently excellent practice to encourage attendance but in addition the school might attempt to give the pupils even greater imperative to arrive on time. (*Para 15*)

The developments to provide pupils with a view about other cultures within Britain might be accelerated as this is a weaker area of provision. (*Para 39*)

Undertake formal risk assessment. (*Para 46*)

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

23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	19	32	18	2	0	0
Percentage	3	26	44	24	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	385
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	186
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	143
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	20	27	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	14
	Girls	24	23	19
	Total	39	38	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (n/a)	81 (n/a)	70 (n/a)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	12	15
	Girls	23	22	23
	Total	38	34	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (n/a)	72 (n/a)	81 (n/a)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	30	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	17	23
	Girls	18	18	23
	Total	30	35	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (n/a)	61 (n/a)	81 (n/a)
	National	75 (75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	13	19
	Girls	17	18	24
	Total	23	31	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	40(n/a)	54 (n/a)	75 (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82(82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	330
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	19.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

Education Support Staff - Nursery

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
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	£
Total income	1041781
Total expenditure	1157392
Expenditure per pupil	3014
Balance brought forward from previous year	126160
Balance carried forward to next year	10549

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	385
Number of questionnaires returned	184

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	30	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	36	7	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	36	12	2	2
The teaching is good.	71	27	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	26	3	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	21	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	20	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	61	32	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	29	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	32	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	32	15	3	11

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

70 When children join the nursery they have skills and knowledge well below those expected for children of their age, especially in speaking and listening. Although most children's skills and knowledge are below those expected at the end of the reception year they make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning.

71 Children usually join the nursery on their third birthday and start the reception class in the September of the year in which they become five. Teachers encourage parents to stay with their children until they are settled and meet the parents each term to share information. At the beginning of the reception year teachers explain to parents how they can help children with their reading and many parents help their children regularly.

72 The school has evaluated the provision and there have been some recent improvements, particularly in the reception class, but there are still several weaknesses, especially in the nursery. There is no provision for children in the reception classes to extend their learning outdoors. Although there is a dedicated outdoor area for the nursery children is underdeveloped and teachers provide few activities for the children. Teachers in the nursery classes do not provide a sufficient variety of structured activities to develop children's learning. Resources, especially in the nursery, are not sufficient and not organised so that they are readily available for children. Teachers in the nursery do not sufficiently check what children can do or find difficult, so children with special educational needs do not get the help they need earlier enough. Children make better progress in the reception class than they do in the nursery.

73 During the period of the inspection teaching was predominately good. The teachers have good relationships with children and manage behaviour very well. When teaching is good children learn well. However, in the nursery particularly, the organisation of the classrooms and the lack of range of activities to support children's self-directed learning means that overall learning is satisfactory. Although the crucial area of planning is now satisfactory teachers do not use this planning to focus clearly on what they want children to learn. Teachers often miss opportunities to develop children's learning. For example, during 'snack time' in the nursery classes teachers supervise children but do not use the time to promote social, language or mathematical skills. The Foundation Stage will be a major focus for support next year and the management team and the coordinator have clear plans for making significant changes.

Personal, social and emotional development

74 Staff put a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in this area of learning. All children in the nursery are clear about routines. They find their name card when they come into the nursery and put it into a box. They know that they must line up before going to the outdoor area and wash their hands and hang their aprons up when they finish painting. They learn to take turns when talking in a class group and share equipment in the role-play area. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals¹. They can concentrate well and sit quietly when listening to adults and other children, for example when the teachers talks to them before their visit to the church. They take turns and work well in pairs when working with the computer.

75 Relationships between children and staff in all the Foundation Stage classes are good and children behave very well because all staff have clear expectations of good behaviour. Children are enthusiastic and show good attitudes to all their work.

Communication, language and literacy

76 Children start the nursery class with communication, language and reading and writing skills that are well below those expected nationally. These are still well below expectations at the beginning of the reception year but they make satisfactory progress and by the end of the year most have skills closer to but still below what is expected of children of their age. By the end of the year, children in the nursery listen well to each other and to adults. For example, all the children listen very attentively as the teacher uses the illustrations in a big book to tell them the story about the mouse and the strawberry. Although teachers in the nursery sometimes miss opportunities to develop the children's language skills, some activities such as the role-play area encourage children to talk. Children dress up and sit on the 'Mersey Bus' and the child who is the driver says 'Are you ready now?' and tells them 'We're there now' after they have finished their imaginary journey. Children in the reception classes listen to the teacher in whole class discussions and answer questions when they are invited to do so. In one of the reception classes the children take turns to take home the soft toy Toby and each morning the child tells the rest of the class what Toby did when he was at their house.

77 Most of the children in the nursery classes are interested in books and handle them carefully. Some children describe what they see in the pictures as they turn the pages making simple statements such as 'Little children' and 'Put fire suits on.' Children in the reception classes enjoy reading and take home books the teacher gives them from the graded reading schemes. Many of them read regularly at home as well as in school. Some children can re-tell the story in their books or a familiar story like 'The Three Pigs' remembering most of the main events. Most children hear and repeat the initial sounds of words and recognise the letter that represents the sound. Some children put the sounds together to read simple words, such as 'pig' 'hen' and 'fan' and can read the words 'was' 'this' and 'everyone' in their books. They use sounds and pictures to read unfamiliar words.

78 The children in the nursery are slowly developing their writing skills. There are very limited opportunities for them to experiment with writing although some children go to the writing table and draw pictures and write letters for each other. One child wrote her name clearly without any help but other children use marks for their names. By the end of the reception year some children have developed reasonably accurate letter formation skills and can select the right letter to represent particular sounds. For example, they can write 'cat', 'dog' and 'pan' and use sounds well to write words such as 'gras' (grass), 'prowd' (proud) 'be cos' (because) and 'sequils' (sequins). A few children can write short sentences independently. One child wrote 'In Estey hols Day I went to Bruday' (In the Easter holidays I went to Broadway) starting the sentence with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. Teachers assess children's writing skills regularly so they know what children can do and what they find difficult. However, there is little evidence of children doing different types of writing, such as shopping lists, or using writing in play situations.

Mathematical development

79 Children's mathematics levels are well below national expectations when they start nursery and are below national expectation when they start in the reception class. At the end of the reception class, levels are still below average and most children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers in the nursery provide some opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills. For example, children make pictures with magnetic shapes and with help from an adult put Russian dolls into size order and showing the adult, which are the smallest and

largest doll. Children use coins in play situations when they are buying tickets for the Mersey bus. By the end of the nursery some children know the names of shapes such as a triangle and can sort shapes into groups by colour and size. A few children can count objects accurately to at least ten and can say whether there are more or less objects in a group. However, teachers miss opportunities to develop children's mathematical skills such as at 'snack' time.

80 Children in the reception classes recognise numerals and use them accurately when altering the calendar each day. At the beginning of the mathematics lessons the teachers give the children good opportunities to practise counting skills. For example, most children count in two's from zero to 20. They sing a number rhyme and join in the actions to count backwards in two's from 10. Some of the children can do simple calculations in their heads. For example, one child knew that two more than 9 is 11. In one class children confidently sorted animals in a variety of ways. For example, they sorted them into two groups by colour, patterned or plain coverings and by whether they live in cold or hot places. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills in all activities when, for example, they are using sand and water.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81 Children's understanding in this area is well below what is expected when they start in the nursery and the reception classes. Although children do not reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year they do make satisfactory progress. In all the classes in the Foundation Stage teachers provide opportunities for pupils to play with the water, sand and construction toys but do not often plan purposeful activities that extend children's understanding. In the nursery children find out about the world around them when they go on a walk near the school and about the seaside through pictures and discussions. In the reception classes they learn about zoo animals by looking at pictures before their visit to a local safari park. However, children are not alert and eager to find things out, as teachers do not provide sufficient interesting activities.

82 Children in the reception classes know that sometimes people go to church to 'pray to Jesus' and for 'weddings' and 'when someone dies.' Following their visit to the church children know that Jesus' birthday is celebrated at Christmas and that the vicar wears special clothes 'like a dress' and special scarves for different celebrations. Teachers provide some good opportunities for children to use the computer. Children use the mouse confidently when they draw pictures of animals and when they move fish in a pond game which develops their counting skills.

Physical development

83 Children' physical development is well below what is expected when they start the nursery. They make good progress and by the end of the reception class most children achieve the Early Learning Goals. The children in the nursery classes have good opportunities to develop their fine hand skills. For example, they use paintbrushes, pencils and crayons and build with small bricks and use small equipment in the sand tray. They have access to a secure outdoor area where they safely control wheeled vehicles such as tricycles without bumping into each other. A few children can throw a ball with reasonable accuracy. Teachers in the reception classes give pupils good opportunities to develop fine hand movements during art activities such making a wooden giraffe and when they play in the sand. Children can crawl, leap, run and slide confidently and with good control and coordination when they move like animals in the jungle in the hall. Most children hold pencils appropriately and can dress and undress themselves independently.

Creative development

84 Children's attainment is well below national expectations when they start in the nursery class but they make satisfactory progress and by the end of the Foundation Stage they are just below national expectations. However, teachers do not provide a wide enough range of opportunities for children to develop their creative skills. For example, materials used for collages of the seaside are not sufficient or varied. Children learn most when the staff join the activities and talk to the children about what they are doing. For example, the teacher used dressing up clothes to be part of the game in the role-play area and asked the children 'Who are you going to be?' Children in the nursery enjoy singing and all join in the actions in number songs with the teacher though the younger children do not always know the words. Teachers give children in the reception classes more opportunities to develop their creative skills. Children choose appropriate musical instruments to portray the sound of an animal, playing a drum for an elephant and cymbals for a crocodile. Children use paint, fabrics and paper well when they make their large frieze to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Their models of vehicles show details such as a wooden ladder with rungs on a fire engine. Children coil and mould clay well to make animals. However, the role-play areas are not well resourced, give limited opportunities for imaginative play and teachers do not plan clearly what they want the children to learn.

ENGLISH

85 In Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils reach the nationally expected levels. This differs from the overall outcomes of the national tests in 2002 because these tests showed that very few pupils were reaching the upper levels of attainment. Over the last year, the school has implemented a range of effective strategies that have led to a significant improvement in the number of pupils now reaching the upper levels. A greater emphasis on more precise teaching of phonics, careful analysis of pupils' performances, specific targets for groups and individuals along with carefully targeted support for pupils have all aided in bringing about the improvement in standards. The school is now in a strong position to raise pupils' attainment in the future as the impact of the current improvement moves through the school.

86 Throughout the school pupils generally show good listening skills. Teachers' clear explanations and interesting approaches to presenting work help pupils progress well in this area. As a result, Year 2 pupils show interest and respond appropriately to questions and directions they are given and Year 6 pupils listen with good concentration during discussions. Pupils' speaking skills are below average. Many pupils are keen to talk in informal situations or in small groups, but show markedly greater reserve during whole class discussions. Their speech is often unclear and lacks grammatical accuracy. This area is currently the weaker strand within English. The school is acutely aware of this and is working hard to improve pupils' speaking skills. For example, the 'talking partners' strategy – with focussed sessions designed to draw out pupils' discussion skills is an effective means of helping pupils increase their vocabulary and gain the confidence to join in class discussions. Teachers also provide lots of chances for pupils to talk with partners or in small groups during whole class sessions. Role-play work seen in Year 6 where pupils took on the role of a character in a story discussed was especially effective in getting pupils to talk and express themselves with confidence. The school is aware of the need to promote drama/role play work on a wider scale as part of its overall range of strategies.

87 In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils show average attainment with reading, but with a significant minority reading well. In lessons seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 coped well with all of the simple work sheet instructions they used and the well structured approach by teachers to helping pupils reinforce their knowledge of phonics means that pupils are not afraid to try new words. Pupils build up words confidently using their knowledge of sounds. They read fluently and with good understanding. Pupils mostly know how to use the contents, index and glossary sections of non-fiction books and they progress well through the regular practice and support they receive. Year 6 pupils show much interest

and most enjoy talking about the books they have read. They competently recount the main storyline of a book just read and the higher attaining pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors.

88 Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain mainly average levels with writing. In particular, they show a confident approach and this has been engendered by the school's emphasis on providing regular opportunities for pupils to write at length. In all classes, pupils try hard with written tasks and progress well because teachers provide clear demonstrations and explanations as to how the work should be completed. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher provided pupils with a template to help rewrite a story they had read and talked them through the procedures a step at a time so all of them knew exactly what to do. As a result, pupils gained a solid understanding of how to create a beginning, middle and end to their stories. Year 2 pupils set down their ideas in sequences of sentences and most are starting to use capital letters and full stops properly. Well-focused discussion work and the teachers' good usage of the 'talking partners' approach helps individuals to progress well with writing satisfactory factual accounts based on non-fiction books they study together. Spelling for pupils by this age is mainly good. The very effective phonics teaching and guidance for pupils, to help them see smaller words within compound words, are making a significant impact upon improving standards in this area and, in turn, boosting pupils' confidence to write. Most pupils' handwriting is legible and reasonably clear in Year 2, although the majority do not join their letters.

89 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know how to structure their writing, and their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar are usually correct. For example, they know how to use pronouns, identify text written in the 'first person' and improve their writing skills by analysing and gaining a good understanding of how an author sets out his ideas in paragraphs. In one good lesson seen for Year 4 pupils, well lead discussion work and careful guidance resulted in pupils editing sentences and confidently turning statements into questions. Pupils' written accounts in Years 5 and 6 show ideas being successfully sustained and developed in an interesting way. They show awareness of writing for different audiences and purposes. For example, Year 5 pupils successfully identified the emotive words in pieces of writing that made it persuasive in style. Similarly, Year 6 pupils showed confidence in using more informal language when writing to an 'Agony Aunt' to express a particular point of view. In addition, pupils know how to write in a formal way and in one good example a pupil wrote 'Dear Sir, I am writing to tell you how utterly disgusted I am with the bin men not collecting the rubbish ...'. There is much writing at length and accounts are often expressive and make effective use of vocabulary. A few higher attaining pupils produce good quality extended, paragraphed and suitably punctuated stories, complete with dramatic tension. Across the school very good quality marking of pupils' written work is clearly helping them evaluate what they do and improve in their next attempt. Spelling from Year 3 through to Year 6 is usually good due to the consistent emphasis placed on this area by teachers. Handwriting for these pupils is mostly neat and well presented. At Year 6, pupils join their writing, but this is not the case for most classes at Key Stage 2.

90 Across the school, good examples are seen of writing in other subjects and teachers make effective use of opportunities to extend pupils' skills further in this way. For example, in history work, Year 6 pupils have written very expressive accounts from the viewpoint of a slave during the time of the slave trade. In this example, and in other work where they are asked to write about their views or those of others, pupils progress well in developing their spiritual, moral, social and occasionally their cultural awareness.

91 In all classes, pupils of abilities of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are catered for well and pupils make good progress. The use of teaching assistants to support groups or individuals either in class or through withdrawal from class is mostly very effective in boosting attainment. Similarly, the use of extra teachers to work on parallel work with withdrawal groups and the arrangement for setting pupils in Year 6 is also beneficial to the pupils and enables the teachers to

match work precisely to the needs of the individuals concerned. Overall, no differences were noted in the performance of boys' or girls' performances.

92 Overall, pupils behave well and concentrate fully in lessons. They often show enthusiasm and try their best. Teaching seen was good overall at both key stages, sometimes very good and was excellent on one occasion. Teachers have a confident knowledge of the Literacy Strategy so that they know how to use it in a flexible way to enhance pupils' learning. They have a strong rapport with pupils and use this effectively to encourage confidence and self-esteem in tackling more challenging writing tasks for example. Teachers also set high expectations for what should be achieved in sessions. Teaching assistants make a significant impact upon supporting the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. They are especially good at helping lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs – ensuring these pupils remain fully on task and helping them to extend their ideas in discussions. Although in most whole class teaching sessions they usefully sit with or near pupils, prompting and guiding as needed, in some of these sessions they are not sufficiently involved.

93 The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who has worked closely with all staff to enable a clear focus to be established upon what needs to be done to improve standards. A suitable range of assessment procedures is in place and teachers carefully evaluate pupils' progress and adjust their planning accordingly. The school identifies rightly the need to make fuller use of assessment information as the newly established system to track pupils' progress in English evolves. The school has invested wisely in improving its resources and now has a good range to support teaching and learning. Teachers prepare and use resources very well in literacy sessions. In some lessons seen teachers made good use of the SMART boards (interactive white boards) to enhance their explanations and demonstrations. However, classroom computers were mostly not used by pupils during the literacy lessons observed.

MATHEMATICS

94 Standards in mathematics are currently broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is largely due to the initiatives introduced in September when the new headteacher took up her post. Pupils have made rapid progress across the whole school this year and this is evident in the quality of work seen and the teaching observed in lessons.

95 The analysis of results of the 2002 national tests, which the headteacher undertook in September, indicated that pupils were underachieving and performing at unsatisfactory levels when compared to all schools nationally and also to similar schools. There is still room for improvement, however, particularly in ensuring that higher ability pupils are provided with tasks which challenge them and enable them to reach the higher level 3 at the end of Year 2 and level 5 at the end of Year 6. The school is working hard to secure this through rigorous teacher assessment and termly monitoring of individual pupil progress against their targets and national curriculum levels. This is enabling the school to identify those pupils who are not making expected progress and target them for additional support in small groups or in booster classes.

96 Pupils in Year 1 are developing satisfactory number skills. Most pupils can count and order using two digit numbers and are developing a satisfactory notion of place value. They add and subtract numbers within 20. The higher ability pupils add two digit numbers to 50 accurately and can find ten more than a given number to 100. The clear emphasis on developing number skills provides a solid foundation to the work that pupils undertake and by the end of Year 2, most pupils can count forwards and backwards to 100. They use addition and subtraction to calculate using two digit numbers and can partition shapes into halves and quarters, recognising, for example, that two halves make a whole. Most pupils can recognise odd and even numbers and can recognise the pattern they make. Higher

achieving pupils have more advanced skills and can multiply using the 2, 3 and 10 times tables with some degree of accuracy. Most recognise that multiplication is repeated addition. Tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment and the lower attaining pupils are supported well by the teacher or classroom assistants. However, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge of number to solve problems are limited and they need more opportunity to explore and explain their strategies for carrying out a calculation.

97 Teachers provide a generally broad range of work and most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of common 2D and 3D shapes by the end of Year 2. They are given appropriate opportunities to measure length using standard and non-standard units of measurement and have a satisfactory understanding of centimetres. Higher attaining pupils are given the opportunity to weigh objects using grams. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of capacity and this area of their mathematics is less well developed. Pupils are able to classify objects and sort into sets using different criteria but have only limited experience of collecting and representing information in different formats.

98 By the end of Year 6 most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of number and can confidently undertake work in addition and subtraction. Higher attaining pupils can carry out calculations using multiplication and division and have a secure understanding of six digit numbers. Lower attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of hundreds, tens and units, they recognise that division is the inverse operation to multiplication and can multiply tens and units by a single number. Where teaching is most effective pupils are able to draw upon their previous learning to solve number problems. For example, in a good Year 4 lesson, pupils were able to find the rule for calculating the sum of three consecutive numbers by recognising that the answer is three times the middle number. With careful teacher prompts they could explain the strategy they had used. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can identify the mode, mean and median of a range of numbers.

99 Pupils are beginning to develop a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measures. By the end of Year 6 they know the standard units of measure for length and know the importance of measuring accurately. They know the units of measure for weight and capacity, but generally have too few opportunities to develop their understanding through practical work. Most pupils can name and recognise the properties of 2D and 3D shapes and can explain their main attributes. For example pupils in Year 5 were able to identify the shapes in a "feely box" without seeing them by touching and describing the number and length of sides and by counting the corners of the shapes. They used correct mathematical language to identify, for example, equilateral and isosceles triangles and a parallelogram and could accurately describe different types of quadrilaterals. Year 6 pupils are able to perform a range of operations, for example, they can construct 3D shapes from nets. However, more opportunities need to be made to enable pupils to explore reflective symmetry in familiar 2D shapes and patterns.

100 The quality of teaching of mathematics ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. However, teaching is generally good in all year groups and most pupils learn well. Teachers' planning clearly identifies the things which need to be learnt, including key vocabulary and the resources needed for the lesson. In their lesson plans teachers make reference to the differing learning needs of the pupils. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented throughout the school and provides a useful structure for teachers. All teachers have received training. Teachers make good use of introductory sessions in mathematics lessons to develop pupils' quick recall of facts. In the very good lessons observed these sessions provided good pace and challenge for pupils of various abilities. When good teaching was observed teachers provided suitable opportunities for pupils to explain how they had arrived at their answers. When used well, the end of lesson discussions are used to assess pupils' learning and to reinforce teaching points. However, in some lessons pupils were given independent

tasks which were not well matched to their ability. On these occasions the work lacked challenge for the more able pupils and opportunities were missed to extend their learning. Teachers manage their classes well. In all lessons observed pupils responded positively to teachers' praise and encouragement and their behaviour was good. They talk enthusiastically about the subject and work with sustained interest in lessons.

101 The quality of teachers' marking ranges from satisfactory to good. Where it is good teachers make helpful comments to show pupils how they can improve their work. Teachers have begun to make regular assessments of pupils' attainment and this is used to support pupils in making improved progress. Some opportunities are created for pupils to practice their mathematical skills through other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 use bar graphs to display information they have gathered about the relationship between height and hand span in a science lesson. There are some opportunities for pupils to carry out data handling tasks in designated ICT lessons, although this is often limited to presenting information as bar graphs or pictograms. Teachers make good use of the Smart boards in classrooms to demonstrate mathematical tasks in their lessons.

102 The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge. Thorough monitoring of the national tests in September and the recent optional tests for years 3, 4 and 5 have given him a clear idea of what needs to be done to raise standards further in mathematics.

SCIENCE

103 There has been a massive improvement in science provision over the past year throughout the school. Although standards are still slightly below average at the end of Year 2, those at the end of Year 6 are now similar to the national average. The test results in 2002 showed that the standards in science of pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 were well below the national averages. Those at the end of Year 6, however, were close to average standards for similar schools.

104 All areas of the curriculum are covered effectively. A detailed analysis of the 2002 results showed that there was a weakness throughout the school in the investigative processes of scientific enquiry. Considerable development has taken place to ensure that this is an integral part of learning, and this is now a strength.

105 The new approaches to science are evident throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 study growth and recognise many of the similarities and differences between humans and other animals. They have conducted an investigation to find the warmest part of the classroom and look at the differences in movement caused by friction on different surfaces. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they have conducted a wide range of investigations. These include light, forces (including an experiment with 'unbalanced forces', where pupils predict, carry out the test and reach a conclusion). They have looked at micro organisms and living things.

106 There are many displays of pupils' work around the school, which reinforce learning and celebrate what has been achieved. These include an investigation into how things move in Year 1, the solar system in Year 5 and illustrations of the human body in Year 6.

107 Because science is taught in an exciting way, the pupils' attitudes to science are overwhelmingly positive. They are interested and attentive. Most are keen to contribute to discussions and think hard. Behaviour is good. All are highly motivated and in one very good lesson a pupil due to be withdrawn wanted (and was allowed) to stay because the work was so interesting.

108 The overall standard of teaching is good, and around half the lessons seen were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are interesting and many of the tasks involve some level of investigation. Questions are well-directed and teachers use praise effectively and this supports and rewards pupils. The quality of marking is generally very good and it is evident that teachers take a great deal of time to ensure that this is effective. There are few signs, however, that pupils take enough note of the numerous comments and helpful points that teachers raise in their books.

109 One of the great strengths in science is the subject manager. She is enthusiastic, well-organised and has a clear vision of what must be achieved. She has been – and still is – committed to raising standards, and is largely responsible for the success in developing this subject. The quantity and quality of resources are generally good, and the school borrows others when needed: as, for example the microscopes for the Year 6 topic on materials, where pupils acted as pathologists to test various powders to identify a murderer. A wide range of visits and visitors are used very effectively to enhance the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 have attended a Science Fair, at which they looked at a variety of subjects including healthy eating, sound and animal habitats.

110 Science has been a necessary priority this year, and the time and effort taken by all staff to develop the subject has been very effective. However, there is still a need to make assessment of science more precise to better inform teacher's planning.

ART AND DESIGN

111 By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations but by the end of Year 6 attainment is below expectations. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because teachers give them plenty of good opportunities to develop different skills and techniques. In Years 3 to 6 teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their skills or to judge what is good about their own or other pupils' work so they can improve their work. This unsatisfactory is due to a lack of timetabled lessons.

112 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy art because teachers plan a wide variety of interesting work. Pupils in Year 1 show good skills in making tones of paint by mixing different amounts of white or black paint with another colour. Pupils show they are beginning to observe very carefully when they sketch snails with details such as the pattern on the shells. In their sculptures using stones, feathers and shells pupils show that they are beginning to learn about shape and form. Year 2 pupils use pastels, crayons, paint, paper and fabrics very effectively to make their pictures of snails. They are developing good observational skills and learning about shape and pattern when they sketch the houses near the school showing details on the bricks and the tiles. A few pupils are beginning to develop a good sense of scale and they draw figures that are well proportioned and include details such as eyebrows and eyelashes. When pupils weave with fabrics they show a good appreciation of colour and texture. Pupils study the techniques used by artists such as Paul Klee, Matisse and Monet before making their own pictures. In their drawings in the style of Monet pupils blend pastels well to make subtle tones. Teachers link the work in art very effectively to literacy when they use paintings by artists such as Hockney to develop pupils speaking, listening and writing skills. They use a computer program effectively to draw pictures.

113 Teachers plan work for the pupils in Years 3 to 6 following national guidance. This ensures that pupils' knowledge and skills build progressively. For example, pupils in Year 3 observe and draw portraits showing a sense of proportion and the relative position of facial features. In Year 4 they draw figures showing joined limbs and in Year 5 pupils achieve some interesting shadow and movement effects. There is evidence of pupils exploring their ideas and developing their designs. For example, in Year 5 pupils find out about different types of containers and use the information to design

their own container. In Year 6 pupils show an understanding of the texture of different materials used for buildings in towns when they sketch buildings such as churches. They then demonstrate their knowledge of perspective when they draw a row of houses. Pupils study the work of other artists such as Van Gogh, Monet and Andy Warhol and Year 6 make reclining figures in clay in the style of Henry Moore. There are some satisfactory links made to other areas of the curriculum when pupils in Year 5 draw Tudor houses and Roman coins and when Year 4 pupils write captions describing the monster collages. However, there is limited evidence of the study of art from non-European cultures. There is limited evidence that pupils use their information communication technology skills in art except when they use the Internet to find out about other artists.

114 Pupils behave well in lessons whether they are working with a teacher, a learning support assistant or other pupils. They concentrate well, work hard and take a pride in their work because teachers make the work interesting and give them the help they need. When pupils work together they share, take turns and help each other to learn. They talk about their work enthusiastically and enjoy their lessons.

115 Inspectors did not see sufficient art lessons to make a judgement on the teaching in art. However, teaching was good overall in the lessons inspectors saw. Teachers are hardworking and enthusiastic and have a good knowledge of the content of lessons. They plan a range of work that is just at the right level for the pupils but challenging enough to make sure pupils learn and make good progress. They give pupils good opportunities to practise skills and focus well on the techniques used by other artists. Teachers and support assistants use good questions to find out what pupils know and to make pupils think more about their work. However, there are limited opportunities, especially in Years 3 to 6, for pupils to think about how they can make their work better or comment on the work of other pupils.

116 The coordinators for art provide good leadership and support colleagues well. For example, one of the coordinators has provided the teachers of the younger pupils with handbooks giving them good guidance on developing pupil' skills and has developed procedures for assessing these skills. Resources are of good quality and adequate in quantity. The coordinators have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in art and have good strategies to raise standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117 Standards of attainment in design and technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and below expectation at the end of Year 6.

118 Although there has been an improvement, the subject is still underdeveloped. There is evidence that while the planning and making aspects of the curriculum are generally covered effectively in all year groups, insufficient attention is paid to evaluating both the process and the products and then identifying those areas in which they could be improved.

119 Too few lessons were seen during the inspection to make a judgement on the standards of teaching and learning. Evidence of what the pupils can do has been taken from the analysis of work and the displays of design and technology around the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils have considered healthy eating and made puppets of characters from Cinderella, linking the subject well with literacy. They progress to investigating packaging and sandwiches at Year 3, designing wallets in Year 4, biscuits and wrappings in Year 5 and bridges, funfair big wheels and slippers in Year 6. Although pupils in some classes evaluate what they have done, this is not an integral part of learning throughout the school. Of the displays, Year 2's winding mechanisms illustrating nursery rhymes are

particularly good. These include Jack and Jill's bucket, the pussy in the well, Little Miss Muffet's spider and a wonderful Rapunzel – whose hair descends as she lets it down!

120 The co-ordinator is new to the role since January. She has written an action plan which clearly identifies those steps which must be taken to raise standards. She is enthusiastic and keen to develop the subject further. The school has rightly prioritised other subjects (such as English, mathematics and science) as needing immediate improvement, but the need for a higher profile in design and technology has been identified by the school.

GEOGRAPHY

121 A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books shows that they attain average standards in Year 2. In Year 6, pupils attain below average standards because they do not cover enough of the geography curriculum owing to an imbalance in the time allocated to the subject. The school fully realises that there is a gap in curriculum coverage in Year 6 brought about by an increased focus upon English, mathematics and science and the urgent need to drive up standards in these areas over the last year.

122 During the inspection, it was only possible to observe two geography lessons and it is therefore not possible to make judgements about the quality of teaching.

123 Year 2 pupils develop a knowledge and awareness of localities beyond their own. They gain a satisfactory basic knowledge and understanding about the differences between life on a small island and life on the mainland and they know some of the features of life in contrasting places such as Iceland and Egypt. Pupils are familiar with maps and identify and label countries on a map of Great Britain. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are given a good chance to develop their geographical skills through field work studies of the local area and they carefully mark routes to get to places on maps of the streets. They learn facts about countries such as India and develop their ability to research by framing proper questions. In one very good lesson in Year 4, the teacher skilfully involved pupils in a role-play exercise enacting an air journey to Chembakoli. This very enjoyable activity helped pupils gain a keen insight into facts about the area studied. Year 5 pupils gain a good knowledge of the main features of river systems – making detailed maps and diagrams of rivers. They know about the effects of pollution and flooding. They carry out a careful analysis of the local shopping area and how people use it. Through their surveys they identify the main problems associated with parking and traffic flow. In Year 6, pupils study conservation topics such as global warming and the effects of erosion and weathering on an environment. In a lesson seen, good preparation of resources helped pupils use maps well to plan a route from Liverpool to Colomendy. However, there is very little detailed work in pupils' books and they have not yet covered the main topics scheduled for Year 6 in sufficient depth and detail.

124 The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Although geography is not currently featured as an area of development, she has drawn up a very useful action plan for use once the subject is able to move up the priority list. The co-ordinator rightly recognises the need to monitor lessons in the future in order to improve the overview of the quality of teaching and learning in this subject. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good, although the co-ordinator has identified correctly the need to increase the range of ICT software available to enhance pupils' geographical research skills.

HISTORY

125 Three lessons were observed during the inspection, but discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator and careful scrutiny of pupils' work suggest that pupils make satisfactory progress in

Years 3-6, with the majority of pupils attaining standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Standards are unsatisfactory, however, by the end of Year 2 and pupils have not progressed in line with national expectations across the key stage. This is largely due to lack of coverage of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2.

126 At the end of Year 2 pupils have some knowledge of life in the past. They learn about the events in the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and events such as The Great Fire of London. They understand that their lives are very different from those in the past and recognise that changes have come about which have affected life today. For example, in their study of Florence Nightingale they are able to compare the ways in which sick people were cared for in the past and contrast with today. They know that they can find evidence about the past from pictures and items of the period. Year 1 pupils learn that objects, such as teddy bears, carry different sorts of evidence of age and change. They have had limited opportunity to compare everyday household objects with those from the Victorian era to examine change over time. They can use words related to time such as “before”, “after”, “then” and “now”. However, gaps in curriculum coverage at Years 1 and 2 mean that pupils are not given the opportunities to fully develop their knowledge of the past or skills of historical enquiry.

127 There are some opportunities for pupils to record their work in their own words, for example in their booklets on Florence Nightingale. However, scrutiny of written work indicates that higher attaining pupils complete the same work as lower attainers. This gives a lack of challenge to the higher attainers and means that lower attainers do not always complete the task they have been set.

128 By the end of Year 6 pupils are making good progress and the majority are attaining average standards. They are developing a sense of chronology and change over time and can place events in history on a timeline.

129 Curriculum coverage is satisfactory. The pupils in Year 3 are able to discuss why events happened. For example, in their study of Invaders and Settlers they can discuss why the Romans wished to invade Britain and the effect that this had on the peoples living in Britain at the time. They know that knowledge about life in the past can be found through photographs, pictures and objects and have applied this knowledge to their study of life in Ancient Egypt.

130 Pupils in Year 4 show satisfactory knowledge and understanding about the key events in the lives of the Romans and the Tudors. They have recorded their work in a variety of ways, using pictures, diaries, tables and reports and have undertaken their own research and enquiry into the life of Henry V111 and the Tudor period. This has engaged them in internet research and has developed good cross curriculum links with literacy and ICT. They are beginning to distinguish fact and opinion in what others have written about the period.

131 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show a keen interest in their work and talk with enthusiasm about what they have been learning. This is largely due to good teaching in the subject. Teachers use resources well, make effective use of Smart boards, have good subject knowledge and present their subject in ways which engage the pupils’ interest. For example, in an excellent Year 5 lesson observed, the teacher effectively used role play to create a Victorian classroom enabling pupils to experience at first hand some of the differences between then and now. In Year 6, pupils’ learning about the slave trade was enhanced through a trip to the Maritime Museum to experience conditions on board the slave ships. In these year groups teachers use a good range of questioning techniques to challenge pupils’ thinking and extend learning. For example in a Year 5 lesson the teacher helped to develop pupils’ understanding of primary and secondary sources of history through his use of carefully framed questions.

132 The study of the slave trade and triangular trade routes in Year 6 has enabled pupils to learn about the growth of Liverpool as a port and an important city in the 18th and 19th centuries. This has contributed to their cultural development and understanding about the city in which they live. Good cross curricular links with literacy and art have contributed to their spiritual development, for example pupils' poetry entitled "A Cry for Help", written as a slave on board a slave ship, has helped them empathise with the plight of the slaves.

133 Opportunities for independent research at Years 5 and 6 have included good use of the internet, texts, pictures and photographs as sources of information. In Year 6 pupils have had the opportunity to interview an evacuee from the second world war in order to learn about first hand experiences of life in wartime Britain as part of their studies.

134 On going teacher assessment is inconsistent across the school. There is some evidence of marking for improvement in Year 6 but this is not applied across all year groups. Pupils' work is assessed against national curriculum level descriptors at the end of each year, but focuses on the content of what has been learned rather than how pupils are using their skills as historians to develop their knowledge about the subject. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and occasionally scrutinises pupils' work. She has identified the areas for development in her subject within the school's raising achievement strategy and the history action plan. She is enthusiastic about her subject and provides positive leadership.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

135 Standards in ICT are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils make good progress due the good quality teaching of the subject. There has been a large investment in staff training and high quality ICT resources recently. There are 'Smart boards' (interactive computer screens) in each classroom. These recent developments have raised standards and are likely to improve them further.

136 The school has rigorously audited ICT provision and this indicated that there were weaknesses in teaching and learning. All teachers have undergone training in basic skills in ICT and many have extended their knowledge and understanding further through attending a wide range of courses. As a result they are confident in the delivery of ICT and in all lessons, the quality of teaching was judged to be good.

137 Teachers give clear explanations and demonstrate well the skills that the pupils' will learn during the lesson. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made good use of the Smart board to demonstrate and explain how to control a rocket's movement by using the arrow keys to input instructions. Pupils were able to copy this and input their own instructions to move the rocket. They worked independently, refining and changing their predictions to achieve the task. They used directional language (up, down, forwards, backwards) well and were able to talk with confidence about what they were doing.

138 By the end of Year 2 pupils have grown in confidence and expertise, for example they have acquired simple word processing skills. They can use the keyboard and can insert pictures into their work from "Clip Art". They can generate a repeating design using a graphics program and control a floor robot using simple commands. They use simple data bases to collect information, for example, about eye colour and represent information as a pictogram. Most pupils have developed good mouse control skills and clearly understand how to use "windows" to gain access to information and programs.

139 Teachers manage pupils effectively and pupils behave well and engage well in lessons. They work well independently enabling teachers to target and support those pupils who need it. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by classroom assistants and as a result make good progress in ICT. This was evident in Year 6 lesson when the classroom assistant helped two pupils to read the information they had accessed through the internet. As a result these pupils were able to use links and hyperlinks to refine their search and complete the task set.

140 A good range of computer generated work is on display around the school and in pupils' work folders. However, this is not consistent in all year groups and is an area which needs to develop further. Good use is made of the internet by pupils to generate information based on their own enquiry. For example, in their study of the Victorians pupils in Year 5 demonstrated a good understanding of the use of search engines in order to find out about key events of the period. Similarly pupils make good use of simple data bases to present their findings in Science lessons. Links are made with Design Technology, for example pupils in Year 3 were observed using the copy and paste functions to design food wrappers and Year 5 pupils have designed a bedroom using a 3D graphics program.

141 By Year 6 most pupils confidently log-on and close down the computer, manipulate screen icons using the mouse, select items from an on-screen menu, use the "drag" and "drop" features of a program and print their work. They can word process their work and change the style, colour and size of fonts. They create simple multi media presentations using PowerPoint and generate spreadsheets and simple data bases and to present information. They have had experience of using keyboards and audio systems to compose and layer sounds in their music lessons. Some use is made of digital cameras by members of the school council to record school events and two pupils demonstrated that they could retrieve an image on screen, change its size, add text and print. However, there is little evidence in pupils' folders that regular use is made of digital photography to record their work. Pupils have limited opportunities to send e-mails as part of their lessons, although recently an e-pen pal link has been initiated between pupils who attend the German club and a school in Germany.

142 There is good curriculum coverage and the subject co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that policies and schemes of work are now in place. However, on-going teacher assessment in the subject is less well defined and this is an area for development. At present teachers record what pupils have covered in their work using national curriculum level descriptors at the end of the year ready to pass the information on to the next teacher. However, there is no systematic or on-going recording of the skills that pupils are acquiring. As a result, the school does not have a clear picture of the national curriculum levels pupils are attaining in each year group or the progress achieved by individual pupils.

MUSIC

143 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is close to nationally expected levels. Pupils make good progress because teachers give them plenty of good opportunities to develop different skills and techniques.

144 Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to sing together and listen to and appreciate music. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use good expression when practising singing and teachers explain clearly how they can make their singing even better. They enjoy singing a variety of songs because the teachers are enthusiastic and give them a lot of encouragement. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a good sense of rhythm and sing clearly and with some expression. They can improve their singing when the teacher asks them to sing higher or lower. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are invited to join the choir. Each week they practise a variety of songs including some that they will perform for the rest of the pupils.

They sing with increasing awareness and control of pitch, breathing, posture and sound projection. They sing tunefully and confidently accompanied or unaccompanied by the teacher playing the piano.

145 Teachers plan work for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 following national guidance. This ensures that pupils' knowledge and skills build progressively and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 2 can say how they feel when they listen to a tune played on the keyboard in different styles. They sing tunefully in different styles. For example, the pupils sing a familiar song happily or angrily by varying the pitch and tempo of their singing. They sing confidently in front of the other pupils in the class and enjoy experimenting in making different sounds with their voices. When they listen to a recording of pupils singing they find it more difficult to say which style pupils are singing in and the teacher explains that this is because they cannot see the pupils' facial expressions.

146 Music lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6, effectively develop pupils' skills and knowledge. In Year 4 pupils are given good opportunities to listen to recorded music, compare different pieces of music and identify the instruments being played. They can say what the music makes them think about. For example after listening to part of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, pupils said it made them think of 'a sunny day' and a 'summer's day.' They experiment with different ways of representing sounds, movement and narrative on a graphic score. By Year 6 pupils explain the meaning of several technical terms such as staccato, pitch and tempo. They can name several instruments of the orchestra and most of the instruments in the wind section of an orchestra. They can explain very clearly how they write the lyrics and the melody for a song and have a good understanding of notation.

147 As there were only two lessons seen during the inspection there is not sufficient evidence to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching. However, in the lessons seen lesson objectives were clear to pupils. Teachers used questions skilfully to check that pupils understood what they had to do and to make them think more carefully about their work. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the teacher asked 'What would be a good symbol for a calm movement?' and 'How will the composers show the music gets louder?' Teachers give the pupils good opportunities to work in groups and to talk about their work. However, sometimes the work is not at the right level for all the pupils. This means that some pupils do not complete enough work in the lesson and others are not sufficiently challenged. Most pupils behave well in lessons, concentrate well and work hard because teachers make the lessons interesting.

148 The enthusiastic coordinator is committed to encouraging pupils' enjoyment of music and to raising standards in the subject. She helps some teachers to plan their work and has regular opportunities to work along side other teachers in the classroom. This has allowed her to use her considerable personal knowledge and skill very effectively to support and encourage colleagues and also to judge the standards in music. She promotes music effectively in school by organising several special events for the pupils. She has invited some musicians into school to perform for the pupils and has plans to extend this and include more from non-European cultures. Pupils are provided with opportunities to perform; for example, to celebrate the opening of the new school the coordinator arranged for a CD to be made of the pupils singing and reciting poetry. The choir performed with other choirs from Liverpool schools in St George's Hall and the co-ordinator took over seventy pupils to listen to the Philharmonic Orchestra. A variety of instruments provides pupils with satisfactory opportunities to develop their musical skills and to experiment with different combinations of sounds. The coordinator has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement of music and has strategies to raise standards further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149 Only a limited range of physical education was seen during the inspection, so the judgement on standards is confined only to games activities. Standards in this area of the curriculum are below average for pupils throughout the school, partly because insufficient time is allocated for physical education, as most classes have only one lesson each week. Evidence from planning shows that over the course of a year all areas of the physical education curriculum are covered to some degree.

150 Most of the lessons seen covered development of the same skills of throwing and catching. Standards in these skills are below average. Pupils learn to swim and most achieve the required 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Pupils are aware of the need for warming up and in one very good lesson seen, pupils in Year 5 developed their own routines. The need for safety is stressed where appropriate.

151 The standards of teaching are generally good, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. In many lessons, the questions asked were relevant and inclusive and praise was very effective in reinforcing what had been achieved and in rewarding effort. Some lessons had a brisk pace. One of the strengths seen in most lessons was that group activities were planned carefully so that pupils are able to develop their skills by working with others who had similar abilities. Planning has been a priority for staff development and is beginning to have a positive effect on the pupils' learning. In less successful lessons the expectations of the quality of learning and behaviour were insufficiently high. The school is aware of this mixed picture and the co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is determined to raise standards.

152 Pupils' attitudes are good. They listen attentively, co-operate very well, whether in pairs or groups, and most try hard, obeying instructions promptly. They enjoy their lessons.

153 Resources are good. The pupils benefit from the range of extra-curricular activities provided, such as the gym club for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the opportunities provided by the school to widen experiences through, for example, Sports Link, dance workshops and out-of-school football and athletics events.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154 Pupils in Year 2 attain levels that match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Due to the fact that they do not cover enough of the syllabus in Year 6 because of limited time allocation, pupils do not meet the expectations set for them.

155 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show reasonable knowledge of Bible stories, an understanding of prayer and an understanding of customs in other religions. For example, they write harvest prayers, know about Christingle celebrations and what this represents and they gain satisfactory knowledge about Jewish and Hindu traditions. Visits to a church and an Anglican cathedral help pupils to learn about traditions and festivals of the church in a practical and interesting way. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 gain an in-depth knowledge about areas of the Sikh and Moslem faiths. For example, they know about the main customs and traditions within the Sikh faith and learn the importance of prayer for Moslems. In a very good lesson in Year 4, the teacher's very good questioning and use of artefacts helped pupils explore a range of ideas in detail, for example, pupils discovered that Moslems use a small compass to orientate their prayer maps towards Mecca. The interesting way in which the work was presented raised pupils' curiosity – with many pupils asking appropriate questions such as ...'why do they face Mecca when they pray?' In Year 5 pupils investigate artefacts from the Buddhist religion and make predictions about what they think these items are used for and gain a deep insight into the way in which a Buddhist lives. Year 6 pupils acquire an appropriate knowledge of the various roles of people within different religions. A good approach is adopted towards researching this area, with, for instance,

with pupils inventing a range of questions to interview the religious leaders about their jobs. Useful areas of research are also undertaken, for example, looking at the week's schedule of an Anglican Minister to see how many different people were helped during this time. Nearly all of the work in Year 6 was carried out in the autumn term, with very little completed over the last two terms. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in terms of what the locally agreed syllabus expects them to know by this time in the year.

156 Pupils' literacy skills are developed well within religious education work with many examples of carefully presented factual accounts seen across the school.

157 In the three lessons seen at Key Stage 2, pupils enjoyed the work and behaved well. There is not enough evidence to enable a judgement to be made about the quality of teaching, but in these lessons, the teachers showed confident subject knowledge and prepared the work carefully to make it as interesting as possible for the pupils. The work in these lessons was effective in raising pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils showed much interest and curiosity with the interesting artefacts used in the lessons and gained a better understanding of other cultures through the work on different world faiths.

158 The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish a clear and appropriate scheme of work based upon the national guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus. She has also ensured that the school is equipped with a good range of resources to support teaching and learning and these were seen to be well used during the lessons observed. The co-ordinator has identified correctly the need to establish a system for monitoring and evaluating lessons in the future to check the quality of teaching and learning across the school.