

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104629

Headteacher: Mr M Jones

Lead inspector: Mr J Brennan

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup>– 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 255810

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	350
School address:	Meadway Wavertree Liverpool
Postcode:	L15 7LZ
Telephone number:	0151 7223462
Fax number:	0151 7222980
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Campbell
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Christ the King is a popular oversubscribed catholic school and, with 350 pupils on roll, is larger than most schools. Pupils attend from an area of private housing in an outer suburb of the City of Liverpool. In addition a small proportion of pupils live in local authority housing. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of white British origin. Most children begin school with a level of attainment that is typical for their age. Currently four per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This is below average.

The school received an Achievement Award in 2003, a Healthy Schools Award in 2003 and the Football Association Charter Mark in 2001. It has just received an Active Mark. The school is currently taking part in the School's Sport Co-ordinator Project.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	English
			English as an additional language
			Information and communication technology
			Music
32678	Kathryn Dodd	Lay inspector	
11510	Keith Oglesby	Team inspector	Art and design
			Mathematics
			Physical education
21666	Andrew Margerison	Team inspector	Special educational needs
			Geography
			History
31012	Ann Welch	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Design and technology
			Science

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited  
14 Enterprise House  
Kingsway  
Team Valley  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well against the targets set for them. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards school and each other. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The teaching of basic skills is good, pupils achieve well in acquiring these to reach standards that are above average.
- The school operates as a harmonious community, adults and pupils treat each other with mutual respect and, because of this, pupils work hard and enjoy school.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good and they achieve very well.
- Teaching does not consistently enable pupils to use their good mathematical or information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and in Years 3 to 6, their good writing skills in an interesting or challenging way in other subjects.
- Not enough thought has been given to how subjects of the curriculum link together.
- Shortcomings in the way the school plans for the future undermines the effectiveness of the strong sense of team which the leadership has worked hard to create.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and the school keeps them very well informed of how well their children are doing and how they can help with their learning.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in sport outside of the school day.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen in English, mathematics and science. Assessment has improved and this is one reason why provision for pupils who have special educational needs has improved. The school monitors the quality of teaching more closely and individual subject co-ordinators are, on the whole, more effective. However, some monitoring is not targeted well enough; because of this improvements in the Foundation Stage have not been wholly effective. The provision the school makes for pupils' personal development has improved, as has the way the school works with parents.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	A	A*	A
mathematics	C	C	A	A
science	C	A	B	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Overall pupils' achievements are good.** Children start school with a range of skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Pupils achieve well in their personal and social development to begin Year 1 as well adjusted learners ready for the National Curriculum. Inconsistencies in the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, mean that achievement in these areas is satisfactory. Achievement is also satisfactory in children's physical and creative development. In all of these areas most children are on course to achieve the goals set for them and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Results in the 2003 National Tests for Year 2 were above average in reading, and mathematics and average in writing. Although recovering from a dip, they do not yet compare favourably with other schools. This was confirmed by the work seen in lessons. Standards in writing were higher than those in last year's tests and are now above average. Standards in reading and mathematics are also above average. Results in the Year 6 National Tests for 2003 confirm the school's upward trend of results.

They were well above average in English, mathematics and above average in science. In English they were in the top five per cent of schools. Results also compared favourably with similar schools in English and mathematics. Work seen in lessons and in books suggests that present standards are above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. In English and mathematics pupils are doing well in relation to their capabilities. However, pupils do not use the good level of writing skills they developed well enough when writing in other subjects. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in, ICT, design and technology and history. As a result they attain standards in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

**The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Pupils get on very well with each other and work very hard. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good because teaching overall is good.** It is strongest in English and mathematics. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and, for pupils who have special educational needs, is good. Here, teaching assistants make a telling contribution to achievement. The school offers a good range of visits to make the curriculum more interesting and a very good range of residential experiences and sports clubs. The organisation of subjects in the curriculum lacks imagination, with links between subjects not planned for. Teachers do not give enough thought to ensuring pupils use their good basic skills in an interesting enough way when they are studying other subjects. Overall the school takes good care of pupils' health and welfare. The school works hand in hand with parents, with target setting helping focus parents' evenings on pupils' future learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher, aided by subject leaders and senior staff, are building a caring school, with a strong sense of team. More subject leaders now check up on the quality of teaching and learning but a lack of detail in the school's plan for improvement means that this work is not always targeted at key priorities. Governors are very supportive of the school and provide satisfactory leadership. All statutory requirements are met. Some of their work lacks formal procedures. They too are not helped by the lack of detail in improvement planning.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Both parents and pupils think highly of the school and offer the school very good support. Parents particularly like the 'family' feel of the school and the way they are kept informed about how well their children are doing. Pupils say they like school. They feel that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. They say teachers are fair but are less positive about teachers making work interesting. Inspectors would endorse these views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- The use pupils make of their writing, mathematical and ICT skills.
- The way subjects in the curriculum link together.
- The detail and use made of the School Development Plan.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is good overall and standards in English and mathematics are above average. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in the basic skills of English and mathematics to reach standards that are above average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well, especially in English and mathematics.
- Because of some inconsistencies in teaching, achievement in the Foundation Stage is not as strong as elsewhere in the school.
- Through Years 3 to 6 pupils' writing in other subjects is not as good as their writing in English lessons.
- Achievement in science is stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.0 (15.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1 Under the leadership of the co-ordinator for Years 1 and 2 aspects of teaching have improved since the last inspection and, as result, so has achievement. Most of the improvement in teaching has centred on literacy and numeracy and it is in these aspects that pupils achieve the most. Standards at the end of Year 2 have therefore risen since the last inspection. These improvements have been fairly recent and are only now beginning to be reflected in the results of National Tests. A marked increase in last year's results arrested what had been a downward trend. However, this is yet to make up for some past deficiencies and so, although test results of the National Tests for 2003 showed standards to be above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing when compared with all schools nationally, they do not compare as favourably with similar schools. Inspection findings largely confirm this picture but work seen in books and in lessons suggest that standards in writing are now above average. However, more pupils still attain the higher level in reading than in writing. The signs are that results are on the up and on the whole pupils make good progress from the average level of attainment they begin Year 1 with.

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.6 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.4 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.9 (30.4)	28.6 (28.3)



2 Pupils continue to achieve well in English and mathematics as they progress through Years 3 to 6. However, standards in English and mathematics remain as they were at the time of the last inspection because the higher standards now being attained in Years 1 and 2 are yet to impact fully on standards in Years 3 to 6. National test results for pupils in Year 6 are above the national trend and the school met the targets it set for results in English, mathematics and science. Results in these for 2003 were particularly impressive, being well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Results in English and mathematics also compared very favourably with schools whose pupils attained similarly when they were in Year 2, but were only average in science. The school received an Achievement Award for test results in 2003. Inspection findings indicate that standards this year are not as high as last year's test results would suggest. This is also given credence by the school's own assessment of pupils. Pupils nevertheless are achieving well in English and mathematics in relation to their capabilities. Through Years 3 to 6 a lack of imagination in teaching means that pupils do not regularly apply their good level of skills in writing to the work they produce in other subjects. Too little thought has been given to the potential of other subjects to stimulate a desire to write or as a way of instilling purpose to the elements of pupils writing in English lessons.

3 Pupils achieve well in science in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average. Here the teaching of science is consistently good and pupils have more opportunities to write about science in their own words. Teaching is not consistently as good through Years 3 to 6, better teaching in Years 5 and 6, does not fully make up for the satisfactory nature of teaching in Years 3 and 4. Therefore, achievement overall is satisfactory, and standards in the current Year 6 are average.

4 Despite the ICT suite being out of action for significant periods during the past year, achievement is satisfactory and pupils reach standards that meet expectations at the end of Year 2 and 6. A scheme of work which stresses the development of skills means that pupils are shown, and practice, an increasing range of skills as they progress through the school. However, the use they put these skills to vary and there is scope for closer links between subjects in order to provide a natural context for ICT work. The picture is similar in history, where pupils' achievement is satisfactory and pupils attain standards that meet expectations by the end of Year 2 and 6. The potential exists for pupils to make better use of their writing skills in history through Years 3 to 6 in particular. In design and technology pupils achievement is also satisfactory.

5 Children begin the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Because of teaching which stresses pupils' personal and social development, they achieve well in this area of learning. Many begin Year 1 as well adjusted learners ready for the National Curriculum. However, achievement is not as strong in other areas of learning, particular in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Because of this, achievement overall in these areas is satisfactory. On the whole, most children leave reception having achieved the goals set for them in literacy and numeracy, with a significant minority exceeding them. Provision for children's creative development has improved since the last inspection, achievement is satisfactory and most children meet expected goals. Pupils' achievement in physical development is also satisfactory. As a result, most children achieve the goals set for them and a significant minority exceed them.

6 Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. They make very good progress in developing their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. They also learn to listen well and develop sufficient confidence in their speaking skills to enable them to make good contributions in lessons. The very good progress they make is primarily due to the very good support they get in lessons from teaching assistants. Their very good support offsets the slight variation in the effectiveness of pupils' individual plans and the use different class teachers make of them as the basis for planning activities in lessons.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

These are strengths of the school. Pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes are very good. Pupils love coming to school and want to learn. This pleases their parents. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop very good relationships with adults and each other.
- Pupils are enthusiastic, confident learners who are keen to take part in all that the school offers.
- The school successfully helps pupils develop the personal qualities that help them show respect for each other and themselves.

## Commentary

7 Pupils behave very well around the school and in lessons. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils respond. Teachers' voices are rarely raised because the pupils listen well, work hard and want to do well. They act responsibly and use common sense. Pupils understand and respect the rules, rewards and sanctions, and think that these are fair. There is a very good range of clubs and teams and almost every pupil is a keen member of some of these. They show pride in their class work and enjoy sharing it with adults. Parents also have confidence in the behaviour of the children, with the vast majority feeling that children behave well and work hard.

8 The school has good systems to motivate pupils and congratulates the great majority whose attendance is very good. However, there are a few pupils whose attendance is less frequent and although procedures to follow up absence are good, attendance overall is satisfactory. There was however, no absence unauthorised last year. Almost all pupils are punctual every day. The school keeps a careful eye on this. Lessons start promptly as a result of pupils' punctuality and very good behaviour during registration.

9 The provision for spiritual development is good. This is a welcoming school where people look after each other. The headteacher sets the standard here. This makes for a real community where pupils can grow and sometimes reflect on feelings and beliefs. These are explored in lessons, assemblies and candle time. However, this sort of reflection is rarely seen in pupils' writing, or the arts subjects. Pupils' understanding of their place in the world is guided further by the strong Christian ethos in the school.

10 Provision for social and moral education is very good. This is evident in the harmony and respect for others that is seen throughout the school. Pupils' learning benefits because they learn to co-operate and support each other effectively. The teamwork shown by the older pupils is impressive. For example, in a games lesson in Year 5, the class was able to improvise a lively warm-up without the teacher and managed to look like a well-drilled chorus line.

11 Provision for cultural development is good. This has improved since the last inspection because teachers now provide more opportunities to explore different cultures. There is a good range of visits and visitors, including the leader of the local Chinese community and leaders of other faiths. The school has a good stock of fiction books set in other cultures; teachers make good use of these. A theatre group comes regularly to explore issues through traditional tales; and the school is closely involved in the church missions abroad. All this goes towards the good preparation of the pupils for life in a multi cultural society. The school meets the statutory requirement to have a policy on race equality and because it keeps a close eye on how pupils behave, the school is in a good position to act quickly should any racial incidents occur.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003 (94.8%)*

Authorised absence	
School data	5.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is good because teaching overall is good. As a result of the very good contribution of teaching assistants, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. As adults go about their daily work they keep a close eye on pupils care and welfare. However, not enough thought has been given to checking the effectiveness of set procedures that governs pupils' care and welfare. The school works closely with parents, especially when setting targets for pupils' future learning.

### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good through Years 1 to 6, while in the Foundation Stage it is satisfactory. The quality of assessment is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers manage pupils very well, relationships are easy and classrooms are pleasant places for pupils and teachers to work in.
- The teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics helps pupils achieve well in these areas.
- Teaching assistants work hand in hand with teachers making a strong contribution to pupils' achievements.
- Teaching does not consistently enable pupils to use their good mathematical or ICT skills, and in Years 3 to 6 their good writing skills, in an interesting or challenging way in other subjects.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage.
- Assessment procedures, especially in English and mathematics, have improved and are now good.

### **Commentary**

12 A consistent strength of teaching is the quality of relationships teachers establish with pupils. These are characterised by mutual respect, which enables both teachers and pupils to go about their work in peace. Pupils feel able to give of their best and join in lessons well. Teachers prepare well with the weakness in short term planning noted in the last inspection much improved, so that lessons proceed smoothly and pupils work with a clear sense of purpose. Very little time is wasted and there is little need for teachers to admonish pupils. There is a high degree of participation in whole class activities and teachers are able to work with a chosen group of pupils in the confidence that pupils working by themselves will make the most of their time working independently. This is invariably the case with teachers being able to switch effortlessly between whole class, group and paired work.

13 The careful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has led to improvements in the teaching of basic skills, particularly through Years 1 and 2. It is here that teaching has improved the most since the last inspection. Questioning has improved, with effective strategies being used to help pupils of all abilities join in well in the opening part of lessons. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 1 for instance, the teacher asked pupils to share answers with a partner before opening up answers to the whole class. Such strategies lead to a high level of pupil involvement. Demonstrations are clear, so that in literacy lessons for instance, teachers enable pupils to understand the characteristics of various types of writing. In a lesson in Year 4 for example, the teacher skilfully merged his own suggestions with those of the pupils to write a whole class summary of a short story they had read together. This gave pupils a framework to apply in their own writing. As a result of this successful class teaching, group work is set up well and pupils invariably complete the tasks set for them within the time allowed. There is some scope for improving the end of lessons. Here, teachers often reflect back to the learning objective for the lesson. Where teachers have given pupils criteria with which to measure their success, lessons conclude well. For example, in a writing lesson in Year 1 the teacher displayed ways in which pupils could show how

they had met the objective by for instance, including at least one adjective in each sentence. This gave pupils a direct measure for 'marking' their own work. This is not always the case and, although learning objectives are shared with pupils, it is not always evident what pupils have to do achieve them.

14 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, partly due to the good use most teachers make of pupils' individual plans as a focus for work in lessons, but primarily due to the very good contribution teaching assistants make. They maintain a good balance between helping and prompting pupils whilst ensuring that pupils complete tasks for themselves. Consequently, pupils make very good progress towards the targets in their individual plans. The contribution of teaching assistants extends to aspects of learning for all pupils. They work hard behind the scenes ensuring that equipment and resources are ready and have an eye to the needs of all pupils and can be seen working with all ability groups over the course of time.

15 The best teaching exploits pupils' good level of basic skills by looking for imaginative ways for pupils to use them in other subjects. Curriculum planning does not help with this and teachers do not find creative ways to link learning across subjects. All but a few pupils feel that they learn new things at school, but more feel that lessons are not interesting enough. There are exceptions to this which act as a model for what is possible. In Year 3 for example, the teacher made good use of a design and technology project on making sandwiches to extend learning beyond a single subject. Pupils studied the elements of instructional writing and then wrote their own instructions for making sandwiches. They surveyed the sandwich preferences of their classmates and then graphed these, several doing this using a computer program. They went on to design, using computers to help, an advertising flyer for their own sandwich shop. This gave free reign to their imagination, enabling them to make use of ICT as a thinking tool. This joined up thinking is not evident in the curriculum and in teaching as a whole, and misses opportunities to build on pupils, existing personal and academic qualities.

16 Teaching across the Foundation Stage varies in quality and, although it is good in relation to children's personal and social development, there are some shortcomings which particularly affect achievement in literacy and numeracy development. In one reception class the work pupils are asked to do in groups lacks a sharp learning focus and although children enjoy their activities they do not learn enough from them.

17 The quality of assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Much of this is down to effective leadership by the assessment co-ordinator. Careful consideration has been given to assessing pupils on a regular basis in mathematics, writing and reading. Reading sessions for example, work well because teachers have a thorough on-going record of pupils past performance and what they need to do next. The school has recently begun to introduce assessment to other key subjects with, for example, assessment of key skills in ICT helping guide the next stage of teaching and learning. The school's marking policy however, is only partially successful. Work is marked conscientiously and there are good examples of evaluative comments made by teachers. However, the system of coding is not fully understood by pupils and many are still unclear what it is they have achieved. Teachers indicate where follow up work is needed but it is rare to find any additional work. In this way misconceptions can exist over time.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4 (10%)	17 (43%)	19 (47%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

**The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment to the curriculum are good. The quality of accommodation and level of resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Visitors to the school and a very wide range of visits to places of interest, including residential ones, add to the value and variety of the curriculum.
- Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Curriculum planning lacks cohesion.
- The school's participation in sporting activities enriches learning in Years 3 to 6.

## **Commentary**

18 Curricular planning is particularly effective for English and mathematics and pupils' achievements in these areas are good. This is largely because of the considered implementation of the national strategies for these subjects. However, planning across the curriculum does not make provision for pupils to use these good skills effectively in other subjects. For example, the emphasis on writing is too often on the factual rather than the imaginative, while in ICT there is scope for a stronger emphasis on its use across the curriculum. Curriculum innovation has been concerned with improving provision within subjects with too little thought given to the development of the curriculum as a whole. In contrast however, planning for the very wide range of residential visits for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 succeeds in forming natural links between the arts and other subjects such as history, geography and ICT. In ICT, for example, the Year 6 residential visit gives pupils a natural context to design and write a multi media presentation.

19 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and reflects the guidance in the Code of Practice well. The individual support provided for pupils is good and well matched to the needs of each one. There are individual plans in place for all pupils with generally clear and explicit targets. There is variation between the classes depending upon the expertise of the class teacher, but the special educational needs co-ordinator keeps a close eye on the plans and there is evidence that they are gradually improving and becoming more consistent.

20 The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the number of extra-curricular activities of a sporting nature. Almost every pupil in Years 3 to 6 has been a member of at least one club or team. These clubs are inclusive, for example, those with modest talents are welcome and a good balance of boys and girls attend them. The school takes every opportunity to take part in local events or play against other schools. There are regular sports days, for example, when pupils have expert tuition at the nearby universities. The School Sports Co-ordinator programme is acting as a stimulus for links with other schools and the school has been awarded the FA Charter Mark and an Active Mark for its commitment to sport. Visits to places of educational and cultural interest provide pupils with first-hand experiences. Both parents and pupils speak highly of the school's commitment to sport and of the opportunities it affords pupils to visit interesting places.

21 There are enough well-qualified and experienced teachers to teach the curriculum and they receive very good back up from the support staff. Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, there are a number of shortcomings. One class works in the dining room during the morning while another is situated in a room that is little better than a corridor. Staff make the best of these conditions and do extremely well to minimise the impact on pupils. New building work will alleviate the problems of one class but the school will still remain short of a classroom. Resources are satisfactory overall although due to vandalism the computer suite is likely to be out of action for a number of weeks.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support and guidance for pupils is good and the school has satisfactory procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Day to day care of pupils is very good.



- Pupils have great confidence that any concerns they have will be taken seriously.
- Effective day-to-day routines ensure pupils work in a safe environment, but formal procedures for assessing potential risk are not rigorous enough.
- There are good procedures for the induction of children into reception classes.
- There are no regular or systematic procedures to seek the views of pupils on the work of the school.

### **Commentary**

22 Pupils are very well cared for on a day-to-day basis. This view is shared by the vast majority of parents. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors and catering staff, take a genuine interest in pupils and work hard to make sure pupils are valued and supported. As a result of these very strong relationships between adults and pupils, pupils are confident that if they have a problem they want to discuss they will be listened to and advised. The caretaker and his team maintain the school to a high standard with regard to health and safety procedures, which ensures that pupils and staff work in a safe environment. However, the formal procedures for conducting risk assessments on some school visits and around the school site are not consistently applied rigorously enough to ensure all potential risks are evaluated. In addition, there are no systematic procedures to ensure that new staff are fully versed in all the health and safety routines of the school.

23 The procedures to help children who join the reception classes to settle in school are effective. Visits are made by school staff before children arrive at school and the documents parents are sent clearly outline the school's aims and procedures. Once children start school, parents have daily access to staff so if they have any concerns they can discuss them easily in an informal manner. As a result, children settle quickly into school, rapidly learn school routines and how they should behave.

24 Pupils are occasionally consulted about aspects of the school's work. For example, they were asked if they wanted new physical education equipment and what sort of reward they would prefer for winning the house point competition. Pupils in Year 6 are given responsibilities around school such as acting as prefects, but there are few opportunities for younger pupils to make constructive contributions to the day to day running of the school. In addition, there are no regular or systematic procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school or to seek their views and opinions on possible developments. Consequently, pupils are not aware of how they can contribute to the school community and take an active, responsible part as 'citizens'.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Partnerships with parents are very good. Links with the community and other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Through well planned parents' evenings, parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress.
- Weekly meetings with parents of children in the Foundation Stage keeps them up to speed with the work of the school and how they can help their children at home.
- Parents hold the school in high regard and, although their views on school are not formally sought, they support all the school tries to do for their children.
- Sporting links with other schools and the local community are very good.

### **Commentary**

25 On the whole parents are kept very well informed about how well their children are doing at school. The strongest aspect to this is the quality of parents' evenings, which were commented on very favourably by parents. They particularly like the clear focus the school places on future learning targets so, that as well as helping parents understand how well their children are performing, a clear agenda is set for future meetings. These enable parents to track key improvements in the work their

children do. Meetings are underpinned by reports which give parents a sufficiently detailed picture of their child's performance over the course of the year. In addition, information to parents about wider aspects of the school is of a good quality. The schools prospectus to parents is very good, offering good support to parents for helping their children learn at home.

26 The Foundation Stage staff have developed its own methods for ensuring that the partnership with parents gets off to a positive start by meeting with them on a weekly basis. These meetings provide useful opportunities for parents and teachers to review the progress of children and for the school to inform parents about upcoming work and how they can best support this at home. Parents therefore, become fully involved at an early stage in their child's learning.

27 Parent's evident support for the school filters through many aspect of school. They raise significant funds for developments at school, particularly in relation to the building, and support school events very well. There is scope for the school to tap into this support by formalising the way in which it collects the views of parents. At the moment these rely on informal methods and a feeling by governors that they are known to parents and are readily accessible. Governors and staff are certainly accessible and the school's 'open door' policy ensures that any complaints are dealt with promptly. However, parents are unsure who some of the governors are and the school cannot be sure all parents feel able to join with the school in moving it forward. It is noticeable that the least positive response on the parents' questionnaire related to how actively the school seeks their views.

28 The school has a strong sporting tradition and works very closely with nearby schools and other community agencies to offer pupils a chance to take part in a wide range of sports. This further strengthens community spirit. During the inspection for example, the whole school 'family' joined in cheering on pupils who took part in a football competition at one of the city's professional football stadiums. This engenders a strong sense of the school community and helps pupils feel that their efforts are worthwhile.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher, aided by other key staff, leads the school well. Aspects of management, although improved since the last inspection, could be improved further. Management is satisfactory. The quality of governance is satisfactory. The school has done much to overcome the barriers to learning due to difficulties in accommodation.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leaderships' commitment to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils has helped create a very positive ethos in which pupils and staff feel valued and want to do their best for the school and themselves.
- The headteacher is mindful of the needs of staff, has built a mutually supportive staff team and works closely with them in shaping the agenda for improving the school further.
- The school development plan lacks the necessary detail to guide the monitoring work of school leaders.
- Governors rely too much on informal methods of checking the school's effectiveness.

### **Commentary**

29 The strength of leadership is the success it has in building a strong sense of community. Parents are particularly pleased with the 'family' atmosphere of the school. The headteacher is central to this. He knows pupils and parents well and sets the right tone for the school. Backed by other staff, an ethos of respect for the individual has been engendered, so that pupils in turn show respect for each other and for themselves. This positive working environment is having a telling impact on achievement and the very positive attitudes pupils have to school. The headteacher wants the best for pupils, as is evident in the way he and the governing body have attempted to overcome the difficulties presented by accommodation. These have been exacerbated by the

popularity of the school and growing pupil population. The headteacher has energetically sought funding for improvements and has been successful in this. The most recent success resulting in the building of an additional classroom. This has partly overcome difficulties, but even when finished, one class of pupils will still need to be taught in conditions that make teaching and learning difficult.

30 The headteacher pays close attention to the needs of staff, his collegiate manner drawing well on expertise that exists in the school. In this respect leadership has improved since the last inspection, with more staff now actively involved in taking the school forward. The school development plan for example is a consultative document which draws upon the monitoring work of all staff. This has had two significant effects. Firstly, all staff feel valued, staff morale is high and staff absence rates are low. Secondly, it has brought out the leadership qualities of others. This has led to improvement in important aspects of the school and, on the whole, key staff lead their areas well. The co-ordinator for Year 1 and 2 for example, has been instrumental in making improvement to the quality of teaching and tackling weakness noted in the last inspection. The headteacher supports those with leadership ambitions by giving opportunities for less experienced members of staff to shadow the leadership role of other more experienced staff. This is replenishing the leadership base and ensures that as co-ordinators take up post they are well prepared for their quality assurance role. The school has therefore, made good progress in improving the work of co-ordinators, a weakness noted in the last inspection. There are gaps in the leadership structure. Although the co-ordination of individual subjects has improved, not enough has been done to lead the curriculum as a whole and so links between subjects remain underdeveloped.

31 The school has made some progress in addressing a key issue of the previous inspection and does keep a closer eye on teaching but problems still remain in directing observations at the right areas. Efforts are undermined somewhat by weaknesses in the school development plan. Although the strength of development planning lies in the corporate nature of the document, its weakness lies in the lack of clarity about key objectives and a lack of detail in action planning. The plan pulls together action plans from all subjects and areas of the school but does not prioritise them or outline the success criteria against which impact can be measured. So time for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is not directed firmly enough. In this way key weaknesses can go unchecked. For example, despite being included in the development plan, there has been no provision made for the co-ordinator or senior managers to check up on the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. Therefore, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across this stage of education remain unchecked. On the other hand, the school fulfils its statutory obligations in relation to performance management and these are used well to target whole school development and link well with the school development plan. Where teaching and learning have been closely evaluated the school has met with success and it is no coincidence that teaching has improved the most in literacy and numeracy, as it is here that the bulk of monitoring work takes place.

32 Governors are not sufficiently involved in the school development planning, their role being one of receiving the draft copy rather than joining with the school in writing it. Consequently, the work of the governors does not feature prominently enough in the plan and so does not give the governors a clear enough agenda with which to carry out their quality assurance role. Governors' knowledge of the school relies too much on informal methods and, although many visit the school regularly, their knowledge of its strengths and weakness are piecemeal. Governors have nevertheless made improvements to the way they monitor the finances of the school, a weakness noted in the last inspection. Finance is well planned and has led to improvements in accommodation, most notably of late in ICT. A close eye is kept on spending with regular meetings checking under and over spends conscientiously. Governors are not however following through on spending decisions to assess their impact on pupils' achievement. Governors do ensure that they meet their statutory duties but there is scope to strengthen procedures. They know for example, that the school has a Race Equality Policy and talk to the headteacher regularly about behaviour and visit the school for themselves to see the school in operation. They are not however, formally noting the results of their work or putting a 'calendar' to their annual duties. Governors do have well founded plans for their

development and have been proactive in seeking outside assistance from the Local Education Authority to help with the next stages of their development.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	702,668
Total expenditure	723,439
Expenditure per pupil	2,280

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	3,991
Balance carried forward to the next	-16,780

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage remains **satisfactory**

33 Children enter reception in the September before they are five. Their skills vary widely but by and large are generally as expected for their age. Teaching is satisfactory overall although good teaching was observed in both classes, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. A strength of the provision is the strong links with parents which begin at the time of the induction visits.

34 Staff work together well as a team in the organisation of the two teaching bases so that, with the exception of the outdoor area, the best use is made of resources. Not enough use is made of the outdoor area and this limits the children's experiences in the six areas of learning. Assessment procedures are good and are used to build up an accurate profile of each child's achievements during the year. However, this information is not used consistently across the classes to plan work to match the needs of all children. The co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage works conscientiously but her role is underdeveloped. There are no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This has meant that inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, have gone unchecked. Also, there is no monitoring of the Foundation Stage provision as a whole by senior managers, with the result that this important key stage of learning does not always receive the attention it merits.

### **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

35 Not enough teaching was seen to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Planning indicates a good range of activities to help children to widen their understanding of the world and stimulate their curiosity. Work is enhanced through visits, for example, to the Tate Gallery, and through visitors, including the local postman in his delivery van. However, not enough use is made of the classroom computer to develop children's ICT skills. This is particularly crucial at the moment because the computer suite is out of action.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Warm and trusting relationships help children to be kind and considerate and to care for each other.
- The curriculum is planned to allow children to initiate their own activities and to make choices and decisions.
- Teachers are not consistent in checking children who call out during class discussions.

#### **Commentary**

36 Children's personal development blossoms during their time in reception because staff are skilled at promoting it in everything children do. They are good role models for the children and treat them with respect and courtesy. They encourage children to take turns during activities, play together and share resources. This is particularly evident during group work and child-initiated activities. One member of a group, who were finding it difficult to find the answer to 8 take away 4, said, very naturally, '*we always help each other.*' A significant minority of children in both classes, however, are not reminded consistently that they need to put up their hand rather than call out and not to talk at the same time as someone else. Children are taught to look after themselves and to be independent. They are already mature in their skills at organising apparatus such as mats and benches for physical education and they change and dress themselves competently at the start and

end of the lesson. Effective teaching, and particularly the supportive and warm encouragement, directly account for children's good achievement in this area of learning. Their self-esteem is boosted when staff praise them for their achievements and the learning targets their teacher shares with them help them to know what they have to do to improve. By the end of the reception year, many of the children act in a self-assured way and have reached standards beyond those typically found in children of this age.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good links with other areas of learning that help the development of language skills.
- Some group activities lack focus and challenge during literacy lessons.
- Whole-class shared reading activities are good.

### **Commentary**

37 Almost every activity in each area of learning involves asking questions and emphasising words and names. Teachers employ their own good use of language to help children to broaden their vocabulary and to improve their diction. They make the shared reading times with the whole class enjoyable as well as educational experiences. As the teacher read *'I don't want to go to bed'* the children listened with rapt attention because it was read with expression and excitement. As the story developed the children quickly picked up the chorus and repeated it copying the teacher's expressive delivery of the different animals involved. This time is spent well not only to extend children's reading skills but to develop their understanding of the text. Interesting group activities, linked to the story, followed and this ensured that children achieved well and reinforced and extended their language and literacy skills. This good practice however, is not consistent across the classes and children are, at times, given activities that lack clear learning intentions and challenge. On these occasions, their achievement is barely satisfactory.

38 Many activities are based on the development of reading and writing skills including the reinforcement of letter sounds to build up familiar words. Parents are very effective partners in enabling their children to master the skills of reading by helping them to learn new words and in developing their understanding of the story content. Children are taught how to form letters correctly and are given regular opportunities to write, for example, captions for their jungle paintings. Overall, children's achievement is satisfactory during their time in reception and most will achieve the standards expected by the end of the reception year with a significant minority exceeding them, particularly in reading.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers are good at teaching basic numeracy skills through talk and the use of resources.
- Some group activities lack focus and challenge during numeracy lessons.
- Many opportunities are taken to develop mathematical skills in other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

39 A good feature of the teaching is the daily focus on counting routines and number rhymes. Counting forward and backwards to and from 20, and counting in twos and tens for example, helps children to develop a good sense of number sequence. Everyday moments are used well to reinforce aspects of mathematics. For example, comparison of heights of children who are

monitors reinforces *taller* and *shorter* and children carrying large mats ensure that there are four children, one at each corner. In a good lesson, group activities were planned with care to extend children's understanding of subtraction. For example, less able children quickly learnt how many numbers were left as they jumped down a large number line. However, as with the teaching of literacy, this good practice is not shared across the classes and, at times, group activities are again lacking in learning intentions and challenge. Even so, the overall satisfactory teaching ensures that most children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of reception and about a third will exceed them.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The formal teaching of physical skills is good and children achieve well.
- Too little time is spent in the outdoor area and this limits children's experiences.
- Children have enough opportunities to use small tools and implements for writing, drawing and painting.

### Commentary

40 Children learn to move with increasing confidence, balance and control and show a good awareness of space and the need for safety when working in the hall using benches, mats and climbing frames. The sensitive encouragement of the teacher ensured that the less able children were successful in negotiating the challenging move from climbing bars to bench. As a result of the effective teaching they achieve well and reach standards in this aspect of physical development beyond those expected for their age. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling dough, brushes, scissors, pens and pencils on a daily basis. Although opportunities are planned for children to experiment and experience a range of challenging physical activities in the outdoor area, not enough time is spent there to enable children to take part in these activities on a regular basis. Overall, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning with a significant minority exceeding them before the end of reception.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links between creative work and other areas of learning are good.
- Provision for pretend play has improved and enables children to use their imagination well.
- Children enjoy music lessons although there is a lack of challenge in the teaching at times.

### Commentary

41 Provision has improved because teachers now plan a range of activities where children can explore colour, shape and texture. For example, they blow bubbles using paint and record the effects. They use their knowledge of mixing to create the colours they need to paint accurate portraits of themselves. Much of the work children do is linked to other aspects of their work. Children were enthralled by the *symmetry* of their butterflies when they folded their painted work and took care to ensure their paintings of jungle animals, for their story, were correct in size and colour.

42 The provision for pretend play is good and children use their imaginations well as they explore the classroom *jungle* using their binoculars to search for wild animals. The weekly music lessons give children the opportunity to practise their singing and to improve their skills using percussion instruments. However, at times, the pace of the lesson is slow so that there is not



enough time to develop ideas or try alternatives. The overall satisfactory teaching in this area of learning enables most children to meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good questioning by teachers helps pupils achieve well in learning to read and in developing speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching assistants make a telling difference to the achievement of all pupils but especially those who have special educational needs.
- In English lessons pupils' writing skills cover a wide range of genres.
- Teachers do not make good enough use of pupils' writing skills in other subjects.
- Monitoring by the co-ordinator relies too much on examining planning and pupils work.

#### Commentary

43 A consistent strength of provision in English is the way teachers question pupils. Whole class learning is handled well. Teachers direct differing questions well at pupils with differing abilities and often put pupils in pairs to share answers. This enables all pupils to join in. Relationships are such that pupils feel confident in giving their opinions and in listening respectfully to the opinions of others and so speaking and listening skills develop quickly and throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6 many pupils are confident and articulate speakers demonstrating standards that are above expectations. Thoughtful questioning also pervades times when teachers work with groups of pupils to teach them to read. These are invariably well taught. Teachers strike a good balance between helping pupils develop techniques that enable them to tackle unknown words and to develop a greater understanding of what they are reading. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils have achieved well to become fluent readers who are able to talk well about what is happening in stories. Good achievement continues through Years 3 to 6, so that by the end of Year 6, pupils are good at making inferences from what they are reading. Teachers also use group reading sessions to teach pupils basic study skills, so that pupils know how to quickly locate key information in non fiction books. As a result of consistently good achievement in reading, standards at the end of Year 2 have improved since the last inspection and, in Year 6, are above average.

44 The work of teaching assistants is an important factor in pupils' good achievement. Assistants are effective in all parts of lessons. Many will help pupils who have special educational needs join in class discussions by sitting near them, quietly helping them understand the teacher's questions. This results in pupils who are confident enough to join in with the rest of the class. Effective help in the early part of lessons also sets up well the work pupils do in groups, so pupils are often able to work by themselves. This helps with pupils' self esteem and independence. It also frees assistants to work with other groups so that they contribute to the achievement of all. Half of the pupils who have special educational needs go on to reach average standards in tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

45 As was noted in the last inspection, teachers in Years 3 to 6 continue to introduce pupils to a wide range of differing genres in writing. Improvements made to teaching in Years 1 and 2 means that this is now the case here too. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 no longer rely on worksheets for practicing writing and, along with colleagues in Years 3 to 6, directly teach the particular characteristics of differing genres and give pupils a wider range of writing tasks to do in English lessons. Effective class teaching ensures that pupils know how to write in a variety of ways. In Year 2 for example, they can write a synopsis of a favourite book, while in Year 3 pupils are able to distinguish between the characteristics of formal and informal letter writing.

46 Although teachers are good at setting the groundwork for writing by concentrating on key skills and helping pupils see how different types of writing work, they do not consistently use these in imaginative ways. At its best teachers find ways to make the writing task relevant to pupils. In a very

good lesson in Year 1 pupils were given a simple framework to structure their thoughts when writing a simple poem. As the poem grew out of work pupils were doing about the seaside, pupils had a fund of information to shape their thoughts. This is not always the case. In a lesson in Year 3 for example, good class teaching in which the teacher helped pupils come to an understanding of how to write informal letters was let down by giving all pupils the same subject matter to write about. Here, pupils wrote to a teacher who had recently left the school. However, at least two pupils did not know the teacher and several could think of people they knew personally who they would prefer to write to. This rather reduced the writing task to an exercise and did not give pupils a chance to write for their own purposes. Because of these inconsistencies achievement is not as strong in writing as in other aspects of English, and is satisfactory overall. Although standards are above average in Year 2 and 6 more pupils reach above average standards in reading than in writing.

47 Improvements in assessment means that teachers generally pitch writing work at the right level. With the assessment co-ordinator leading the way, pupils' achievements are now carefully tracked and catch up lessons implemented. As a result, few pupils fail to reach the national average in English. Teachers regularly assess writing and have an accurate picture of what level pupils are working at and what they need to do next. This is leading to the setting of personal targets, which both pupils and parents are aware of. However, the current policy of marking with an 'A' work which meets a particular objective is not having a strong impact on achievement because pupils are unsure what they have achieved when their work is marked. Satisfactory leadership of English relies on of scrutiny pupils' work and planning as a way of deciding on future plans. On the whole these target the right areas for development, but at present the over reliance on collecting second hand monitoring information means that some inconsistencies in the teaching of writing have been missed.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

48 Pupils' writing in other subjects is often at a lower level than they are capable of, especially in Years 3 to 6. This is because too little thought has been given to making links across subjects or to planning particular purposes for writing. In an English lesson in Year 5, for example, pupils have been looking at the features of persuasive writing. However, no link was made to work in geography, where pupils were considering the pros and cons of a nearby housing development. Writing was limited to listing these, and missed a valuable opportunity for pupils to put into practice what they learnt in English about persuading others of their viewpoint. In Year 1 and 2, teachers often ask pupils to write about trips or short pieces of factual writing and, on the whole, make better use of other subjects for writing. This is not developed well enough through the juniors. Although there are some examples of teachers requiring pupils to write in imaginative ways, for example by placing themselves in the shoes of a particular character from history, these are few and far between. In essence therefore, the complexity of the writing task differs little from year to year. In Year 5 for example, pupils wrote a short factual account of aspects of the climate in mountainous regions, while in Year 1 and 2 pupils wrote in a similar way about seaside weather. Pupils are given some opportunities to use ICT in English lessons but these are often restricted to improving the presentation of work. There were few signs of classroom computers being used in English lessons during the inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership is good and has led to improvements in teaching and learning, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Lessons are interesting and keep all pupils busy and involved. As a result, pupils behave very well and work hard.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning.
- In a few lessons, mental and oral work does not have enough pace and rigour.

- Pupils do not have sufficient chances to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.

## Commentary

49 Throughout the school the subject leader has done well to help teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and plan challenging work at the right level for all abilities. This was an issue at the previous inspection. Lessons are now more exciting and pupils have to stay alert and think for themselves. Effective teaching in all parts of the school and a better organised curriculum means that achievement is now more consistent across the school and many pupils are on course to become good mathematicians. Current standards in mathematics are above average in Year 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when they were average. The good achievement noted in the last inspection continues through Years 3 to 6 and standards remain above average. The improvement through Years 1 and 2 is mainly due to more consistent teaching and better teamwork.

50 Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and are making very good progress. The able team of assistants makes a significant difference here. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, a group were guided so well on an area problem that they were amongst the first in the class to find a solution.

51 A particular strength in most lessons is the way that teachers keep everyone involved and thinking. Relationships are very good and teachers constantly look for ways to boost confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy the lessons and several said that mathematics was one of their favourite subjects. Pupils' ability to co-operate in pairs or groups is very good. They share ideas and equipment very well and listen to each other's suggestions. This helps them to tackle new work without panic, so that they set about solving problems logically and talk about mathematical ideas using the correct vocabulary. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. On the whole teachers prepare well-chosen, purposeful activities, provide good materials and use probing questions. Consequently pupils are highly motivated and get the most from their lessons. Even very young pupils in Year 1, for example, worked happily for a long time on some quite difficult problems because of skilful and encouraging teaching. A feature of this lesson was the teacher's good judgement in when to offer help and when to back off. As a result, all were succeeding and many were working towards becoming independent learners.

52 Other good features of the teaching include the emphasis given to practical work and problem solving. Teachers strike the right balance between this work and the teaching of basic skills. As a result, the pupils are making good progress both in their understanding of mathematical ideas and their knowledge of calculation strategies. Most lessons are managed well and move along at a good pace. This does not leave anyone struggling but keeps the class on their toes. For example, all these features were seen in a very good lesson on capacity in Year 3. This class has to work in the dining room, but the pupils were so engrossed in their work that they hardly noticed the kitchen noise and managed to move to another area in mid lesson without losing momentum.

53 A weakness in a small number of lessons is that the mental and oral work at the beginning does not do enough to develop pupils' rapid recall skills. In one lesson it was too slow and easy, in another the time was taken up by explanations. The school has identified this as an area for training.

54 In just a few lessons, teachers gave a little too much information and advice. They set some interesting and demanding tasks, gave all the help needed and had their classes raring to go. However, at this point, anxious to make sure all went well, some teachers went into further explanations and so blunted the challenge. Consequently, pupils did not have to think enough for themselves, and a chance was missed to give a deeper understanding.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

55 There is some use of mathematics in science lessons in some classes. This gives pupils opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills. However there is less than is usually seen in subjects such as history, geography or design and technology. The school has purchased some

good software to help pupils use computers as a mathematical tool, but it was not possible to see this in action.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 has raised standards to above expectations.
- Teaching helps pupils to carry out practically based activities and so they enjoy science.
- Teaching is too directed at times and does not take sufficient account of the different expectations there must be for pupils of different abilities.
- A lack of monitoring means that some weaknesses in teaching are missed.

### Commentary

56 Evidence, over time, in pupils books shows that teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2. In the Year 2 classes in particular, pupils use their skills in literacy well to record their work in their own words. This in turn affords teachers good assessment information on which to plan the next stage of learning. As a result by the end of Year 2, standards in science are above those expected nationally with almost half the pupils reaching the higher level. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the work for higher-attaining pupils lacked challenge. Standards for the current Year 6 pupils are similar to those expected nationally. Teaching in the Years 3 to 6 classes is satisfactory overall although good teaching was observed in the Year 5 and 6 class.

57 The best teaching is marked by clear explanations, opportunities for pupils to take part in practical activities, and the choice of resources. All teaching is based upon an experimental and investigative approach to science and this raises pupils' interest and enjoyment. This ensures that pupils know how to carry out an investigation, make and test predictions, decide if tests are valid and use the correct terminology as they record their results. There are however, limitations to the teaching. Too often the starting point for investigations is the same for all pupils with no added challenge within the investigation for the more able. Less able pupils do not always complete the task because of their lack of understanding. Investigations are often too structured and this limits pupils in thinking for themselves, which in turn, slows their rate of achievement. This contributes to the sameness and lack of originality in pupils' recordings of their findings, particularly when worksheets are used.

58 Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are no opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This limits the prospect of identifying where teaching is most effective or where improvements can be made. Some weaknesses are therefore missed. For example although teachers make some use of pupils' mathematical skills in science lessons, there is scope for improvement. Equally there is little evidence of ICT skills being used alongside science skills.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Vandalism, which has put the ICT suite out of action for substantial periods of time acts as a barrier to achievement.
- The subject leader has a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses in current provision and has well founded plans to move the subject forward.
- The development of skills is well thought out.
- There is inconsistent use of ICT in other subjects.

### Commentary

59 The ICT suite has been out of operation on several occasions in the past year and because of damage caused by a break in was not fully functional during the inspection. A limited number of classroom computers were available and the school made use of several laptops. Too little teaching was seen during the inspection to make a judgment about its overall quality and so strengths and weaknesses derive from a close examination of work to date, including discussion with pupils. These were supplemented by a scrutiny of planning and discussion with the co-ordinator.

60 The co-ordinator has put together a scheme of work which outlines the acquisition of key skills. This clear guidance, aided by recent improvements in assessment, means that teachers pitch work at the right level enabling skills to build sequentially over time. A strong focus on developing skills means that pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Although there have been interruptions to learning this year, pupils in Year 6 have nevertheless worked on all but one element of the National Curriculum and this is planned for completion during an upcoming residential trip. Standards therefore, at the end of Year 2 and 6 are in line with expectations. However, too little thought has been given to developing skills through other subjects and in ways which exploit the potential of the computer to make pupils think. In Year 2 for example, pupils used some tools of an art package to produce pictures of fireworks. However, this did not fit with any wider work pupils were studying at the time. This can be contrasted with a project in Year 6 which linked closely to work pupils were carrying out in geography. Here, pupils were given the task of planning a holiday using a limited budget. This encouraged an element of problem solving, as pupils had to make decisions about their holiday itinerary, travel costs and so on. In turn therefore they used a wide range of ICT skills. This involved researching their chosen destination using the Internet and producing a spreadsheet to help with the analysis of costs. This thoughtful approach typifies the approach of the co-ordinator who provides a good role model for colleagues. This was evident in a lesson on spreadsheets in which she used her obvious expertise to show pupils how to make the most of using a spreadsheet to save time when calculating the area of complicated mathematical shapes. This involved entering formula into cells, highlighting and copying information to other cells.

61 Because of good monitoring, which involves observing teaching and examining pupils work, the co-ordinator is in a good position to move the subject forward. She has spotted the need to give the development of skills a sense of purpose and challenge by linking these more closely with other subjects. To this end she has looked at the wider themes taught within classes with a view to slotting key skills into these.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

62 There are isolated examples of ICT work being planned in other subjects but these are not systematically planned for. On the whole, teachers are not making enough use of the computers they have available in the classroom when working on other subjects. Many of these were not used in lessons observed during the inspection.

## **HUMANITIES**

63 Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements on provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in **geography**. Pupils' work and planning documentation indicate that pupils cover a sound range of topics that progressively develops their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. As at the last inspection, visits and field work are an important element of the subject.

### **History**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of visits enhances and supports what pupils are taught in lessons.
- The subject is well led.



- Teachers help pupils understand what life was like for people living in various historical times.
- There are not enough planned activities in lessons for pupils to use their literacy and ICT skills.
- History makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## Commentary

64 Throughout the school, teachers are very consistent in the expectations of pupils' behaviour, they organise lessons well and use class discussions effectively to interest and involve pupils in lessons. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic, behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning. The range of activities teachers plan ensures pupils develop a secure understanding of what life was like for people in different periods in the past and in different places around the world. For example, by the end of Year 2, pupils understand how people's lives change over time and know about a few important people, such as Florence Nightingale, and events such as the Great Fire of London from the past. Standards have therefore been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school to attain standards in Years 2 and 6 that are in line with those expected.

65 A positive aspect of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is that teachers plan a good range of written activities that enable pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and to learn how to compare the present day with the past. However, this is not as effective in Years 3 to 6 where pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use a broad range of literacy skills.

66 The good range of visits teachers organise to places such as Speke Hall and the Maritime Museum in Liverpool make an important contribution to history topics and develops pupils' appreciation of their own culture well. However, written activities in lessons mainly require pupils to continue to describe periods of time or events and do not require them to write about life from the perspective of different people, to compare their life with the past or other cultures. In addition, pupils have few opportunities to use their ICT skills to use the Internet and to present their work in different ways such as through graphs, charts or pamphlets.

67 The main exceptions to this are the topics taught by the subject leader. She is a very good role model to colleagues through her own teaching in the way in which she encourages pupils to write about the past. For example, following a visit to Quarry Bank Mill, pupils in Year 5 imagined that they were a child worker in the mill and described their life through the 'eyes' of their character. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and, since the last inspection, has revised the policy and scheme of work and audits the subject annually to identify areas for further development, although this is not translated into a subject action plan to give a clear focus for her work. She has a very clear understanding of the important contribution that the subject can make to promoting pupils' literacy skills and has provided teachers with a list of resources through which they can develop such links. However, there is no whole school overview of the curriculum so the links between the history topics and what pupils are studying in English are not coherent across the school. As a result, her approach has not yet had a significant impact on standards within the subject.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68 No lessons were seen in **art and design** during the inspection, but evidence from displays and pupils' work indicates that standards are as expected. The subject shares a slot on the timetable with design and technology. This gives adequate time and pupils gain a reasonable range of experience of techniques and materials. Some teachers make good use of the time available by making links with other subjects. For example, in Year 4 the pupils follow up ideas from literature when they explore native Australian designs. They make good use of their sketchbooks by collecting examples and trying new versions before making some striking paintings. The use of sketchbooks varies, the best ones collect and explore ideas for future use, for example rubbings, ways to show texture, or recording the details from an ancient vase. These books are less useful when they are used for casual drawing. Pupils visit galleries regularly and are building up a little knowledge of major artists, though few can talk about their work.

69 It is not possible to make an overall judgement about **music** as evidence is based on a scrutiny of the scheme of work and a discussion with the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has recently piloted a new scheme of work, which covers all aspects of the curriculum for music. This provides good guidance for less confident teachers and maintains a good balance between composing, performing and appraising music. Musical styles cover a range of periods and cultures. The curriculum for music is enhanced by a successful and popular choir. This provides opportunities for public singing and has acted as a stepping stone for some pupils to go to a city wide choir.

70 It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in **physical education** as only a small number of games lessons were seen. Further evidence was gathered by talking to the co-ordinator. Physical education has a high profile in the school and the school shows a very strong commitment to extra curricular sport. In the games lessons seen, standards in throwing, catching and using bats or racquets were average overall, although a significant minority of pupils showed above average skills. For the pupils observed in Year 5, standards in teamwork and using tactics were good. In the best lessons seen, the teachers' own expertise meant that advice on techniques was helpful and introduced at the right moment. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 5 the teacher used his obvious expertise to show pupils the correct way of throwing 'soft' javelins. On the whole teachers use plenty of equipment and organise lessons well, so there is maximum time for practice. In these classes, pupils make the most of the time available and are learning well. Pupils are encouraged to think about their performance and say what works well or what can be improved. On occasions even those who are unable to take part because of injury are involved. For example, following the demonstration of javelin throwing in Year 5, pupils not taking part made notes on the performance of their peers, offering feedback and advice. On other occasions teachers sometimes follow lesson plans too rigidly. In one lesson, for example, a game was not working well because many pupils' throwing skills were not good enough. The teacher worked hard to improve the game, but it would have been more productive to divide the class and go back to basics with those who needed extra practice. The co-ordinator leads by example to promote good teaching. He has further increased the impressive range of events and sporting activities and has built up a generous stock of equipment. A start has been made on monitoring teaching. There are good plans to continue this, in order to bring all lessons up to the standard of the best.

## **Design and Technology**

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching is helping to raise standards throughout the school.
- Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum.
- Some teaching is too directed, which stifles pupils' creativity.
- The co-ordinator has no opportunities to monitor teaching or the implementation of the new scheme of work he has introduced.

## **Commentary**

71 Teaching has improved since the last inspection mainly because teachers are more confident and have a more adventurous approach to their teaching. Pupils are taught the whole design and technology process from the original idea through to the evaluation of the finished product. Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of the appearance of the finished model with the result that pupils work with care to complete their work to a high standard of finish. As a result standards in design and technology are in line with expectations in Years 2 and 6. However, standards are rising following the introduction of a new national scheme of work for the subject. Pupils in Year 1 for example, were given a choice of materials to use to fasten their playground toys, such as swings and slides made from paper, card and art straws, to a plastic board. This was

challenging but with effective support from both teacher and teaching assistants, and by working things out together, most were able to complete the task.

72 Work is given relevance when links are made with other subjects. Some teachers achieve this well. For example, in Year 6, pupils complete shelters as part of the study of World War 2, while pupils in the Year 5 class extend their science work on physical processes by making musical instruments. A good feature of both of these examples is the originality of the design and the finished product. This is not always the case and links made with mathematics are not fully thought out. There are times when teaching is too prescribed, too much is done for the pupils, particularly in the preparation of resources, which results in almost identical finished articles for the whole class.

73 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator, through the successful implementation of the new scheme of work, has raised the profile of the subject. A review of the scheme is planned at the end of the year to identify any gaps in provision. However, there are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, to establish strengths and weaknesses in the provision.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

74 Not enough evidence was gathered to make an overall judgment about provision. Discussions with the co-ordinator and analysis of planning show that pupils' **personal, social and health education** are closely linked to work in science and religious education. In religious education in particular close links are made with pupils' personal development. The use of class discussions and time for reflection are helping pupils to think carefully about their actions and the actions of others. The school fulfils the requirement to have a programme in place for sex education and for drug education. These are mainly linked to aspects of work pupil's study in science. The stress put on sport and participation in the Healthy Schools' Initiative provide a backdrop for encouraging pupils to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*