

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HOPE VALLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Anfield, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 131313

Headteacher: Ms E Boutflower

Lead inspector: Mr J Palk

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 256504

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Type of school:             | Primary                                      |
| School category:            | Community                                    |
| Age range of pupils:        | 3 to 11 years                                |
| Gender of pupils:           | Mixed  |
| Number on roll:             | 318  |
| School address:             | Walton Breck Road<br>Liverpool<br>Merseyside |
| Postcode:                   | L5 0PA                                       |
| Telephone number:           | 0151 2634038                                 |
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| Appropriate authority:      | The governing body                           |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Adrian Simmons                            |

Date of previous inspection: 22 June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hope Valley Community Primary School is a large inner city school situated in an area that is severely disadvantaged socially and economically. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is twice the national average; most have speech and language difficulties and behavioural difficulties. Eleven of these pupils have statements, which is above average, and 20 pupils are taught in the two language units. There is a third language unit that provides outreach support for pupils from other schools. There are no pupils who are in public care. The majority of pupils are of white British origin and a small minority are of mixed white African and Asian backgrounds. Three pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and receive additional support. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very poor and an above average number of pupils leave and join the school other than at the usual times. This is the result of changing family circumstances or transfers from other inner city schools.

Excellence in Cities and Life Education Action Zone<sup>1</sup>, provides additional provision for pupils to help to remove barriers to learning. The school holds the silver Healthy Schools award.

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<sup>1</sup> Excellence in Cities funding provides a learning mentor to the school (EIC) and Action Zone: a secondary school with local primary schools in selected areas co-operate together to raise standards and extend learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities starting with the needs of the individuals and the challenges they face.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |            |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|--|
| 23630                          | J Palk     | Lead inspector | English, history, geography, personal, social and health education, and English as an additional language. |
| 19369                          | C Wild     | Lay inspector  |  |
| 27426                          | T Aldridge | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology, and physical education.              |
| 33212                          | S Fane     | Team inspector | Mathematics and information and communication technology.  |
| 23412                          | A Jeffs    | Team inspector | Special educational needs, religious education and music.  |

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school that provides good value for money. Teaching and learning are good overall and standards are rising. Pupils achieve well and the school is highly successful at encouraging positive attitudes towards learning and developing in pupils the desire to succeed. The school is very well led by the headteacher, and the governors provide good support.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management are effective in bringing about improvement.
- The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and history and for those with special educational needs; support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- More opportunities could be provided for pupils to use their mathematical skills.
- High attainers in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> do not achieve as much as they should.
- There is very good provision in the language units set up for the pupils referred to the school with complex language problems and they are achieving very well.
- The school is very successful at meeting pupils' personal needs and they make very good progress in their personal confidence and attitude towards education.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and too many pupils are late for school and miss the start of lessons.

The improvement since the last inspection has been good. The main issues have been tackled effectively and led to improved behaviour and a strong sense of teamwork. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance are now strong features. Standards in test results are higher and have improved in line with the national trends despite an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The quality of the curriculum has improved and has brought about a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes. Teaching is better, but there are still inconsistencies in the quality through the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2001        | 2002 | 2003 | 2003            |
| English   | E*          | E    | E*   | E               |
| Mathematics   | E*          | E    | E    | C               |
| Science   | E*          | E    | E    | B               |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with the same proportion of free school meals.*

**Achievement is good overall.** Although results of national tests do not compare well with those of other schools (pupils were in the bottom five per cent of the country in English in 2003), overall they are average when compared to similar schools. Children enter the nursery class with very poor basic skills and complex needs. Children achieve well overall, but a few

<sup>2</sup> Foundation stage: the first stage in the primary school that provides a curriculum for children aged three to five.

higher attainers, in the Foundation Stage, are not challenged to do as well as they could. By the time they start Year 1, standards are still well below average against the goals they are expected to reach. Pupils generally achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards seen were below average in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 3 to 6 because of well-managed lessons and pupils' growing confidence in their abilities. There are a large number of pupils in the current Year 6 with low ability and the inspection found standards below average overall in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Standards in religious education and history are average. In mathematics some pupils are not achieving as well as they should because there are not enough opportunities for them to apply their skills. Achievement for those learning English as an additional language is similar to other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and those in the language unit are achieving very well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Their emotional and social needs are complex and are met very well. They have good attitudes to their work and are very keen to take responsibility. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.** Lessons are skilfully managed and motivating teaching methods give pupils the confidence to learn. The strategies for teaching English and mathematics are particularly effective and teachers target work well to meet the needs of pupils. In other lessons teachers have high expectations of the pupils, but science lessons do not always provide enough challenge. The pace of lessons is well matched to the pupils' levels of concentration and teachers succeed in motivating pupils to work hard. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes plan activities that extend children's abilities to work independently and collaboratively, but assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory and, consequently, the activities do not always challenge the higher attainers. The teaching in the language units is good overall and often very good. Support staff are very well directed and reinforce learning very effectively for those with special educational needs.

The curriculum is good and there is considerable opportunity for pupils to broaden their experiences, and widen their horizons. The school is attractive, reflects high aspirations and celebrates achievement. The very good social and personal programme supports those with difficulties effectively and with great care. Pupils' welfare and academic needs are well known to staff responsible for them. The school has a very good partnership both with parents and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** Leadership by the headteacher is very good. She is thorough in the action taken to raise standards and conveys her determination to other members of staff very effectively. The management of the school is good. The senior management team monitor standards and teaching well and the action taken to improve. There is very good management of the language units, which ensures that the teaching and provision is of very good quality. The work of the governing body is good and they ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors are fully involved in helping the school judge what works and what doesn't.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school. They feel their children are very well looked after. They particularly like the easy access they have to the staff who tell them how their children are progressing. Pupils very much like their school and particularly the responsibilities they have towards making the school a better place in which to learn.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- Implement more regular assessment of children's progress in the Foundation Stage.
- Implement further strategies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievements are good overall. Standards in Year 6 are below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The achievement of higher standards is constrained by the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils from ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language.

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

- Pupils are achieving well in reading and writing through the school and this gives them confidence in their abilities in other subjects.
- Some higher attaining children are not sufficiently challenged in the Foundation Stage.
- Average attaining pupils are not achieving well enough in using their mathematical skills.
- Achievement in science, ICT and history is good.
- All pupils with special educational needs achieve well in respect of their individual education plan targets and pupils within the language units achieve very well indeed.

#### **Commentary**

1. Most children start school in the nursery with very poor communication and language skills and very few experiences in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. A rich variety of experiences ensure that children are enthusiastic about learning and develop personal and social skills that form a platform for their future achievements. Language skills are a substantial barrier to the progress of most children. However, some children could learn more if teaching was more challenging in the reception classes and there were higher expectations of what they could achieve in the areas of learning.

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



| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 11.5 (12.9)    | 15.7 (15.8)      |
| Writing       | 10.6 (11.2)    | 14.6 (14.4)      |
| Mathematics   | 12.9 (14.7)    | 16.3 (16.5)      |

*There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Results in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 2 pupils were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally and have shown little improvement over the last three years. This is because the proportion of pupils not reaching average levels is high. The inspection evidence indicates that more pupils are now reaching average levels in their reading, writing, mathematics and science and there are a small proportion who exceed this. Pupils achieve well and standards are below average by the end of Year 2. Programmes for teaching sounds, spelling, grammar for writing and number are taught effectively. There are more opportunities for pupils to work practically in science lessons and this is helping raise attainment. Teachers are better at identifying the difficulties pupils have and use strategies effectively to combat this. The teachers and teaching assistants adapt much of the material to match the needs of the pupils, gathered from reliable assessments.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 23.0 (23.5)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| Mathematics   | 25.0 (23.8)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| Science       | 27.0 (26.3)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. There has been a steady improvement in mathematics and science test results for Year 6 pupils, but securing consistent improvement in English results has been hard to come by. In part this is because of the large numbers of pupils with poor reading and writing skills who join the school, which creates a unique picture to each year group. Pupils enter the school lacking in confidence and many have special educational needs, with speech and language difficulties being a key issue. In addition, many pupils have breaks in their learning due to changes in school. The inspection evidence found that the majority of pupils are achieving well and standards are rising because of good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to learning. However, there are some pupils who could achieve more in applying mathematical skills.
4. The current Year 6 attain standards in reading and writing that are below average and better than previous test results. They reflect some good improvement in provision and teaching that is working its way through the school. The determined efforts of the literacy co-ordinator and the action being taken by the school to raise pupils' self-esteem are having a positive impact on attainment. The improvement in reading is particularly marked amongst average pupils through Years 3 to 6 with some very good gains by the lower attaining pupils. Pupils are achieving well in grammar, spelling and handwriting, but too few pupils in Year 6 express their ideas succinctly or imaginatively to reach the higher levels. This is challenging the school, but the increased variety of writing opportunities is bringing about sustained improvement throughout the school, including boys' writing.
5. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are improving as a result of consistently good teaching and are satisfactory overall. In Year 6 standards are well below average. Whilst some pupils, mainly the higher attainers, have achieved well the year group has a large number of pupils with special educational needs. This combined with a significant number of pupils who lack confidence in their mathematical abilities because of uneven provision in the past, is a constraint on higher attainment. Through the school a small, but significant, group of average attaining pupils have difficulty applying their mathematical skills and this is limiting their attainment. There is a lack of consistency in how well pupils are challenged to use problem solving skills and mental arithmetic skills in practical contexts and this is limiting the number of pupils who reach average levels. Standards in science continue to rise, mainly due to the strong practical and investigative approach to learning that has boosted the achievement of all pupils.
6. Pupils are achieving well in ICT because the school has improved the resources and trained staff in the use of software and this is helping pupils to catch up lost ground. Standards in Year 6 are in line with what is expected. Pupils are also achieving well in history because the teaching is exciting and resources to support learning are well chosen.

7. The school sparkles in its celebration of pupils' achievements and there is a strong belief that everyone can succeed. Pupils with special educational needs have realistic targets based on their previous progress and there are effective systems for monitoring their progress in lessons and over the long term. The headteacher has ensured that teachers and teaching assistants are appropriately trained and this is improving their effectiveness. Evidence from the individual education plans and from talking with pupils and teachers in the mainstream of the school (i.e. outside the language units) indicates good achievement. Pupils achieve well in respect of those targets identified in their individual education plans and within English. The progress is also strong with regard to pupils' overall confidence and self-esteem.
  
8. The 20 pupils placed at Hope Valley's language units have the most complex language difficulties and, as such, require the highest quality of teaching and support. They receive this and, consequently, their progress is always good, often very good indeed. Within lessons, the inspection team was able to see small, but significant, developments in confidence, retention and the ability to respond. Over time, progress in these areas is good, as is pupils' ability to talk to visitors and take part in mainstream class lessons effectively.

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

Pupils' have good attitudes to school, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have set themselves a high standard of behaviour.
- Pupils learn to work successfully collaboratively and independently and relationships set the standard on which the school measures itself.
- Spiritual, moral and social education generates responsibility and respect.
- The attendance of some pupils is unsatisfactory.

**Commentary**

9. The emphasis the school places on high expectations of good behaviour and respect for others ensures that behaviour in and around the school is very good. The shared respect, shown by pupils and teachers for each other is evident in the courteousness seen in classes and in the corridors. Pupils appreciate the reward system employed throughout the school and enjoy receiving awards for achievement in their work, attendance or behaviour. In response to the parents' questionnaires and in discussions, a few parents have concerns about bullying in school. However, it does not seem to be a noticeable problem and most parents and pupils are confident that the school deals effectively with any instances that occur. Some pupils join the school after failing at their previous schools. The school is successful in integrating the pupils, but occasionally a few pupils do not respond, which as a last resort results in exclusion. The exclusions in the school year 2002/03 relate to four boys. In the academic year 2003/04, there was one fixed period and two permanent exclusions.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year (2002-03)***

|   |                      |                        |                     |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period | Number of permanent |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|

|   |     |            |            |
|---|-----|------------|------------|
|   |     | exclusions | exclusions |
| White – British                                     | 246 | 4          | 0          |
| White – Irish                                       | 1   | 0          | 0          |
| White – any other White background                  | 1   | 0          | 0          |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 3   | 0          | 0          |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 1   | 0          | 0          |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 3   | 0          | 0          |

10. Despite the range of behavioural and emotional problems these rarely surface to interfere with learning. The strong ethos of the school, supported by the bond that exists between parents, carers, pupils and staff creates an environment where pupils develop caring and sharing relationships with each other. This helps pupils to feel confident and builds their self-esteem. Children in the nursery and reception classes develop sound personal and social skills that help them enjoy school and build positive relationships with each other. However, despite achieving well, many will not meet all the expectations in this area of their learning by the end of the reception year.
11. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they approach their lessons with enthusiasm. They also attend other activities with the same keenness. In lessons, pupils are engaged in the tasks, work confidently and with enthusiasm. In assemblies, pupils are attentive and listen carefully. On joining the school, not all pupils have the acquired the skills of working in pairs or taking part in group work; the school takes great care in developing independent and collaborative work. Pupils with special educational needs are full members of every mainstream class. Their contributions are valued and, consequently, they grow in confidence and self-esteem, enjoying class work and the working partnerships they make. The school provides many opportunities for fostering a sense of responsibility in the pupils, for example, reading buddies, peer mentors<sup>3</sup> and school councillors<sup>4</sup>; they are keen to volunteer and eager to be involved and take their roles very seriously.
12. Pupils learn to respect people as individuals and in assemblies celebrate the achievement of others. All pupils are treated equally by one another and adults and there is a high importance put on allowing pupils to appreciate the differences between each other. Through the personal, social, moral and cultural education lessons (PSHCE), respect for the beliefs of others is re-enforced. Posters and photographs displayed throughout the school emphasise the intolerance of racism. The posters are fun and interesting and raise awareness of how the pupils' demeanour can affect others, such as encouraging pupils to smile. Visits to museums and art galleries and visitors to school provide interest in and understanding of different cultures through the provision of drama, art and music. Teachers build well on assembly themes, PSHCE topics and many issues that relate to moral and social development. The religious education syllabus allows pupils to experience and discuss a range of faiths, including Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Pupils visit mosques and churches and have a good insight into many festivals such as

<sup>3</sup> Peer mentors: these are pupils who are selected by staff and their peer group to act as arbitrators in minor disputes that may occur during playtimes. They are given training in counselling skills at the level required to carry out their duties and their work is supervised by the equal opportunities coordinator.

<sup>4</sup> School councillors: elected representatives from each class meet with the link teacher and the learning mentor to help solve problems relating to the care, welfare and management of pupils in the school.

Divali and Hanukah, and participate in a Christingle service. These are enhanced with visits to the school by the vicar, who takes part with staff in assemblies.

13. Attendance at the school has been improving gradually over the last three years. However, it is still below the national median and is, therefore, unsatisfactory. A significant group of pupils whose attendance is below 90 per cent are the main contributory factors, a few of these pupils' attendance is so low that legal action is taking place. The school is developing effective systems to monitor attendance and good progress in ensuring that the school obtains a reason for absence, which has resulted in a significant reduction in unauthorised absence. A considerable number of pupils arrive late to school; not all parents understand the need to make sure their children arrive on time. The school is well organised to take account of this. The school has developed strategies such as the 'breakfast club' to encourage parents to bring their children in early, and organises the school day to counteract the affect of the social conditions that prevent pupils arriving on time.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/04 (%)**

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School             | 6.1 | School data          | 1.6 |
| National data      | 5.4 | 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 school provides all pupils with a good education. The good curriculum is broad and balanced and offers very good enriching experiences. Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils are well cared for and there are strong links with families and carers and a very good partnership with the community and other schools.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning, although good overall, vary between subject and year groups. Teaching in the language units is very good. Assessment arrangements and their use are sound overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are skilfully managed and motivating teaching methods give pupils confidence to learn.
- Some teachers' planning and marking is not precise enough and focused on small steps; particularly in the nursery and reception classes.
- The strategies for teaching English and mathematics are particularly effective.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning.
- Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage.

### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 10 (16%)  | 26 (42%) | 25 (40%)     | 1 (2%)         | 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.*

14. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is now greater consistency in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics through the school and in teaching pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, many pupils have greater confidence in what they can achieve and are keen to learn new skills. Classroom management and the quality of relationships between pupils and staff are also key ingredients to the successful learning and achievement of pupils. Pupils in all lessons are very well focused. They enjoy the exciting presentations in lessons, but also the careful routines that help them learn well. Routines are clear and uncomplicated, ensuring that pupils learn effectively on their own or with partners. Teachers make good use of teaching time and the lessons are well

balanced to provide an end when teachers and pupils share in the learning. Discussions with the pupils form an important part in all lessons giving time for pupils to think and articulate their responses. Pupils listen well to each other and this makes these times even more productive. All teachers and teaching assistants are skilful at refocusing the activities of groups or individuals to consolidate and extend ideas. This ensures that progress is even through the lesson. Praise is used well whilst discipline is firm without being punitive. The teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils' needs, both academic and personal, and are careful to challenge individuals at the right time; skilful at avoiding any sense of failure.

15. The teaching in English, mathematics, history and ICT lessons is good. The teachers have just the right mix of enthusiasm and excitement. They are punchy in their delivery and use a good range of strategies to build on what pupils have already learnt. Higher attainers are usually challenged and given work that stretches them and this ensures that they are reaching standards of which they are capable. In English lessons, pupils are clear about what they have achieved and know what they have to do to improve their work. This is not always the case in mathematics work because some pupils still lack confidence in applying strategies. Teachers are skilful at drawing everybody together at the start of lessons ensuring that everyone is involved. Pupils are provided with the relevant materials to help them; the targets are precise and expectations are high.
16. Pupils are well supported by relevant support material and, as necessary, well-prepared teaching assistants. The teaching assistants work very hard and are very effective moving from groups, carrying out specific teaching programmes. Key features of all these good lessons are good relationships, a positive atmosphere and the use of humour to promote learning. When helping in mathematics lessons the pupils are often encouraged to describe the strategies they use for calculations. Carefully planned questioning and modelling ensure success and promote pupils' self-esteem. Pupils all know what they have to do and work confidently. The work in the computer suite is also supported well.
17. Teaching assistants work well to support pupils with special educational needs within the mainstream classrooms. This support is characterised by attention to individual targets and good planning, which link classroom work closely to pupils' levels of attainment. They do this in close conjunction with the class teacher and co-ordinator. Classroom teachers take an active role in identifying targets for pupils with special educational needs. However, the ability to set clear and effective targets varies between teachers. Some regularly monitor targets and adjust planning regularly, but not all.
18. Lesson planning is satisfactory overall. Work is generally well adapted and modified, and pupils are divided into groups to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants can work more effectively. Teachers who have high expectations of pupils teach the very good lessons. These are sustained because their planning identifies clearly what they want individuals to achieve. Whilst in some Years 1 and 4, science and physical education (PE) lessons, activities were varied to match broad ability groups, but the teaching did not sharply identify the expectations about individual pupils' progress. Teachers were usually clear about the outcomes for the class, but less precise about the challenges for the different ability groups. This was often evident in the quality of questioning at the start and end of these lessons. The scrutiny of work showed that some teachers are very aware of the individual targets, particularly in literacy, and mark accordingly, but for other teachers little mention is made to the pupils as to how well they have achieved or what they might do to get better.

19. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. There is good planning in the nursery class and the teacher plans well for the children to learn through exploration and play. However, teaching is not sharp enough in the reception classes to provide for the small steps in progress. This is largely because assessment information is not routinely gathered and subsequent activities planned with sufficient attention to what is to be learnt.
20. Teaching within the language units is always good with many very good points. The headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator direct extra support thoughtfully. The mix of support in and out of lessons is beneficial and wisely managed. Planning for individuals is detailed, adjusted as progress or problems are identified, and pupils are always given enough time to think and respond within class. Thus, a lesson on zoo animals with younger pupils saw all pupils using a vivid vocabulary to describe the animals within the story. The success of the teaching was in the reinforcement of the key vocabulary and concepts in an entertaining way. Classroom assistants are highly skilled, very intelligent in their planning for individual pupils and highly imaginative in the ways they enrich the lesson planning with humour and exciting vocabulary. The new 'outreach' language unit also displays a high level of teaching skills and is a valuable addition to the school's facilities.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good overall and it is very good at meeting the personal and social needs of the pupils. The opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum and the support for learning outside the school are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the language units, is good and they receive the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers.
- There is lack of practical opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills.
- The learning environment is a significant strength, and has a good impact on raising children's expectations and overall achievement.
- A very good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development.
- Personal and social education, particularly citizenship, is strong and has a positive impact on responsibility for the pupils.

## **Commentary**

21. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum overall encourages a positive self-image and provides pupils with every opportunity to succeed academically. As most of the work is carried out within class, all pupils with special educational needs have access to the full curriculum and develop their skills through work that is usually well adapted, taught and recorded by teaching assistants and teachers. The school has been able to improve provision since the last inspection, as it has been able to appoint more classroom assistants, who are used to match support for the different needs in each cohort.



22. In the language units, pupils follow a curriculum appropriate to their maturity and language needs and one that is constantly adapted and enriched. Planning for their lessons takes into account all relevant elements of the National Curriculum, while following closely the targets identified within their language and comprehension programmes. Consequently, these pupils are both supported and challenged by the work they undertake. They also experience exciting activities such as trips to zoos and visits from musicians and artists, which further enhance their ability to develop the full range of skills in subjects such as art and design, science and music. Although pupils are usually bussed into the unit, they have the same opportunities as other pupils to take part in out-of-school clubs and activities.
23. The learning environment gives a very positive message about education. Thought has been given to the appearance of all areas of the school, both indoors and out, and all are well maintained. The entrance to the school is attractive and inviting to parents. Vibrant, colourful displays throughout the school support and celebrate learning and give strong messages about the school's ethos and expectations. In all classrooms resources are well organised. Great effort has been made to provide a good range of different play areas on the playgrounds, with planting to soften otherwise stark spaces. A high profile is given to providing small working areas that are attractively resourced. Quiet and special places give opportunities for pupils to withdraw, but also remain included. The mentors' room and the 'Quiet Place'<sup>5</sup> all exude an air of calm, are attractive and display positive messages about personal development.
24. The extra-curricular clubs are very well attended. These include mathematics, games, ICT, gardening, chess, athletics and football. Lunchtimes are short, but provide a range of opportunities other than sport. Pupils' health needs are well catered for throughout the day. The school has capitalised effectively on support, initially from Excellence in Cities funding (EiC) funding and then through links with the local universities, to provide French teaching in Years 5 and 6.
25. Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and is more cohesive. All areas of learning are covered and the curriculum is relevant for the range of children's abilities. Children have good access to well-resourced outside areas. The Foundation Stage provides a rich range of experiences and activities for the children to develop social skills, early literacy skills, awareness of number, creative and physical skills. However, planning to ensure that more able children are challenged to develop their skills as they progress through this stage is not precise. There is positive integration of children with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
26. The school is very successful at compensating for the disadvantaged backgrounds from which the pupils come. Subject co-ordinators support the strong focus on pupils' personal development, the broad and balanced curriculum and the development of positive attitudes towards learning by adapting curriculum guidelines to provide more opportunities for collaborative working. A very good programme of rich and varied enrichment experiences makes full use of what the city has available. Visits and visitors are well matched to the subjects and topics taught in school broaden pupils' horizons and knowledge of the world. Experts from the university, politicians and senior representatives from the community give pupils the sense that they are important and valued. Musicians and dancers extend their cultural understanding. Enrichment has included 'black history

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<sup>5</sup> Quiet Place: this is funded separately and provides a service for pupils, parents and carers where they receive support in dealing with difficult situations that they encounter.

week' and a themed week on 'culture'. All pupils have equal access to these rich curricular opportunities, which are very well matched to their needs, and the impact is seen in their developing social responsibility and their growing confidence as writers.

27. The curriculum is evaluated well and is updated to take account of new ideas and methodology. However, despite effective strategies to address slippage, teachers' timetables still show variation within the same teaching teams. This makes it difficult to monitor the time given to different subjects. The school follows the numeracy strategy, but not all teachers give enough time to practical mathematics activities. Therefore, pupils are not challenged regularly to apply their skills and find it difficult when faced with mathematical problems.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Overall, the school takes good care of its pupils. There is very good involvement of pupils in their school, and the support, advice and guidance they receive is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships help pupils to feel happy and secure and this has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and how they settle into school.
- There is very good support for pupils' personal development and strong support for those who might otherwise become disaffected; the standard of support and care within the language units is very high indeed.
- All staff have good knowledge of the pupils, but do not always use this to show how individuals can improve.
- Pupils' views are valued and they know they have an impact in shaping their school.

### **Commentary**

28. Relationships are a valuable contribution to the caring character of the school. Staff work closely as a team in ensuring that they share their knowledge of the pupils, which leads to their very good monitoring and addressing of their personal development. This is well managed by the headteacher who sets great emphasis on the compassionate nature of the school alongside the push to equip the pupils with academic skills. This in turn cascades to the staff, with the result that the school functions as an orderly community that is well liked by pupils and parents alike.
29. Home visits in the nursery, by the 'learning mentor'<sup>6</sup> and the language unit staff enable the children to know the staff before starting school and reassures the parents that their children will be well supported. The on-site nursery means that the children view the move to more formal education as part of a natural progression. Preparation for moving to secondary education is effective; visits to the schools by pupils and Year 7 teachers visiting to teach in the classroom ensure a smooth transition.
30. The 'learning mentor' gives very good guidance to pupils who need extra support either with personal problems or in raising self-esteem. Through the delivery of personal, social and health education, very good links are in place with outside services to make use of

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<sup>6</sup> Learning mentor: the learning mentor is a trained member of staff who provides additional support and extra opportunities for pupils

their expertise. Rewards and praise are central in the school to the raising of pupils' self-respect and encouraging feelings of self-worth, which lead to pupils wanting to achieve well in their work. Pupils are able to self-refer as well as being referred to the 'Quiet Place', where they know there is a member of staff who will take time to listen; parents and staff are also able to avail themselves of this provision. Pupils with special educational needs have good plans which link well to the additional needs identified. Teaching assistants and most classroom teachers have developed good skills in planning and monitoring pupils' progress. Systematic and well managed systems for reviewing pupil' academic progress is in place in Years 1 to 6, gives sound guidance to the pupils. However, not all teachers mark pupils' work with the same level of precision. The assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are not rigorous enough to keep a track of children's small steps in progress.

31. Staff knowledge of pupils within the language units allows them to provide the highest level of care and guidance. This relates to matters way beyond language. Pupils within the language unit receive support that is characterised by a high level of knowledge and care. Teachers and support assistants know their pupils very well. All work together well and the very good teamwork and attitudes of adults are reflected in the good collaborative work of pupils. The inspection team was very impressed by the detailed adaptations made by staff with regard to individual pupil's medical needs. It was also clear that the greatest care is taken when pupils are integrated into mainstream classes or re-integrated to their 'home' school. All staff make very careful appraisal of pupils' learning, social and emotional development and this deep involvement informs all of the unit support. The level of speech therapy support, by therapist and specialist assistant, is of a very high quality indeed.
32. The school seeks and acts upon pupils' views through the whole class in personal and social education. They are very involved in the strategies for tackling, bullying, racism and disruptive behaviour. Consequently they give full support to their teachers in matters of classroom management. The School Council<sup>7</sup> is very effective in seeking their peers' views, time is given to consult with their peers in the classroom is available. Pupils' respect their work particularly in the arrangements for playtimes. The peer mentors also have an influential role in how the school is managed and help to deal with conflict resolution. The pupils express their views thoughtfully and with considerable maturity, confident in the school's assurance that the school and the pupils takes them seriously and that they have a positive impact on school life.

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

The school has very good links with its parents. The school has established a very effective partnership with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a fundamental part of the community.
- The school values parents' views and parents are very welcome in the school.
- The success of the links with the local schools and colleges enhances pupils' provision.

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<sup>7</sup> School council: elected representatives from each class meet with the link teacher and the learning mentor to help solve problems relating the care, welfare and management of pupils in the school.

## Commentary

33. Parents are very welcome in the school and appreciate the support they receive. The school encourages parents either to help in the classrooms, to discuss and share their concerns or to attend events. In the nursery, a very strong rapport with parents helps pupils to enjoy the activities, as could be seen at their concert when parents had helped provide elaborate costumes and over 100 parents attended. Parents find the staff approachable and feel comfortable in the attractive welcoming surroundings.
34. Outside agencies, such as 'Family Learning', are encouraged by the headteacher to make good use of the school, which give parents access to courses and fun activities such as card making. Parents appreciate the ease of the availability of the activities which enables them to broaden their views, horizons and experiences. An active parents and teachers association offers social and fund-raising events. These attract good attendance by parents and the community.
35. Parents are happy with the opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The planned termly meetings ensure they are well informed on personal development and progress. Information to parents is mainly of a very good quality. Newsletters are frequent and informative, and the prospectus and governors annual report to parents are useful documents. Termly information on the curriculum taught in each class helps parents to understand and assist their children with projects. Central to information is the verbal communication with parents, teachers and the headteacher are readily available, access to a range of support services and counselling is on site. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and the school feels the building of very good relationships is paramount to increasing pupils' achievements. Pupils' annual progress reports are variable in quality, most celebrate the achievements of the pupils, but clear concise targets to show how to improve are not indicated.
36. The school is an integral part of the locality. Through the EiC programme, very good partnerships are in place with local primary schools. An exchange visit to another school with a multi-ethnic intake by the School Council, is one of the initiatives that broaden pupils' experiences. The 'learning mentor' is pivotal to the additional opportunities in, for example, sport, music and art which provides occasions of excitement and enjoyment to enhance the pupils' experience of school. Close links with the feeder secondary schools, colleges and universities as well as contributing to ease of transition for pupils, the training of teachers and support staff also provide unique experiences for the community such as the 'Quiet Place'. The pupils through the school council have forged good relationships with the local police, involved the support of the local Member of Parliament and contributed to an awareness of the need for improvement of the local vicinity for the residents.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership shown by the headteacher is very good and she receives good support from the senior management team. The school is well managed. The school is governed well and the governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership shown by the headteacher is very good; she has a very clear vision for the school with a very strong focus on inclusion and raising standards.
- The senior management team provides good support and has clear responsibilities.
- The way that the school has integrated and managed the three language units is a model of very good and inclusive practice.
- The governing body are committed and offer strong support.

### Commentary

37. The headteacher is very committed to the school. Since amalgamation six years ago, she has faced many challenges including integrating staff from the two schools, staff movement, falling rolls and staff absences, which she has successfully overcome in addition to the barriers presented by the pupils themselves. She is perceptive in identifying weaknesses, skilful at gaining support of colleagues and constantly strives to do the best for the children and pupils in her care. She shows good judgement in weighing up which initiatives will contribute positively to the work of the school. She is ably supported by a deputy and leadership team who act as good role models for their colleagues. They are ambitious for the pupils, but have not lost sight of the importance of ensuring that all pupils, whatever their level of attainment, are given the opportunity of benefiting from all the school has to offer. Parents believe the school is well managed and are very supportive.
38. At the time of the last inspection strategic planning for school development was identified as a weakness. This has now been successfully addressed and the school has reached a good level of strategic planning, based on a thorough analysis of performance and the needs of the school. Standards are rising through the school because of the action taken to improve the teaching of basic skills. The systematic development of provision for pupils' personal development has brought about a sustained improvement in attitudes to learning and contributes to their good achievement. Some steps to improve learning in mathematics and science have still to be taken, however, these are clearly identified in the subject co-ordinators' plans. Practices are thoroughly evaluated by the headteacher and senior managers and there is recognition in the development plan of the different challenges provided by individual year groups. The budget is managed well to meet these needs and resources are targeted effectively.

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

| Income and expenditure (£) |           | Balances (£)               |        |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 1,100,140 | Balance from previous year | 20,150 |

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Total expenditure     | 1,114,869 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,505     |

|                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance carried forward to the next | 5,421 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|

39. Performance management procedures are soundly established for the headteacher and teaching staff and this is helping to identify areas for focused staff development. For example, provision in ICT has improved as a consequence of staff training. There are good arrangements for professional development linked to the movement of staff out of the school to ensure that management skills are retained. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to make teachers' work more effective in and out of the classroom. Administrative and support staff work unobtrusively and make a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school.
40. The strong leadership of special educational needs ensures that all staff are aware of and address the special educational needs of the pupils they teach. The co-ordinator assists all staff in developing targets and programmes for this group of pupils. Training has been good for all involved and the co-ordinator ensures that problems that are on the horizon, such as the increase in language, behaviour and autistic spectrum disorders, are well prepared for within the staff training programme. Funds identified for these pupils are used appropriately and invariably topped up from the main school budget as a result of the high level of need within the school. This represent very good value for money, but, with a level of 36 per cent special educational needs in the mainstream classes and only four full-time teaching assistants, the level of classroom support is still inadequate for the needs of pupils.
41. The management of the language units is a model of its kind. The headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and unit staff work closely as a coherent team, ensuring that the units are run to the greatest effect for the pupils, while good inclusive practice takes place. The headteacher provides good performance management for the staff and this is highly valued. The third language unit is being well introduced into the school and great care is taken to ensure that accommodation is appropriate for the outreach service that is now based at Hope Valley. Unit staff have been involved in good language training for the mainstream class teachers, while they themselves have received a wide range of good and relevant training. All staff working within the units are highly skilled and every opportunity is taken to keep up with recent developments and to cope with the greater complexity of needs with which the units deal.
42. The governors are particularly effective. They play a significant role in the management of the school, in particular, helping the school link the various sources of funding together, anticipating movements in the school roll and helping look at alternative scenarios. They have a good view of staff development and how to raise the quality of this. They have also invested heavily in improving the quality of the buildings, which has created a physical environment that is welcoming to pupils, parents and visitors.

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

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

43. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Improvement since the last inspection has been good with improved facilities and resources that have resulted in more consistent teaching and children's good achievement in their personal development and independent skills.
44. Children are taught in three classes, one with nursery children and two with reception children. The nursery teacher plans for all the children's knowledge and understanding, creative and physical development so that children get a similar range of experiences. Children enter the Foundation Stage with very low literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. The achievement for the majority is good, however, there is a lack of challenge for the few higher attaining children in the reception classes.
45. Induction procedures are very good and include visits to the school, home visits by staff and pre-visit meetings. These result in a very constructive partnership with parents and carers.
46. Planning is satisfactory overall. It is appropriately based on the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and ensures a rich range of experiences. However, there is a lack of clear planning for progression of skills. This is because the arrangements for regular assessment of children's progress are unsatisfactory. This is recognised by the school and is a priority in the school development plan.
47. Accommodation in the nursery is spacious; reception classrooms are of adequate size, but should provide more opportunities for role-play activities for the older children. The enthusiastic and experienced nursery teacher ably leads the Foundation Stage. Her leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good; this was evident in the high quality 'Pirates' concert performed by all children in the Foundation Stage during the inspection.

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

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

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

- Staff provide a caring and supportive environment from which children learn to co-operate and help each other.
- Children achieve very well because of the good opportunities to develop initiative and independence, and the high expectations set by the staff.

#### **Commentary**

48. Most children enter the nursery with underdeveloped personal and social skills. This area is given a high priority and children achieve very well overall, reaching below average standards by the end of reception year. Many children achieve very well in this area

because of the good teaching and the rich opportunities to play together with adults in the nursery and reception classes. High expectations and caring relationships ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave. They settle into the daily routines of directed and self-chosen tasks with little fuss and most behave very well. This is because there are a good range of practical activities that encourage children's independence and capture their attention. They take good care of materials and equipment and soon move confidently around the classroom choosing their own activities. Most children show reasonable awareness of classroom routines. The older children in the reception class respond well to clearing away at the end of sessions and helping with activities such as giving out fruit and milk during 'snack time'. By the end of reception, most children go to the toilet unaided and manage to dress themselves and put on their own coats, but still need help with shoes and buttons.

49. The teamwork of the adults in all classes gives the children good role models for co-operation, and a calm approach to work so that their relationships are very good. As many of the children have learning or social difficulties their successful inclusion into all activities is a strength of the teamwork. Most children show good levels of interest in what they are doing, and concentrate well, even when not directly supervised.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills and this area has a high priority.
- There is not enough expected of the few higher attaining children in the reception classes.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, but assessment information is not identifying clearly the small steps children have attained.

### **Commentary**

50. Most children are likely to achieve standards well below expectations by the time they start in Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but this is variable across the Foundation Stage. In the nursery achievement is good because of good teaching and learning. Most of the activities have a strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills, and role play and other activities encourage children to talk. This is helping to extend their poor language. They are beginning to speak with each other and occasionally some higher attaining children start conversations with adults and other children. They listen with attention and, with encouragement, join in together in songs or when reading together. Staff take every opportunity during activities both in and out of the classroom to develop children's speech and language through careful questioning. They repeat what others have said so that others in the group learn to listen and take turns. Adults are interested in what the children have to say and this encourages them to develop the confidence to talk.
51. In the reception classes teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most children achieve well, but there is not enough expected of the few higher attaining children. The lack of a complete picture of children's progress results in a lack of well-planned opportunities to develop literacy skills. Sounds and phonic skills are taught well so that children gradually



learn to recognise sounds and simple words from their reading books and classroom displays. They regularly take books home to share with parents and carers and there are many opportunities when children look at books themselves. However, from observations during the inspection, activities that would promote early reading and writing skills are not demanding enough. There is not enough opportunity for the children to write independently and expectations are too low about what higher attainers might achieve outside directed activities.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adults plan a wide range of practical activities to promote children's mathematical development, which ensures that most children achieve well.
- Good use is made of mathematical language and resources to help children learn.

### **Commentary**

52. Despite good teaching and learning, most children are likely to achieve standards well below expectations by the end of the reception year. Achievement is satisfactory overall. In both the nursery and reception classes, teachers plan a range of activities to develop mathematical understanding. In the nursery, children are encouraged to count and match numbers using a good range of resources in structured and less formal activities. Adults use a range of number rhymes and songs to help children count and develop mental skills. Children have regular access to sand and water activities and are beginning to understand words such as 'full', 'empty', 'larger than' and 'smaller than'. They are developing an understanding of flat and solid shapes.
53. In reception classes, children are given a sound range of activities to build on what has been learnt in the nursery class. These involve counting on and back from a set number and ordering, estimating and matching numbers up to ten. Adults ensure the correct use of mathematical words to develop and extend children's understanding of mathematical language. The good range of practical activities prepare the way well for children's confidence in working with numbers and their positive attitudes. However, there is insufficient challenge in the numbers used and the problems set for a few higher attaining children. This is because the tracking of their progress through the Foundation Stage is not sufficiently focused on the small steps towards the Early Learning Goals, and these children do not build well enough on the progress made in the nursery class.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of experiences extends children's appreciation of the wider world.
- Children have regular access to, and use, computers developing keyboard and mouse skills.

- The independent activities do not provide enough challenge for children to develop their investigative and enquiry skills.

## **Commentary**

54. Children enter the school with poor levels of development in this area of learning. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good for the lower attaining children in both the nursery and reception classes. Standards are well below average by the end of the reception year. Children show curiosity and begin to talk about what they observe happening. The children's poor oracy skills restrict how they talk about events, but opportunities are given for them to record events using art and digital cameras. Only a few investigate with any sense of purpose or pose questions that would form the basis of enquiry.
55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A comprehensive range of well-organised activities drive the work of both the nursery and reception classes. The themes are supported by visits and visitors to promote learning through practical experiences. For example, the current topic is 'transport' and includes a trip on a bus, ferry and train. This is encouraging children to show interest and begin to pose questions. Parents and carers are encouraged to accompany their children on visits and become fully involved.
56. There are also a good range of experiences, through the use of road layouts, simple construction kits, small world toys and role-play areas, which encourage children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, in reception there is insufficient emphasis on children investigating for themselves in non-directed activities to strengthen their knowledge and understanding and lay the foundation for scientific thinking. Assessment in this area is not yet developed and the activities tend to be taught to the whole class rather than meeting the specific needs of children. Children have regular access to computers to develop mouse and keyboard skills and most children's skills are in line with expectations in this area of their learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

57. It was not possible to make a judgement about provision because not enough observations were made in this area of children's learning. Most children come from an area where there are few opportunities for playing safely outside. Lesson observations, displays, teachers' planning and photographic evidence indicate that children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their co-ordination and fine manipulative skills. In the reception classes, children have regular access to large wheeled toys and the adventurous climbing apparatus through afternoon sessions and develop confidence, taking turns and awareness of others. They also have regular lessons in either the gym or outdoor area to develop co-ordination, throwing and catching skills and dance. Most respond well to instructions, 'stop' and 'start' on request, and enjoy the opportunities provided during outdoor playtime. Outdoor activities are timetabled for both reception and nursery children in the afternoons, therefore, children of nursery age attending in the morning session do not have regular experience with this equipment. The resources are good in number and range, but some of those used outside are unsatisfactory. For example, some skates are broken and the steering wheels are missing from some trikes.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of planned creative activities in both the nursery and reception classes, but higher attaining children could be challenged more.
- Good links are made between creative development and other areas through the themed approach.

### **Commentary**

58. Most children enter the nursery with very few creative experiences and the majority are likely to attain standards that are below the expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage, and for a significant number, well below the expected levels. Most children achieve well from a very low starting point because of the good range of opportunities, both directed and self-chosen, provided. Children display low levels of oracy, limited attention and communication skills on entry to reception and the good range of activities provides effective opportunities for children to develop these skills. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Planning, photographic evidence and children's performance in the 'Pirates' concert indicates that children experience a wide range of stimulating opportunities to develop their imagination. Through the use of art, role play, songs, rhymes and stories, children extend their creativity. Parents and carers often join in the activities, for example, in the pretend wedding ceremony and reception, providing valuable support for children's learning. The nursery teacher develops this area of learning very well through a wide range of activities. She plans for children in the three classes, but because there is insufficient detailed assessment of children's attainment the activities lack the challenge for the higher attaining children in the reception classes. Resources and opportunities are plentiful and well used, but teachers' expectations of what could be achieved by the higher attainers are not high enough.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well in reading and writing and by the time they leave school are confident in these skills.
- Reading books are more inviting to pupils in Years 3 to 6 than in the Years 1 and 2.
- The teaching is good through the school, which is a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The curriculum for English is well enriched and literacy skills are developed well in other subjects.

#### Commentary

59. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are well below average at the start of Year 1. Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 2 standards in all four areas are below average. The standards seen in Year 6 are also below average, but this again reflects good achievement for this complex group of pupils, many of whom are pupils with special educational needs or who have changed school.
60. Pupils' oracy skills in all year groups are improving because pupils gain in confidence through their very positive relationships with adults. For example, those pupils in Year 6, who are supported by the learning mentor, are confident talking in front of their class about what upsets or concerns them about where they live. By the end of Year 6, pupils are good listeners, but a significant number still have difficulty with syntax and explaining their thinking lucidly. Pupils achieve well because teachers are sensitive to their needs and provide time for all pupils to express their views in lessons. The teaching is good because teachers include opportunities for pupils to use drama to help them get over their inhibitions. Presentations are a regular feature of many lessons. The very best lessons, including all those observed in the language units, gave a high priority to the vocabulary to be used. However, occasionally teaching did not emphasise the new vocabulary enough. This was mainly in science lessons rather than English, mathematics or the humanities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are good at encouraging each other and will wait patiently whilst class members think before speaking. Overall, pupils learning English as an additional language achieve very well because of the support pupils and parents receive from bilingual staff. Standards are set to improve even more as the school embarks on a local authority oracy project.
61. Reading is well taught through the school and, consequently, standards are rising. Many pupils start Year 1 with little knowledge of the alphabet or of any of the key words. Achievement is good and by the end of Year 2 standards are below average. Many have made rapid progress in recognising commonly used sight vocabulary, although they are still about a year behind for their age. The teaching of phonics is lively and well paced and the link to spelling is bringing about an improvement for average and higher attaining pupils. However, in Year 2 the pupils who are of average ability have too narrow a range of reading material to extend their reading experiences.

62. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. Teaching assistants supporting those with special educational needs and lower attainers, use a systematic approach to teaching reading based on listening to the chunks of sounds in words that the pupils want to use. Pupils enjoy learning the actions that accompany these sounds and this is of tremendous help to those who have difficulty concentrating. Assessment of reading is good with the introduction of careful analysis of mistakes in reading. Paired and partnership schemes 'reading buddies' work well. Older pupils are aware of the strategies they use and apply these. For example, chunking words or applying common word endings to root words. The regular use of the library to encourage reading is good. The school has wisely allowed the loan of two books before pupils are restricted. This is beginning to bring about the social responsibility of returning books. There is a good range of books for the pupils in Years 3 to 6 that help pupils build up their sight vocabulary as well as exciting stories and poetry collections. Throughout the school teachers are flexible in teaching skills in comprehension to pupils, finding time within the English lessons to work intently with groups of pupils on their skills in reading whilst others are busy at other well-chosen activities. The enthusiasm for learning and the relationships in lessons allow both teacher and teaching assistants to work effectively.
63. The strategies to improve pupils' writing have been very effective and pupils are achieving well through the school. The weaker vocabulary of pupils is more evident in Year 6 than elsewhere in the school and this affects their ability to reach the higher Level 5. Most are writing using grammatically correct sentences. They have a secure grasp of connectives, understand the differences between direct and indirect speech, and apply these confidently in their writing. Often the structure of their written work is adventurous. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well because they respond very well to the different ways of presenting writing and the systematic way of teaching handwriting and spelling. Teachers are good at extending pupils' vocabulary and allow time in English lessons for this. Teaching assistants are deployed well to provide maximum support to those needing it and this includes the higher attainers. Teachers expect pupils to set out a framework for their ideas before writing and good use is made of whiteboards and partners to rehearse ideas. The use of highlighting pieces of text is particularly beneficial to pupils who have difficulty reading a whole page at a glance. There are targets for particular groups of pupils identifying specific aspects of their writing to improve upon and work is well matched to meet these needs. By Year 4, pupils are comfortable redrafting their work because of the emphasis teachers and the many visits from authors and poets give this. Through the school pupils are acquiring a deeper understanding of the craft of writing and this is maintained through exciting and enjoyable reasons for writing. Pupils see writing as an important medium and poetry and letter writing are strong features of the written work seen during the inspection.
64. The leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is working well with the headteacher, special educational needs staff and governors to monitor the effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment. Together they keep a close track of pupils' achievements in reading and writing through monitoring teaching and routine evaluation of written work. Termly moderation of pupils' writing ensures that teachers are familiar with criteria for assessing writing. Although satisfactory overall, this is relatively recent and whilst most teachers' marking is accurate it is not well directed to the targets pupils have achieved or those they are working towards.

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

65. The development of literacy across the curriculum is strong. Most subjects and almost all teachers use language effectively to extend pupils' vocabulary as well as reading and writing skills. The display in all classrooms celebrates writing; titles, captions and messages provide a rich environment for reading skills. History topics are being adapted well to match the teaching elements of the literacy strategy and the tasks empower the pupils as writers. These, combined with workshops with poets, visitors and drama groups provide pupils with many opportunities to extend and explore their literacy skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a need to provide regular opportunities for practical and investigative work that will challenge pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills.
- Teaching and learning are good overall with some that is very good.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

## Commentary

66. Pupils enter the school lacking in confidence and many have special educational needs, with speech and language difficulties being a key issue. In addition, many pupils have breaks in their learning due to changes in school. Overall achievement is satisfactory. However, achievement is variable for different ability groups through the school. In the main, average attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should because they lack confidence in applying their mathematical skills. This is because there are not enough regular opportunities to consolidate and extend their mathematical skills through practical activities. Most pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 to reach standards that are below average at the end of Year 2. The standards seen in Year 6 were well below average, although higher attaining pupils are reaching expected levels. There are a large group of pupils who do not reach average standards. This is because there is a backlog of skills and almost half of the current Year 6 have special educational needs and over one third have moved schools in recent years. Teaching quality has been inconsistent for these pupils and many pupils in Year 6 still are unsure about applying their skills to tackle new problems.
67. Lower attainers make good progress through the school in their mental skills, retaining vital strategies that help them tackle addition, subtraction, multiplication and division accurately. Pupils learn number facts including tables and by Year 6 can demonstrate good use of these. However, pupils of average attainment could achieve more in mathematics through Years 3 to 6, which would enable more of them to reach the expected standard by the time they leave the school. Whilst the majority carry out routine calculations successfully and are confident in using larger numbers all but the few higher attainers have confidence in transferring these skills to new situations. Through the school the group of pupils of average attainment remain unsure about how to apply the skills they have been taught. In the main this is because of previous insecurity, but also the curriculum does not provide enough experience of using and applying these skills. For some teachers there is an over-reliance on worksheets.
68. The quality of teaching is improving and results in good learning in lessons. Teaching is now consistently good in quality through the school ensuring that pupils grow in confidence with handling numbers. Teachers manage behaviour well and, as a result, pupils want to learn, feel challenged by the tasks and work hard. Strategies for carrying out day-to-day operations are also taught consistently and in a way that allows pupils to make mistakes and consolidate the small gains they make. This is the most successful aspect of the teaching seen and one that heralds a continuing rise in standards and achievement. Throughout the school, effective teaching, the use of assessment information to group pupils and the sustained use of the numeracy strategy support pupils' progress well. Teachers' good use of a range of inclusive strategies promotes good attitudes and enables all pupils to participate fully in lessons. However, whilst lessons are well planned and organised pupils' work indicates a lack of opportunities for using and applying mathematical skills and insufficient use of interesting, motivating, open-ended challenges.
69. Where teaching and learning are very good, lessons are well planned for all attainment groups, expectations are high and the pace is good. In a Year 6 lesson the focus on solving word problems was made relevant by putting pupils into 'companies' who then used calculations to earn money for their 'business'. The element of competition was well managed and provided an added spur. Pupils helped each other to use all four operations, including calculating

percentages. Thoughtfully planned resources for teaching help pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of ideas such as fractions and data handling. In an effective lesson in Year 3, pupils were encouraged to explain the strategies they use for calculating fractions. Effective modelling and clear explanations in this lesson ensured that all pupils learnt about the relationships between fractions and division. They worked confidently in pairs to identify halves, quarters and, for higher attainers, tenths. Such gains are hard won and there is a need to ensure that these are consolidated through regular practical experiences as pupils move through the school.

70. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' learning. They are skilled and well briefed about pupils' abilities and the tasks to be carried out. They question pupils well and provide plenty of repetition and consolidation of learning, assisting pupils in carrying out practical activities that promote their understanding. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In whole-class sessions they provide discreet support to individual pupils. They have a key role in enabling lower attaining pupils to succeed through additional booster and springboard classes.<sup>8</sup>
71. The subject leader is clear about her roles and responsibilities and has a clear vision and a good sense of direction, which are reflected in her action plans. The subject is well managed. Systems are being established to track and evaluate pupils' attainment and progress, and to set curriculum targets based on the analysis of test results. Professional development, including guidance from the mathematics consultant and support from the local schools' group, has given the subject leader increased confidence and a greater understanding of the curriculum and teaching. The good support given by the mathematics consultant has resulted in improved teaching of mental and oral skills. Lesson observations have also led to work on enhancing the learning environment for mathematics and a modification to the weekly planning sheet that details the tasks for the three main ability groups.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

72. Overall, the planned use of mathematics in other subjects is barely satisfactory. Good links are being forged between mathematics and ICT in some years and with science. A mathematics club provides good activities for pupils to consolidate and extend their knowledge of number facts. However, there is a need to be more systematic in planning for the use and application of mathematics in order to raise attainment further.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are keen and interested and want to learn and behaviour is very good.
- Teachers' planning does not always clearly indicate what pupils are expected to do and learn and assessments are not sufficiently linked to attainment.
- There is good leadership and management and a clear strategy to improve teaching.

### **Commentary**

73. Inspection evidence and the school's good monitoring and tracking information indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are below average and at the end of Year 6 they are well below average. These standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection

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<sup>8</sup> Booster and springboard classes: to enable pupils who with extra help are likely to reach average levels in mathematics in Year 6.



because the nature of the school has changed. All groups of pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, achieve well because they enter Year 1 with standards that are well below expectations. Pupils in Year 6 have a range of difficulties that serve to limit their attainment, for example, in explaining their thinking clearly. Pupils are achieving well because they are well motivated and are benefiting from greater confidence in their reading and writing. In particular, the pupils' abilities to write more convincing conclusions to their work are improving quickly. Lower attaining pupils achieve well because of greater confidence in practical work. Skills in interpreting data are also being addressed successfully. Where achievement is best the teachers have made conscious efforts to adjust the science programme to fit in with the skills being taught in mathematics and literacy. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, because not all teachers are using assessment information effectively to challenge all pupils in their practical work.

74. From talking to pupils, it is clear that most enjoy science lessons especially the investigations. Across the school, pupils have good attitudes to science and older pupils are developing a clear idea of a 'fair test'. They work together very well in group activities, which promote personal and social development effectively, and relationships and behaviour are very good.
75. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and this encourages positive attitudes, self-esteem and confidence in pupils and results in very good relationships. Evidence from looking at pupils' work clearly indicates that teachers in Years 2, 4 and 5 develop pupils' investigative skills effectively through a good range of activities that develop observation, prediction and recording skills and co-operation. This is not as effective in other years. Pupils are too often set the same activities, which do not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Teachers' marking is variable and often does not provide pupils with clear guidelines as to how they can improve. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and manage time and activities well. Teachers' planning is not always precise enough to help them direct questions and illicit discussion that strengthens the pupils' learning. Lessons usually start briskly with a clear explanation of what pupils will be doing, but there is a weakness in that teachers often only take answers from those pupils who put their hands up, which means not all are involved. In a few classes, not enough use is made of scientific displays and words to reinforce pupils' understanding. Support staff are used well to help individuals and groups of pupils access the curriculum during the main activity, but are not always used so effectively in the introductory and final sessions.
76. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good. A strength of the science curriculum is the range of visits and visitors that support the teaching and encourage pupils' interest. Whole-school assessment procedures have now been developed to track and monitor pupils' progress, but these are at an early stage to influence all teachers' lesson planning. Not all teachers use the assessment guidance effectively to record what pupils have learnt to do. The quality of teaching has shown an improvement, but there are still variations between classes. There is good leadership and management. In the short time available the co-ordinator has given good support to colleagues to bring about more consistency in science teaching through the school with a particular emphasis on supporting investigative work, although there is insufficient monitoring of teachers' planning and teaching to assess the impact of this. The development of science teaching has been identified by the school as an area for improvement and is a feature of the coming year's development plan.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school.
- The improvement since the last inspection is good, but assessment is inconsistent.

## Commentary

77. In Year 2 pupils use the mouse confidently to enter and edit text using a writing program. Some pupils select and add borders to their writing so enhancing its presentation. Most use arrow and number keys to control movement of devices on screen and on programmable toys. They also use a 'paint' program to produce pictures of themselves. Overall, attainment in Year 2 is just below national expectations, but this represents good achievement, given the previous attainment and experiences of the pupils.
78. By Year 6 pupils show great confidence in using ICT. They open and save files with ease. They use 'PowerPoint' to produce a presentation combining text, pictures and sound, demonstrating that they have given thought to the design and suitability of the effects chosen. Their work is imaginative and well constructed. Pupils used a search engine to seek information on the Internet and referred to the need to observe copyright and to use passwords. Pupils use the interactive whiteboard and explore its use without hesitation. Pupils show confidence and are articulate in describing their ICT work. Attainment is in line with national expectation, and in some cases above it, which represents good achievement.
79. Where teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in using the technology. They demonstrate skills effectively so pupils know what to do. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the teacher showed pupils how they could move between pictures of daily life in an Indian village, a skill pupils used later when selecting a scene for their character description. Work is set in motivating contexts, for example, to analyse text, and the lessons are well paced. The software chosen is motivating and promotes pupils' learning. For example, in Years 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed two different programs in which they had to control the movement of a small creature on screen. Pupils were enthusiastic, motivated and demonstrated good attitudes to learning. Where teaching and learning were only satisfactory, pupils were unsure of what to do and did not have the strategies needed to learn collaboratively.
80. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Improved resources and greater staff knowledge and confidence have led to much improved attainment and achievement. The subject leader has a clear understanding of her subject and a strong sense of direction, which is reflected in her well-focused action plan. Her role in subject monitoring is being developed to support further improvement and at this time leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory, but not all teachers are keeping an accurate track of pupils' progress in ICT. For example, a useful bank of annotated pupils' work is being collected in one Year 2 class, but some other teachers' evidence is rather more ad hoc. Whilst the subject co-ordinator has introduced individual assessment sheets not all teachers are using these and, consequently, standards and progress cannot be properly evaluated.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. This is satisfactory and improving. Teachers capitalise on pupils' positive attitudes to learning, and the interest they show in ICT work. There are regular opportunities to use the suite to support learning in subjects like mathematics, history, English and art and design.

## HUMANITIES

Geography and religious education were sampled. History was inspected in full.

82. Overall, judgements about the provision in **geography** cannot be made. Evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work and from lessons in Years 3 and 5, planning sheets and displays indicate a balanced and broad coverage of geography skills. Teachers adapt unit planning well. The better adaptation comes in Years 4 and 5 where the literacy and

mathematics skills to be explored and developed are clearly stated. Good links with the local community, for example, the local park, form the basis of some good work on landscapes and features. During the unit studying an Indian village, pupils successfully tackled stereotypes through their studies into comparisons and similarities using some stimulating resources.

83. There were not enough lessons seen to make an overall judgement on the provision of **religious education**. Work was sampled and discussions were held with the co-ordinator. The subject is well led and links very well with the personal, social, health and citizenship education PSHCE curriculum. The co-ordinator has shown considerable initiative in developing and monitoring the subject. She has developed resource boxes well and modified planning to ensure that unnecessary demands are not made on pupils' reading and writing skills. She has monitored teaching in all classes and evaluates samples of work produced throughout the school to identify development and areas for improvement.
84. Standards in Years 2 and 6 meet the requirements of Liverpool's Locally Agreed Syllabus. Two lessons were seen. In the one Year 6 lesson observed, the last RE lesson of the year, the teacher provided very good opportunities for discussion of a range of qualities, such as 'kindness' and 'friendship', which had been discussed over the past terms in RE and PSHCE. This led naturally to issues of 'discrimination' and 'faith'. Pupil responses were impressive in the degree of maturity and thought shown. It was clear that the twin aims of understanding other people's beliefs and commenting on them had been achieved well through the RE teaching within the school.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and acquire a satisfactory understanding of historical events and their significance by the end of Year 6.
- The teaching and learning are good and support staff are used well.
- The curriculum successfully develops pupils' research and enquiry skills.

## Commentary

85. Satisfactory progress has been made in provision since the last inspection. Guidelines to help with lesson planning have now been established, although there is still some variation in the effectiveness of teachers' planning. Pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of historical events throughout the school because of good teaching and the emphasis placed on developing research skills. Some pupils achieve very well and overall standards are average in Years 2 and 6. There is well-directed support for the lower attaining readers and writers and those with special educational needs that enables many of them to reach average standards. Pupils are well motivated to learn because the lessons are interesting and they have plenty of opportunity to research for themselves.
86. In a very good Year 4 lesson pupils had grouped together to find out from an extensive range of sources about the life of Henry VIII. The teacher had adapted the guidelines well to interest the pupils, but also to emphasise the outcomes of events and their historical

importance. The teaching assistant's knowledge of what was to be learnt was very good and she provided very effective help to the small group that included pupils with special educational needs. Questions were targeted carefully at the pupils making sure the ideas related to their experience. The use made of support staff was good in another lesson when pupils sat in a small group, discussed features of the Armada ships, and rehearsed the main events using maps. The scrutiny of work shows a good balance of presentation techniques that ensure good development of writing skills. Teachers' marking of work is good, picking up in particular on pupils' spelling of key words. More could be done to extend pupils' grammar where this is incorrect.

87. The use of drama in a Year 2 lesson was very effective and very well managed. Pupils listened to each other carefully and demonstrated a very good ability to organise each other. They conveyed the main facts relating to the life of Florence Nightingale with only limited recourse to notes.
88. The Year 6 pupils benefited from a very exciting display of Egyptian artefacts. The lesson was very well led by the archaeologist and teachers played a vital role in maintaining interest. This was not difficult as the artefacts themselves were fascinating and the chance to handle objects over 3,000 years old was greeted with suitable wonder. Again the writing demands were challenging whilst being realistic. The pairing of work partners meant that less able writers had support without detracting from learning the skills of searching text for answers to the problems raised on the worksheet.
89. It was not possible to speak with the co-ordinator, but time was set aside to talk with the headteacher. It is clear from this discussion that history study skills are seen as an important vehicle for raising pupils' interest in education. The subject is now linked well to art and design and also to poetry and drama. Good use is made of visiting theatre companies to stimulate research. The school also uses carefully selected 'experts' to raise the level of expectations for pupils. It is part of the general hard work the school puts into varying the curriculum for pupils whilst keeping a focus on developing basic skills.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Art and design, design and technology, physical education and music were sampled.

90. There was not enough evidence in **art and design**, to make a secure judgement on provision or standards at the end of Year 6. From displays, photographic evidence and samples of work, average standards have been maintained at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection. The artwork around the school makes a very valuable contribution to high expectations. Pupils have a well-developed sense of colour, composition, painting and drawing skills. The pupils are given a good level of opportunity to experience a wide range of different art materials with some quality batik and painting in the style of Monet in Year 2. Chalk, pastels, paints, inks and pencils have all been used by older pupils to produce some well-observed portraits and still life drawings in the style of Van Gogh, Renoir, Monet and Cézanne. In the art and design lesson sampled, standards were in line with expectations and the activity was soundly planned and delivered. Pupils were clearly motivated, took care with printing from their printing blocks, and were proud of the prints they made.
91. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on provision or standards in **design and technology** at the end of Years 2 and 6. Similarly, it is not possible to comment on

improvement since the last inspection. In the lessons sampled, teachers displayed good subject knowledge overall and pupils and activities were well managed. Recently introduced individual record books provide a good record of the skills and techniques, but have no record of the final product that would help evaluate teaching.

92. The two co-ordinators are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility. Their overview of whole-school strengths and areas for development is limited by a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation from first-hand experience across the school. Teachers' planning in both subjects varies in quality and depth. Plans often indicate that planning is linked more to activities rather than the skills and knowledge to be developed. A scrutiny of pupils' record books indicate that planned activities are not always delivered with sufficient depth and rigour and topics are not always fully completed.
93. There was not enough evidence of **physical education** to make an overall judgement on standards and achievement at the end of Years 2 and 6 because not enough lessons were observed. In the games lessons seen in Years 3 to 5, standards were similar to that expected nationally. The teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall and sometimes good. The teachers motivated and encouraged pupils well and relationships were very good. They placed particular emphasis on the importance of developing healthy bodies. Pupils were enthusiastic tried hard and had very good attitudes. They co-operated well together in pairs and small groups when practising tennis skills and were keen to exceed their personal targets.
94. There are good links with other schools for annual sporting activities such as football, netball and athletics. The curriculum is further enhanced through links with Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs, Notre Dame High School for dance, and other agencies that provide rugby, cricket and short tennis. There are sufficient hard and grassed surface areas and a good range and quality of small apparatus, which ensures that the outdoor curriculum can be effectively taught. However, the gymnasium, situated in the basement, although adequate in size, is not well lit and continues to provide an uninviting learning environment and is not decorated as well as the rest of the school. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides good leadership and management. The policy has recently been updated and the subject leader undertakes an annual subject evaluation with areas for development. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. For example, the quality of teaching and resources have improved, and the subject leader is now more involved in monitoring and evaluating the subject. However, assessment procedures, identified for development at the time of the last inspection, have still to be produced.
95. There was not enough evidence in **music** to make a secure judgement on provision. However, from evidence in lessons and in assemblies standards of singing are satisfactory. The guidance to help teachers plan lessons is very helpful and ensures that pupils receive the full range of activities within the music curriculum. In the two lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory with good use made of resources that gave all pupils the opportunity to develop performance and evaluation skills. Their achievement in these lessons was sound. Pupils clearly enjoyed the experience of performance. The school provides regular opportunities for them to perform in assemblies and to parents, which develop their skills in this area. Concerts and seasonal performances are very well attended and music provides a very good link with parents.
96. Good opportunities for enrichment are also taken; in particular, there is a strong link with the local secondary school. Pupils have attended brass band concerts there and Years 1 and 2 have received skilled music teaching from their specialist staff. African drummers and performers have also visited the school from other cultures. The current Year 6 has

worked with the Welsh National Opera. These experiences have widened their musical horizons considerably since the last inspection.

97. The co-ordinator is aware that staff confidence and skills within music vary. Consequently, arrangements have been made for her to be released to provide a significant amount of specialist support from September onwards. A small number of pupils play instruments and the co-ordinator is seeking external funding to enlarge the opportunities for pupils to do this.

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

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

98. The school has taken a strategic decision to place at the heart of the school the PSHCE of its pupils. There are well-planned opportunities for all pupils to develop a positive self-image, which contributes to good attitudes and good learning in lessons. The headteacher has ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have the appropriate skills to deliver the programme. All classes have at least one lesson a week where they debate and discuss issues that affect their life and the lives of others. Teachers are skilful at involving all pupils in discussions and during lessons there is support for those with special educational needs to ensure that they play a full part. In addition the many visits out of school, together with the many visitors all help to develop pupils' understanding of the world around them, their own personal feelings and their relationships with others. In this way they learn to value themselves and their abilities.
99. The school follows the local authority programme, which is comprehensive in its content and includes drugs education and healthy eating. There is a strong emphasis placed on healthy bodies, food and fitness. Supplementing the programme is innovative teaching such as relaxation and visualisation techniques, which are particularly helpful to pupils who have problems in self-control. The teaching of citizenship is central to building pupils' self-esteem. Particularly helpful in improving a sense of responsibility are the discrete topics taught in circle time<sup>9</sup>, the peer mentors and school council. Behaviour has improved because pupils learn to form constructive relationships and incidents of bullying and antisocial behaviour have been reduced.

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<sup>9</sup> Circle Time: a lesson whereby all the class come together to discuss and solve issues that might be a concern.

## 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  | 2            |
| 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   | 5            |
| Attitudes  | 3            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 2            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 2            |
| <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  | 4            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                           | 3            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 2            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 3            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 3            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 3            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 2            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 2            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 2            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>3</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 3            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 2            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 3            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 3            |

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



