

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KIRKBY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kirkby, near Liverpool

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104448

Headteacher: Mair Hindmarsh

Lead inspector: Lynne Read

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 November 2003

Inspection number: 256641

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	261
School address:	Hall Lane Kirkby Liverpool
Postcode:	L32 1TZ
Telephone number:	0151 4778510
Fax number:	0151 4778511
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd Stratford
Date of previous inspection:	28 September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kirkby CE Primary is a popular school in the north of Kirkby. Social and economic circumstances are below average, overall. Children entering the nursery class have a range of learning experiences that are below those typical for the age group and, in language and mathematical development, they are well below. With 261 pupils on roll, it is around the average size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (23 per cent) is slightly above average. Some pupils have moderate learning, physical, or behavioural difficulties. Just under one per cent of the school population has a Statement of Special Educational Needs and this is below the national average. Almost 25 per cent of pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is above average. Most pupils are of a White British background. A few are of Caribbean or African heritage and all speak English as their first language. The school receives funding from the 'Excellence in Cities' project, has the Investors in People award and received the government's Achievement Award in 2001 for improved standards.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21199	Lynne Read	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Foundation stage Art Music Religious education
19343	Marion Howell	Lay inspector	
23262	Philip Martin	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Science Geography History
22482	Bruce Potter	Team inspector	English Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Kirkby CE is a **good** school with some **very good** features. Pupils achieve well from entry to the nursery class to Year 6. Teaching is very **good** for children in the nursery and reception classes. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good and much is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**; management is **good**. Pupils who have special educational needs are **well supported** and enjoy all that the school has to offer. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in English and mathematics is very good and at least good in all other subjects.
- For the present Year 6 group, attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Teachers have a good range of expertise; they work hard and are skilled practitioners.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) is very good.
- There is very good provision for personal development and, as a result, pupils have very good attitudes, they behave very well and there are very good relationships.
- The curriculum offers a good range of learning opportunities for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs.
- The headteacher is very successful in driving the school forward and in overcoming barriers to learning. She is effectively supported by the senior and subject managers.

There are two main areas for development:

- Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are not as well developed as their knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- Governors are not sufficiently active in shaping the direction of the school.

### Improvements

There have been **good** improvements since the last inspection, especially in levels of attainment and provision in the Foundation Stage and in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). All the key issues have been **successfully addressed**.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**The 2003 results illustrate very good achievement** as pupils progress from a starting point that is well below average to average or above average standards in Year 6. This is because of:

- the focused work done in the early years, including very good links with the pre-school group;
- the intervention class where pupils 'catch up' on skills, knowledge and understanding;
- pupils' challenging learning targets that build well on prior achievements and drive learning forward at a faster-than-average pace.

Inspection judgements are that attainment in English is above average for the current Year 6 group and has improved because of the school's action to improve boys' reading and writing. In mathematics, attainment is above average. Scientific knowledge and understanding are good but skills of enquiry require further development; overall, attainment in science is average. Pupils do well

in art and design, music, and physical education and standards are above expectations. The individual tracking system allows teachers to monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and those from different ethnic groups. The rate of their learning is equal to that of the majority of pupils. Attainment trends at the school tend to fluctuate according to the numbers of pupils who have special educational needs in the different year groups. In the light of some challenging circumstances, the school has done well to maintain improvement at the same rate as that seen nationally.

**Attitudes:** The school has a caring ethos. **Provision for social and moral development is very good and for spiritual and cultural development it is good. Consequently, pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.** Relationships are built on mutual respect and are **very good**. Attendance is broadly **in line** with the national average and pupils are punctual.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is good and in the Foundation Stage and the Years 1 and 2 intervention class, it is very good.**

**Teaching is good.** Specialist teaching in art and design and music is successful in promoting pupils' interests and attainment. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class is very good with work planned to meet the individual's needs. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is excellent and provides considerable intellectual challenge. Teaching assistants are experienced and well briefed. They make a valuable contribution to learning.

**Curriculum:** There is a **good, broad** curriculum that successfully promotes pupils' creative, physical, aesthetic and academic skills. The accommodation is **satisfactory**, overall, but there is a lack of space which means that the library and the computer suite are very small.

**Care and guidance is good.** Pupils form trusting relationships with adults and say that they feel safe. Pupils who have special educational needs have good support and specialist help to access all lessons and activities.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The headteacher is constantly looking for ways to drive the school forward and her leadership is very good. The senior managers form an effective team and have high aspirations.** Together with the subject leaders, they are clearly focused on improvement and have a **good** overview of teaching and learning. The school monitors performance and takes action where needed. The effectiveness of procedures is seen in the very successful work done to tackle the issue of low attainment on entry to school and to improve the attainment of boys. Governors are supportive, are fully committed to the aims and ethos of the school and have a basic overview of attainment and provision. A new, larger governing body has recently been elected and members are aware of the need to develop their role. Present systems for gathering information rely too heavily on the headteacher and governors are not active in shaping the direction of the school. Governance is **unsatisfactory** at present.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The results of the parents' questionnaires, discussions and meetings show that parents and pupils have **very positive** views of the school. Parents commend the headteacher and her staff for their dedication and commitment. Pupils say that they like their teachers and enjoy their lessons.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop further pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation in science.

- Develop the work of the governing body so that governors have a thorough overview of attainment and provision and a greater involvement in school development planning.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Children in the nursery and reception classes **achieve very well** from a low starting point. Pupils in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class also achieve **very well**. Standards seen during the inspection in English and mathematics are **above average** by Year 6. Achievement is very **good** in these subjects. Standards in science match the **national average**. This represents **good** achievement. Attainment in art and design, music and physical education is **above expectations**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve very well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical understanding and in personal and social development. Achievement in the other areas of learning is good.
- In the Year 2 class pupils are attaining at an above-average level in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. Skills in writing have improved considerably and attainment is about average.
- In lessons seen in Year 6 attainment in English and mathematics is above average and in science it is average. These results represent very good achievement in English and mathematics and good achievement in science.
- Achievements are very good in art and design, music and physical education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting point.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well and those capable of higher attainment extend their learning successfully to areas outside the National Curriculum.
- Skills of scientific experimentation and investigation are less well developed than knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- Boys have, historically, attained lower standards than girls in writing in Years 3 to 6. This issue is currently being addressed by teachers and good progress has been made.

#### Commentary

1. When children enter school in the nursery, their skills and knowledge are below those for the age group and well below in language development and mathematical understanding. For some children, personal skills are very limited. Those who have had the benefit of pre-school learning are better prepared in terms of personal, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. For those children who have not had this advantage, prior learning is well below average in these four areas also. Children achieve very well in personal development, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding in the nursery and reception classes. A scrutiny of assessments, records and evidence gathered from the pupils in Year 1, show that attainment remains below average in language and mathematical understanding, although children have made considerable gains in their learning. Overall, most children attain the expected learning goals in personal, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the reception class.
2. Achievement in the nursery and reception classes has improved further since the last inspection. The school recognised that the low starting point for many children was a major barrier to learning and was depressing attainment levels by the end of Year 6. Measures taken to overcome this problem include:
  - the development of a pre-school group taking children from age two;
  - a system of entry to nursery on the child's third birthday;
  - a complete re-organisation of the learning environment and planning.The success is seen in the improved attainment as the children move into Year 1.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.4 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. There were some very pleasing improvements to writing in 2003, with results that were well above the national average as well as for schools in similar circumstances. This followed a school focus on developing skills. The reading results were below the national average but in line with the average for schools in similar circumstances. Observations made during the inspection indicate that standards in reading are better this year. One major factor in the improved attainment lies in the school's efforts to inspire and support boys' reading and to find books that will appeal to their tastes. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 2 in mathematics was average in 2003 but very few gained the higher level. This is because pupils start at a low point and do very well to gain the average; those who are capable of higher attainment are fully challenged. A similar picture is seen in science, where all pupils achieved the expected level 2 but none reached the higher level 3. Scientific knowledge is good but skills in practical enquiry require further development. The work seen from last year shows that, by the end of Year 2, pupils' spelling is largely accurate, handwriting is well formed and the higher-attaining pupils are including detail in their well-punctuated sentences. In mathematics, pupils are confident in calculating mentally and have a secure understanding of shape, measures and in making graphs and charts.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27 (25.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.4 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.2 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Results for 2003 show a pleasing improvement on 2002 and reflect the school's concerted efforts to raise attainment. When compared with schools nationally, they are average for English and science and well above average for mathematics. This is an impressive achievement when consideration of the low starting point is taken into account. When compared with schools in similar social circumstances attainment is well above average in all three subjects. Achievement between Year 2 and Year 6 is judged as good for the present Year 6 group. This is largely because the efforts made to improve boys' writing are now bearing fruit, with a better percentage working at the average mark this year. In mathematics, achievement is very good from Years 2 to 6 and in science it is good.
5. A very important factor in the good and very good results is the thorough system of assessment, of tracking pupils' progress and setting learning targets year on year. The school sets above-average challenge for most pupils and this is a major factor in the good rates of learning seen. At the same time, subject managers have analysed test results and concentrated on identified areas of relative weakness. For the last year these have included boys' writing and practical science. The other major factors are the pupils' very good attitudes to work and the good quality of teaching.
6. Last year's targets for the Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics were challenging. Results in English fell marginally short of them, largely due to issues with boys' writing that are now

being addressed successfully. In mathematics, results exceeded the targets. In Year 6 a good number of pupils are attaining the higher level (around 20 per cent in English, above 30 per cent in mathematics and 40 per cent in science). This is a clear indication of some very good achievement, since the majority of children enter the nursery as below average. There are good improvements since the last inspection, especially in English and mathematics and in the numbers reaching the higher level 5 for all tested subjects. The key issue relating to speaking skills has been very well addressed with an emphasis on communication from the nursery upwards and very good use of role-play areas.

7. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well throughout school. They have individual learning goals that are set at regular intervals. Their parents are kept informed of progress made and advised on how to help at home. The broad curriculum allows pupils to develop their creative, physical or practical skills so that all have the opportunity to find their own talents. There are some very good achievements in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class. Small numbers enable the teacher to plan specifically for individual needs and to accelerate learning where gaps are identified.
8. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved and matches expectations in all aspects of the subject. Pupils use their ICT skills for research and in checking, organising and presenting their work. Good improvements to the curriculum and teaching of art and design, music and physical education have resulted in attainment that is above expectations by Year 6. The school is now well placed in its application for the nationally recognised 'Artsmark' and 'Activemark' awards. In all other subjects, attainment matches expectations.
9. Through the tracking system, teachers check on the progress made by different groups of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and pupils from various ethnic groups are achieving as well as their peers. Those who are gifted and talented have excellent provision for one day each week from the last term in Year 3 to Year 6. Their achievements spread above and beyond the National Curriculum for primary schools and an inspiring curriculum allows them to use their gifts to the full.

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

The school is **very successful** in promoting personal development. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are **very good** throughout school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good relationships throughout the school.
  - The school has very high expectations of good conduct.
  - The pupils are confident and know they are valued.
  - Pupils can clearly distinguish right from wrong.
  - There is a very strong feeling of community within the school.
10. Very good relationships exist between pupils, and between pupils and teachers. During lessons and breaks the pupils work and play very well together. They readily offer help to their fellow pupils in lessons, and this was illustrated during a Year 3 art lesson. One pupil was having some difficulty understanding which hieroglyph to use in spelling his name when a friend intervened and very sensitively explained the system to him. Pupils listen to their friends and respect the different opinions expressed. They feel comfortable to talk to adults in school, both about their work and their interests. The teachers act as very good role models and the pupils follow the example. As a result, there is a great deal of mutual respect.
  11. The pupils live up to the very high expectations their teachers have of them. They clearly know and understand the reasons for the school rules, and very little time needs to be spent correcting inappropriate behaviour. During lessons there is quiet background music played,

and the pupils say this helps them to 'feel calm' and to concentrate. The tempo of the music is altered to suit different situations. For example, a livelier tune is played when the pupils are getting changed for their games lessons. The atmosphere in the dining-room is calm and friendly, and again very little active supervision is needed. The pupils clearly enjoy their outdoor playtime and make good use of the space and equipment available to them. There is a friendly and harmonious atmosphere within the school which creates a very good environment for learning.

12. Spiritual education is promoted effectively through worship, religious education lessons and, wherever possible, through the curriculum. For example, children in the Foundation Stage showed pleasure and wonder as they observed mini-beasts that they found in the garden. There is a strong emphasis on creative aspects of the curriculum and this allows pupils to flourish and express their individuality. Teaching styles allow pupils to pose their own questions and to articulate their thoughts and ideas.
13. The school promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem very successfully through a very good programme of social education. Pupils are very willing to offer their opinions. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to take responsibility and show initiative. For example, the Year 6 pupils help the younger children during the lunch break and also at rainy playtimes. They undertake secretarial duties during the lunch-time break, and many also help with paired reading. The 'wrap around care' provided at the school for children from two years old makes a significant and very important contribution to the confidence and prior learning of the children as they enter the nursery.
14. The provision for moral education is very good and pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The strong Christian ethos of the school is evident, and has a significant effect on the attitudes of both pupils and staff. During discussions with pupil school council members, they stressed that 'honesty is very important' and could give examples of how the teachers emphasise the need for truth at all times. They explained clearly why school rules exist and knew very well the rewards and sanctions used by their teachers.
15. The feeling of community within the school is very strong and stems from the good emphasis on cultural education. The pupils are proud of their school and very much enjoy being members of it. They take an active part in the local community, both through the links with the church and other organisations. Pupils from Year 6 are members of the local authority's 'Children's Parliament', where they undertake project work and attend termly meetings. They know about, and respect, different faiths and understand how customs and life styles differ around the world. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in our multicultural society. Pupils are well aware of the fact that there are many in the world who are less fortunate than themselves and they work enthusiastically to collect for charities.

## Attendance

Attendance rates are broadly in line with the national average and they are better than similar schools within the area. The staff work hard to monitor patterns of absence and do all they can to encourage regular attendance. Most pupils arrive on time and families are very supportive in this respect. Any late-comers are welcomed as part of the school's policy. Staff and governors very sensibly decided that it is better to have the pupil come to school late than not at all.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0%
National data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1%
National data	0.5%

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



## Exclusions

The lack of exclusions is further evidence of pupils' very good attitudes and of the school's commitment to promoting personal development.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	256	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** and there are some **very good** features. Most of the teaching is **good** and the curriculum offers a **good** range of learning opportunities. Consequently pupils learn effectively and make **very good** gains from the time they enter the nursery to the end of Year 6.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **predominantly good** throughout school and often it is **very good**. This promotes **very good** achievement in the Foundation Stage, in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class and in English, mathematics, art and design, music and physical education. There are **thorough and good** processes in place for checking pupils' progress and for setting challenging targets for future learning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good range of subject knowledge, including a very good understanding of the needs of children in the nursery and reception classes.
- The teachers' planning is good and uses assessment information well to target the next steps in learning; most effectively so in English and mathematics.
- Specialist teaching enhances learning in art and design and music.
- Teaching assistants are knowledgeable, well briefed and deployed effectively.
- Teachers use a range of techniques and resources to challenge, motivate and encourage pupils. They have high expectations.
- Staff ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in all lessons and receive the support that they need. Provision in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class is very good.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	12 (28%)	25 (58%)	5 (12%)	0	0	0

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

16. The teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Children have an inviting range of activities where they explore, investigate and exercise informed choice. Staff work very closely as a team and all have specific roles either in teaching new skills or in supporting children as they apply their new knowledge. There is a very strong emphasis on independent learning and communication skills. Staff work hard to create an outside area that is rich in opportunity and supports learning very well. On one afternoon during the inspection the range of activities enjoyed in the fresh air included:
  - creative activities, such as role-play and music and dance areas;
  - physical activities, such as the permanent climbing and adventure equipment, wheeled toys and throwing and threading exercises;
  - tasks to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world, such as sorting and matching activities, construction opportunities and an investigation of living things;
  - activities to extend mathematical understanding, such as a road mat for directional work and a sand pit for comparing the capacity of containers;
  - communication, language and literacy work, including the writing and reading areas, nursery rhyme tapes and constant engagement with adults.
17. Staff encourage children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments and this provides a good, additional amount of space for activities such as indoor water or construction play.
18. Information about children's learning is collected on a daily basis in the Foundation Stage. Thorough records of progress are kept and these are very well used to plan the next steps in learning so that children move on quickly.
19. In Years 1 and 2, teachers focus on developing a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy. During guided and individual reading sessions, they promote a good range of strategies to help pupils tackle new texts and in mathematics lessons, they encourage the use of different approaches to problem-solving. At the same time, they ensure a broad balance across all other subjects of the National Curriculum. This prepares pupils effectively for the demanding work in the junior classes.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils who require additional help are identified as soon as possible when they begin school. The special educational needs co-ordinator, together with the class teacher, discuss and develop pupils' individual education plans. These are implemented well. Teachers use skilful questioning to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons, so enabling them to make consistent gains in their learning.
21. Teaching in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class is very good. Lessons are based on developing skills that have not been fully mastered in the reception class and also on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There are very good links with parents. Through these measures, pupils are supported very well in their achievements. For example, in one physical education lesson, pupils worked on co-ordinating their movements, creative interpretation of the music, listening skills and their use of space. As a result of the careful planning and very good support, pupils often do well enough to cope with the more usual curriculum and transfer into another class. Their places are then taken by others who may be experiencing some difficulty. Parents speak very highly of this provision and view the class as a very positive feature of the school.
22. Throughout school, teachers prepare and plan their lessons with great care and with constant reference to prior learning. This ensures that pupils have the challenge or support they need to do their best. Challenging targets are set twice each year and these drive learning at a faster pace than average. Pupils, and their parents, talk about their individual learning targets for English and mathematics on the review days. Marking often includes reference to the targets so pupils know what they need to do next. All wording is carefully chosen to ensure that pupils

understand. Targets are kept in exercise books or in the 'Going for Gold' records and, when asked, pupils explained their targets and were able to judge how well they were doing. As a result of these measures, pupils evaluate their own progress and are developing well as independent learners. Teachers are also able to keep a close eye on learning and to intervene quickly where problems occur.

23. Teachers use ICT effectively to prepare lessons and to find extra sources of information. The interactive whiteboard in Year 4 is used very well to enhance teaching. In one whole-class session, pupils used the facilities to explore the effects of moving adverbs around the sentence in a very effective way. They were able to compare and contrast an instructional text with a video, drawing out the relative advantages of each in specific situations.
24. The quality of teaching has improved well since the last inspection. Specialist teaching has been developed in art and design and music. This is leading to above-average standards in both subjects. The teaching for gifted and talented pupils is of exceptional quality. Pupils extend their learning into areas such as philosophy and they begin to appreciate that they can use their intelligence in different ways to solve problems. Below is a brief commentary of the excellent lesson seen for Year 6 pupils.
25. The class was made up of pupils who are identified as Year 6 higher achievers from Kirkby CE and neighbouring schools. The objective of the lesson was to develop creative thinking and verbal intelligence.

## EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

### Example of outstanding practice

The lesson began by pupils revising what they knew about 'the amazing brain' and verbal intelligence. They discussed ways of improving their skills by playing word games, learning a number of new words each week, learning word roots, prefixes and suffixes and developing new words from them. The new word roots introduced by the teacher included 'put' to think and 'tech' a skill. Pupils then defined words such as 'computer' or 'technology' using their new knowledge. They then worked at a fast pace on several exercises, collaborating with a partner. They worked out the meaning of words such as 'kinesiology', generated new words from a given root such as 'viv' (life), created a 'pyramid' of words containing the same initial root and combined words in a fun way (grossology = the study of horrible things). Learning was excellent and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed their challenges.

26. The headteacher, together with the subject and senior managers constantly evaluate the success of teaching and provide helpful feedback. There is a good programme of training in place to enhance skills. Teachers pool their ideas and successes through staff meetings and this is an effective way of sharing good practice. Teaching assistants know the expected learning outcomes for the group or pupil they are working with and are conversant with the specific learning programmes for those pupils who have special educational needs. Very good relationships are an important feature in lessons. Teachers set high standards and expect pupils to work hard. Pupils rise to the challenge because they know that their efforts are valued and will be rewarded through praise and encouragement. This is helping them to develop good industrious habits and an intrinsic love of learning.

## The curriculum

The curriculum for the nursery and reception children is **very good** in the breadth and balance of the opportunities it provides. For pupils in Years 1 to 6 it is **good** in these respects and very good in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class. There have been **good improvements** to the curriculum since the previous inspection. The accommodation is **satisfactory**, overall, but lacking in space. Resources are **never less than satisfactory and often good**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad and balanced, interesting and worthwhile curriculum.
- Children in the nursery and reception experience a very good range of activities, which are well resourced and specifically planned to meet their needs and to encourage skills of investigation and exploration.
- There are good links between different subjects of the curriculum that reinforce learning.
- There is good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs. Provision is very good in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class.
- The school makes good provision for the personal, social and health education of its pupils.
- Pupils have full and equal access to all the activities the school has to offer.
- Improvements in the provision for ICT are very good.
- There is good enrichment to the statutory curriculum, including the good provision for the participation in sports and the arts.
- There is a good match of staff expertise to the demands of the curriculum.
- The school library is small and there is little space for research.
- There is a lack of space in the accommodation and some areas are cramped.

## Commentary

27. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and those of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Good planning enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects and areas of learning. The curriculum is conscientiously reviewed and updated to embrace new developments and to ensure its relevance and enjoyment for pupils. The staff work hard to ensure that every pupil is fully included in all that the school has to offer. The excellent provision of innovative lessons is catering for the needs of those junior pupils who are identified as having special gifts or talents. Peripatetic music lessons by the specialist teacher allow interested pupils to extend their creative skills, once they have completed the 'taster sessions' in Year 3.
28. The curriculum supports pupils who have special educational needs effectively. This support is particularly effective in the intervention class of Years 1 and 2 pupils because of the very good teaching and very good use of assessment to ensure that lessons are well-adapted to children's specific needs. A number of parents commented very favourably on the progress their children made in this class.
29. Subjects and areas of learning are often linked appropriately; for example, an historical area of study is the focus in a literacy lesson for Year 6 on journalistic styles and conventions. The school's good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is timetabled and taught as a curricular area and is also well incorporated into the wider curriculum. For example, the importance of cleanliness and hygiene is stressed in the food technology element of design technology. Pupils are often helped to make sense of their experiences through some sensitive discussions in religious education. Both PSHE and citizenship have an appropriately high priority in the curriculum. The provision of homework is satisfactory and includes relevant tasks that supplement the work done in class.
30. There is a good range of expertise across all subjects. Teachers use both literacy and numeracy well across the curriculum to enhance learning opportunities. For instance, mathematical skills are used to measure accurately or create graphs in science. Speaking and listening skills are promoted very successfully in class and group discussions and reading and writing skills are well applied in research and recording. The school has extended the time allocated for English to help address the issues with writing that the staff have identified.
31. There have been very significant improvements in the provision for ICT. The accommodation has been adapted to provide a much-needed computer suite and there are more computers in classrooms. This is proving to be an important factor in the improved teaching and learning for

ICT. The school has one interactive whiteboard that is very well used to enhance learning opportunities for Year 4 pupils. There are plans in place to extend this provision to all classes, as the budget allows.

32. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory with both sporting and art activities provided either at lunch-times or after school. Participation in musical and sporting events is providing good opportunities for pupils to extend their social skills, sometimes by competing and sometimes by performing before an audience. A good programme of visitors to the school provides enrichment and support for the curriculum, as in the case of visits by poets and artists. There are very good arrangements for children entering the nursery and reception classes and again, as they move into more formal education in Year 1. These include close involvement with families. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commended the staff's efforts in easing the transition.
33. The accommodation is satisfactory, with many positive features. Where there are drawbacks, they are usually areas which the school can do very little about, for example, the lack of space. There is, at present, no area available to develop the library and provide better research facilities. The school has been very imaginative in creating space for the computer suite but, nevertheless, the room is of a very inconvenient shape. It is to the pupils' great credit that they manage to negotiate the very limited space in a sensible manner. Staff work hard to ensure that the lack of space does not affect learning.
34. Overall, the school provision of resources is satisfactory and good for the Foundation Stage, ICT, art and design and religious education. The supply of books and materials for English is good and teachers provide attractive reading and research areas in classrooms to compensate for the small library. Displays in school contribute well to the pleasant learning environment. Pupils' work is carefully presented, valued and celebrated.

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

The school makes **good** provision for the pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. There is **very good** support and guidance for pupils' academic and personal development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good procedures in place to meet the personal and emotional needs of the individual pupil.
- Procedures to check learning and to set challenging targets for development are well-developed and effective.
- There are very good induction arrangements for pupils entering the school, and for when they move into the higher classes.
- Pupils trust their teachers and know that they can turn to them for help.

### **Commentary**

35. All pupils are valued as individuals, and their teachers have very good knowledge of both them and their families. Personal development is monitored informally and this works well. The school deals sensitively with any problems the pupils may be having at home. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that they were particularly satisfied with the sensitive bereavement counselling that their children had received. At present, there are a number of pupils in school who have special medical needs and the staff have received specific training to ensure that they can cope.
36. Pupils' learning is checked on a regular basis in all subjects. Monitoring of progress in English and mathematics is particularly thorough and is very good. Each pupil has targets that are clearly worded and explained to the individual and to his or her parents on the review days. These targets are based on prior learning and contain an above-average amount of challenge,

especially in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils achieve their goals and this is an important underlying factor in the very good achievement seen in the two subjects. Pupils enjoy their successes and this motivates them even further and encourages sustained effort.

37. The school has very good induction arrangements to help the children enjoy their first experience of nursery and school. The provision begins when the children join the 'Busy Fingers' playgroup and continues as they transfer to nursery, then into reception and finally into Year 1. Teachers keep parents well informed of the procedures and routines, and this enables them to help their children as they settle into their new surroundings. The children are introduced gradually to the phase of more formal education in Year 1 so that they make the move happily and with confidence. The school does all it can to prepare pupils for the transfer to the secondary phase of education. Satisfactory links are established, although this is sometimes difficult where parents choose secondary schools out of the local authority. Parents commented that their older children had settled well after they left Kirkby and no problems were mentioned.
38. The pupils have confidence in their teachers and know that they can turn to them for help. They are sure they will be listened to, and that any worries will be taken seriously. The pupils completed a questionnaire before the inspection, and many of them said how much they liked their teachers, and commented on how kind they were. They also mentioned that they had fun in their lessons and that their teachers smiled a lot. The welcoming and caring atmosphere within the school helps the pupils to feel safe and secure.
39. The school offers good support and guidance to pupils with special educational needs. This has a positive impact on their learning. In the intervention class for Years 1 and 2 pupils, adults help pupils to develop good learning habits. The special needs co-ordinator carefully considers pupils' views when preparing their education plans so that they share in setting the goals.

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

The links with parents, other schools and the community are **good**. Parents are **very supportive** of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The parents are happy with the education their children receive.
- The school has good links with the local community and the church.
- There are very good links with the pre-school providers.

### **Commentary**

40. There was very strong support for the school from the parents who responded to the questionnaire, and from the high number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting. They are particularly appreciative of the progress their children make, the good teaching at the school and the help their children receive to settle in. They say that behaviour is good and that they have good advice about helping their children at home.
41. The school works closely with a number of local organisations. The links with the church are strong, and the pupils are involved in many activities throughout the year. The pupils benefit from the wide variety of visits they make to nearby places of interest and from the speakers who are invited into the school. There are particularly effective links with the local ranger service. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 were very enthusiastic when the ranger brought in a barn owl to show them. They took a great interest and asked sensible and relevant questions. The pupils also undertake a variety of environmental projects. The pupils' understanding of their own community and the wider world is significantly increased through the use the school makes of the local environment.

42. There are very good links with the pre-school providers who share the school facilities. Joint meetings are held to ensure that the teaching methods and routines used in the Busy Fingers group and the nursery match those used in the main school. The children become familiar with the main school building, and join the nursery class for certain activities. The close co-operation between the school and the providers has a significant impact on children's learning and of the way they settle when they eventually join the main school.
43. The school also has effective links with nearby teaching colleges, who commend the very good support their student teachers are given. In return, the pupils benefit from the varied interests and talents that the trainee teachers bring. The school is a member of a local cluster group and the pupils benefit from such links. The 'Excel' programme for gifted and talented pupils is a joint venture with cluster schools and is particularly effective. In addition to the classes that Years 4 to 6 pupils attend, teachers have received training in the 'mind-based' techniques used in the project so they can use them for the benefit of all pupils. Homework and booster classes are provided through the cluster group, and pupils from the school take advantage of the extra provision to enhance their learning.
44. The school has good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are consulted about their children's education plans and are fully informed about the results of reviews. The school keeps parents closely involved when further support and involvement from outside agencies is needed.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good** and is a major factor in the success of the school. The role of senior staff has improved considerably since the last inspection and they show **good** leadership. **Good** management enables the school to run smoothly. Governors fulfil their statutory duties but in some important respects, their governance is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher, senior teachers and subject managers encourages high aspirations.
- Information gathered from the school's rigorous self-evaluation programme is used effectively in school improvement planning.
- There is very good teamwork, strong vision and effective sharing of expertise.
- Day-to-day practice reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to all parts of school life.
- Innovative measures are taken to tackle identified barriers to learning and to enrich provision.
- Governors have a limited knowledge of the performance of the school and rely too heavily on the headteacher.

### Commentary

#### *Leadership*

45. The school's leaders promote the mission statement by striving for high achievement and providing a caring environment where all pupils, regardless of any special need they may have, are fully integrated into all activities. The headteacher is highly regarded by parents and governors who value her hard work, approachability and commitment. There is a strong sense of shared purpose and a clear vision for future development among members of the senior management team, the headteacher and the subject managers. Staff are constantly looking for ways to improve achievement. One major barrier that was identified is now being addressed very well as a result of some original solutions. The issue was the low level of prior learning for many children entering the nursery class. The solutions included:
  - dedicating a room in the building for use as a pre-school group for children aged two;

- developing links with the providers of the group so that the environment, teaching methods and resources matched those of the Foundation Stage;
- providing some staff from the Foundation Stage to work in the pre-school group regularly so that they get to know the children;
- developing a staggered intake of children on their third birthday so that they have the maximum time in the Foundation Stage.

As a result, children who attend the group arrive in nursery with better skills than previously and many more are attaining the expected levels of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Other examples of innovation include:

- the very good provision for gifted and talented pupils arranged in conjunction with neighbouring schools;
- the re-designing of part of the building to provide a much-needed computer suite;
- the assessment manager's work in developing new customised, computerised records that are very clear and easy for teachers to follow;
- the review days where pupils accompany their parents to discuss how well they are doing and decide on future targets.

At the same time, leadership is very successful in promoting an all-round education where creative, practical and physical skills are well promoted and valued. The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in the very good standards of pupils' personal development, their enjoyment of lessons and the pleasant, welcoming environment. Subject managers have a good overview of teaching and learning in their areas through checking completed work, looking at planning and observing lessons. They write action plans identifying future developments and take responsibility for their budget allocation.

46. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection and the role of the senior teachers has been extended well. The two deputy headteachers share in the day-to-day running of the school. The senior management team consists of the leaders of the Foundation Stage, infants and juniors and is flexible enough to include the managers of special projects, such as the leader of the behaviour initiative. In this way, communications are facilitated and potential problems are identified early. The system also allows for good professional development, with team leaders for each stage in school.
47. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed. The special needs co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the Code of Practice for this provision and provides a very good model through her own practice. She has identified the need for class teachers to become more involved in drawing up education plans for pupils in their own classes and in ensuring that these are followed.

### *Management*

48. There is a thorough and effective cycle of self-evaluation at the school that includes a planned programme of classroom observations by the headteacher, senior managers and subject managers. Good improvements in teaching have been made since the last inspection as a result of this work. Data from national and optional tests are analysed carefully to see if there are any areas requiring further development. The detailed tracking and target-setting system allows the headteacher to check that individuals, classes and year groups are making the expected progress and to check that good challenges are set for the higher-attaining pupils. Newly developed records are making the task easier and the system is to be extended so that all teachers have access to it. The experienced school administrator has a good deal of expertise and covers a varied range of duties to provide good support. Standards of safety and cleanliness are kept high through the vigilant work of the site manager. Any issues identified are quickly reported and acted upon. The accommodation and resources are used efficiently and best value is routinely sought. Taking into account the good quality of education, the very good achievement in English and mathematics, the very good leadership, good management and costs that are slightly above the national average, the school provides good value for money.

## Governance

49. The governors are supportive of the school and have the interests of the pupils at heart. The acting Chair of Governors has worked well with the headteacher and all statutory requirements are in place.
50. There are link governors in place to support managers of literacy, numeracy, ICT and special educational needs and those governors who work in school have a good overview of everyday practice. Over the last year, there have been some problems with attendance at meetings, making it difficult for governors to share the workload and to take decisions. At the time of the inspection a new, expanded, governing body had just been elected together with a new permanent chairman. In meetings with members of the inspection team, the governors showed a keenness to succeed and were well aware that governance needs to improve. In particular, governors are not sufficiently informed about standards and rely heavily on the headteacher for much of the information they need to monitor the school's success.

## Financial information

The balance carried forward is slightly above recommendations because part of it is allocated for specific projects. It is the school's policy to hold a minimum of reserve to cope with unforeseen circumstances.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	589,308
Total expenditure	577,248
Expenditure per pupil	2,212

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20,288
Balance carried forward to the next	32,348

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning (nursery and reception classes) is **very good**.

Provision has improved further since the last inspection. The revised, nationally recommended curriculum has been fully implemented and children's progress is checked regularly so that they are constantly provided with new challenges. The resources, organisation and planning of the nursery and reception classes have been completely revised. The new layout allows children to explore and investigate and to initiate their own line of enquiry, thereby developing skills of independent learning very successfully. There are very close links with the pre-school group that bring many benefits to children's learning.

The school accepts children throughout the year, immediately after their third birthday. This ensures that they have the maximum amount of time in the Foundation Stage and is a significant factor in the very good learning seen. Records show that prior learning of the children when they enter the nursery is below average and skills in communication, language and literacy, and aspects of mathematical understanding are well below average. Personal and social development is also well below average in some cases, especially for those children who have not had the benefit of pre-school provision. There is a varied and exciting range of activities provided throughout the day, both inside and outside. These promote children's social, academic, imaginative, creative and physical skills very successfully. As a result, children achieve very well and lay down very firm foundations for their later learning. Evidence from records and last year's reception group, who have just moved into Year 1, shows that most achieve what is expected in personal and social development, in their understanding of the world around them, and in creative and physical development. In communication and language and in mathematical understanding, attainment is generally below average although very significant gains have been made from the low starting point. Children who have not achieved the expected goals have very good support in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class, where the work is targeted on closing the gaps in their early learning as well as moving forward along the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

There are very good arrangements to ensure that children settle into the nursery class with ease, to help them cope with full time school when they enter the reception class and, again, as they move into formal education at Year 1. Systems ensure that they are well prepared for the new challenges that they meet. There are very good links with parents and carers who are invited into school to learn about how children are taught. This enables the sharing of information and ensures that individual needs are very well met. Many parents help in the Foundation Stage; they are well trained and their work provides a valuable asset, especially in the promotion of language and literacy skills.

The provision is very well managed and there is a good ratio of adults to children. There is a busy, productive atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Planning is extremely thorough, there is very good teamwork and all adults are carefully allocated to specific areas. There is a good balance of intervention and support for children's learning and of guided sessions where new skills are taught. The teachers and teaching assistants have a very good level of expertise in early learning which enables them to meet the needs of their young charges effectively.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and the caring ethos of the school promote personal development well.
- Children maintain attention, concentrate on their tasks and ask appropriate questions.
- Relationships are very good; children mix and play with confidence.
- Children are encouraged to be independent and care for themselves effectively.

### Commentary

51. The quality of teaching in this area is of a very good standard. Children are well aware of the adults' high expectations; as a result, they show very good behaviour and follow the simple rules. In both classes, staff act as positive role models and children copy them by showing care and concern for others. Staff know their children very well because they constantly check on personal development. Children show respect for one another and adults and demonstrate good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. There is very good promotion of children's self-esteem and they are willing to 'have a go' at new activities because they trust their teachers.
52. From the earliest days in the nursery children make good relationships, learning to share and to wait their turn. They enter school eagerly, ready to take part in the activities set out for the day. They work together well and show pleasure when given praise. When playing in the outdoor 'garage', children politely ask if they may have a turn on the tricycles and, in most cases, there is a readiness to share. Snack time can be taken at any time during the session and this provides a good social occasion where children talk quietly with their friends. Reception children show increasing independence in selecting resources and activities and they generally maintain good concentration. Children experiment with different social situations through their role-play. They pretend to be 'a mum' in the home corner, a 'receptionist' in the office or a 'mechanic' in the garage.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop well as confident speakers by the end of the reception year and they listen attentively.
- They can identify and say sounds at the beginning of words.
- They enjoy sharing a book with an adult and they retell the story in the correct order.
- Children are learning to form letters accurately and record their thoughts using early writing techniques or pictures.
- Teaching is very good and all adults place a strong and suitable emphasis on this area of learning.
- Volunteer helpers make a good contribution to learning.

### Commentary

53. When they enter the nursery, a significant number of children have speech and language difficulties or little experience of books. Achievement is very good. By the end of the reception year, most children reach the expected learning goals but a significant group do not. Attainment, overall, remains below average, although some very good gains have been made.



54. In the reception class, children initiate conversation and are able to express their needs effectively. Some children in the nursery have only been in school for a few sessions; they are more hesitant to express their thoughts but are learning well. The children listen attentively to stories and join in with actions or familiar refrains. Reception children are beginning to recognise letter sounds and to write their name and simple captions. They enjoy sharing stories with an adult and retelling them using the puppet theatre. Adult helpers make a good contribution here. Reception children make their own books using recognisable letter shapes and some good illustrations. They enjoy being 'authors' and very proudly 'read' their work to adults. The higher-attaining children are able to write their name and some letters with very little assistance.
55. Teaching is very good. In both classes, the varied and very well prepared activities encourage children to communicate their thoughts and feelings and there are carefully planned opportunities to share books and develop writing skills. Adults develop children's listening and speaking skills through constantly engaging them in conversation and challenging them to explain what they are doing and what they will do next. Great care is taken by staff, when directing their questions, to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved and that they have the time and support to express themselves clearly. Children have frequent opportunities to engage in role-play where they mimic adult language and experiment with dramatic techniques. Some especially good work was seen as children re-enacted the story of *Sleeping Beauty*, with both the prince and princesses using appropriate language and actions.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are developing a good grasp of mathematical language.
- They count accurately and recognise some numerals.
- Children use their mathematical skills and knowledge in a range of problem-solving situations, such as model making.
- Teaching is very good.

### **Commentary**

56. When children enter the nursery, their mathematical understanding is lower than that typical for the age group. They achieve very well and many reach the expected learning outcome by the end of the reception year. There is, however, a significant number who do not and attainment is below average, overall. Children show an interest in numbers; they play games and are beginning to use number names correctly. In the reception class, most children can count to 20 and beyond. They put number symbols in the correct order. Most are able to sort two- and three-dimensional shapes and discuss in what respects they are similar or different. A wide range of activities is used to extend counting skills. After calling the register, the teachers ask 'how many away?' and, with the class, work out how many are present. As they play a game, reception children throw the dice and move their counters along the correct number of places.
57. This area is very well taught. The opportunities for children to count, sort, match and sequence, enable very good development of their mathematical language and skills. Mathematical understanding is further developed through very well-chosen stories, songs, games and imaginative play. In all these activities staff intervene to develop children's thinking through appropriate questions such as 'Who's going first?' 'Who's got the most?' or 'Which one is full?' Good use is also made of computers in order to reinforce children's counting and number recognition skills and of exciting games to develop children's thinking. A very good range of practical activities allow children to explore all aspects of mathematical understanding, such as capacity (water and sand play), shape (construction and pattern work),

and direction (the road mat, climbing-frame and wheeled toys). This provides them, very effectively, with a broad foundation for their National Curriculum work when they move into Year 1.

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

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a very wide range of topics to promote children's understanding of the world around them.
- Children achieve well and the majority attain the expected learning outcomes by the end of the reception class.
- Children are encouraged to ask questions and to investigate and explore.
- There are very good opportunities to learn about, and to use, ICT.

### **Commentary**

58. Teaching is very good and very good use is made of the outside area to stimulate children's interest. Good opportunities are provided for investigation; for example, the chance to feel leaves, to sort materials and objects or to observe 'bugs and slugs' found in the garden. Adults are skilled at encouraging children to find answers to questions and gently prompt the direction of their investigations. Teaching supports children's spiritual development effectively, as they note the changing seasons or visit a forest to observe squirrels.
59. In the reception class, children make a large-scale city, complete with roads, a railway, bridges and a harbour. They designate some buildings as the station, the offices or shops. They dig in the garden area to find worms and observe them through a magnifying glass, commenting on the 'lines' that they see. When dressing up as characters they have a good understanding of costumes worn in the past. The princesses find flowing strips of material to make a long skirt and the prince finds a jacket that will protect him as he travels through the forest. Children learn how to use computers and apply their skills when dragging features to make a face, a birthday or thank-you card or to listen to a story. They print out pages that they like and are very confident in using the mouse and on-screen prompts to find their preferred program.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and the majority attain the expected learning goals by the end of the reception year.
- Children have varied opportunities to use a wide range of tools, equipment and materials.
- The outside play area provides a very good range of opportunities to develop physical skills.
- Teaching is good and adults encourage exercise and healthy eating.

### **Commentary**

60. In the nursery, children build with construction toys and modelling materials and are achieving well. As they get older, children move with increasing co-ordination and agility, for example, when driving their tricycles or climbing over their adventure equipment. Most demonstrate good use of the space and an awareness of others. Some use equipment in imaginative ways as they dangle or hang from cross beams and view the world upside down. Children use a good range of small equipment and are growing in confidence in handling tools and objects. For

example, they use cutters to shape their moulding material or use scissors and glue sticks when making a collage. Some children find it difficult when using new equipment but they persevere and help one another under the watchful eye of staff.

61. Teaching in this area is good. The teachers and teaching assistants, encourage children to try new experiences. Children are taught to move and play safely. Staff explicitly teach children how to use equipment safely, for example how to hold tools when cutting or shaping. The outside facilities are available to children for most of the day as a choice activity and many take advantage so that they have a good deal of fresh air and plenty of exercise.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planned activities allow children to communicate their feelings and use their imaginations.
- Teaching is good. Children have varied opportunities to explore shape, texture, colour and form.
- Children know songs and rhymes from memory and have a good awareness of rhythm.
- They experiment with adult language and actions as they work in the role-play area.

### Commentary

62. Children join in singing rhymes and songs from memory; they move with a growing sense of rhythm. The nursery group enthusiastically join in a selection of action rhymes as a start to the day and have a good repertoire. Even the youngest accompany their singing with actions. In the reception class, children compose simple musical rhythms to accompany the music that they choose to play on the tape recorder. Some excellent work was seen where children spontaneously danced to a taped story, acting out the plot and interpreting the music imaginatively. Some nursery children interpreted the story of 'Whatever Next' by looking at the pictures and acting it out using toys. Children use their imagination in their drawings and paintings, exploring use of paint, pencils crayons and collage.
63. Teaching is very good. A wide variety of activities are provided for children to develop their imaginative skills including art, music, dance and imaginative play. Time is used well to enable children to explore, develop and finish their work to the best of their ability. Constant praise makes children aware that their efforts are highly valued and motivates them to work hard.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and pupils **achieve very well** from their entry to the nursery to Year 6.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average in Year 2.
- Standards in English are above average by Year 6.
- All groups of pupils achieve well, relative to their different abilities.
- Teaching is consistently good and very often very good; assessment and marking are of high quality.
- Work is well-matched to different pupils' abilities and needs.

- Results and data are very well analysed and areas for improvement are accurately identified leading to measures being put in place to address them.
- The leadership of the subject is very effective.
- Girls have been doing better than boys but the balance is more even for this year's pupils.

### **Commentary**

64. The overall standards in English are good. Judgements made on the basis of inspection evidence are that pupils are exceeding national averages in speaking and listening and reading at Year 2 and in English by Year 6. This is better than the 2003 results for reading because boys' reading has improved by Year 2 and boys' writing has improved by Year 6, following some focused action taken. Standards have risen since the previous inspection, partly because of the school's very good assessment procedures. The teachers and subject manager analyse results and then target very specific areas for improvement. As a result, the recent downward trend in results has been reversed. The success of teaching and learning of the present group of pupils is clearly evident in their very good achievements since their time of entry into the school. Pupils from different ethnic groups do equally as well as their classmates.
65. Teaching is good and often very good. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and plan challenging work to match the range of abilities to be found in their class. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their special tasks; as a result, they make good progress in their learning. The care and concern shown by teachers for all their pupils generates mutual respect. Staff work very hard to make the literacy lessons enjoyable and this is well repaid in the very good behaviour and the very positive attitudes shown by the pupils.
66. The overall standards for speaking and listening are good, which is a very good improvement on the restricted vocabulary many children have on entry to the nursery. The school identifies this as a priority; consequently, there is strong emphasis on speaking and listening in the Foundation Stage and the infant years. Some staff have undergone training to promote speaking and listening and they take every opportunity to enhance their skills wherever possible. Measures taken by the school, for example, an increased emphasis upon role-play and teacher-led discussion sessions, have had a very significant effect upon children's confidence and ability. As a result, by the time they enter Year 3, the majority willingly engage in conversation with one another and with adults and, as they grow older, some take part in meetings in which they debate issues concerning the welfare of the school and its community.
67. The pupils heard reading during the inspection demonstrated good ability. Most pupils achieve well in reading, with the development of their knowledge and the enjoyment of books going hand in hand with the development of skills. Those who experience difficulty are given special help to develop a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. The school has worked hard to improve reading standards, especially in the work done to overcome boys' lack of interest in Years 1 and 2. Focused reading sessions are well organised and the school has resourced this well, with sets of books that include content matter especially appealing to boys and a good range of non-fiction material. The school arranges library visits and has invited authors to speak to pupils to stimulate pupils' interest and broaden their horizons.
68. The invariably good, and often very good, planning ensures that the several elements of the National Literacy Strategy are well incorporated into lessons. A cursive style of handwriting is introduced early and many pupils are able to produce a good, legible style by the end of Year 2. The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is a high priority. Teachers demonstrate different styles of writing very effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils learn to write instructions whilst those in Year 6 learn how to develop and use a journalistic style of writing. The staff have worked hard to improve boys' writing and are achieving success. Girls are still achieving higher than boys but the gap is closing. One important factor is the much greater proportion of boys on the register for special educational needs. More time is now allocated for extended writing and there are more opportunities for pupils to use their skills when recording work in other

subject areas. There is good inclusion of poetry and drama in the curriculum. Pupils take part in school plays, demonstrating confidence in their performance and clear diction.

69. Information and communication technology is well used in the teaching and learning programme for literacy. The interactive whiteboard, at present only to be found in one classroom, is used very well. In one lesson, pupils were able to use the facilities to compare the effectiveness of written and video instructions. When composing sentences, they 'dragged' words or phrases around to see where they could make the best impact. Pupils use ICT to research for information on the Internet and to draft and present work. Year 1 pupils compared real or computer-generated settings from videos before working on a setting for their own stories. Older pupils make good use of the computer by checking the accuracy of spelling and punctuation.
70. The subject is led very effectively and there is a clear view of what needs to be improved and how it is to be done. There has already been a great deal of progress along these lines and there is the enthusiasm, determination and ability to ensure that the good work continues. There is no complacency in the school and new targets include working towards an increased percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5.

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

71. There is an emphasis on speaking and listening in the school and subject plans include opportunities to teach and reinforce these skills. At the start of most lessons, pupils listen very attentively, contribute articulate answers and join in discussions. At the ends of lessons, pupils are encouraged to talk about what they have learned and to evaluate their success.
72. Teachers include opportunities for research in subjects across the curriculum. The library area is very small but there are several small study areas located around the school where pupils can be seen reading books. Class reading areas also compensate well for the lack of library space and teachers include a good range of relevant study material to match the current topic areas.
73. The school tries hard to ensure that skills are used in a meaningful way; for example, handwriting quality is not just a paper exercise but is seen as a skill that enhances work across the curriculum. Similarly, skills in grammar and spelling are constantly practised as pupils write in various non-fiction styles. They produce explanations or recounts in science or reports of historical events, such as those seen about the Great Fire of London.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above national expectations by Year 6.
- Pupils achieve very well from the low starting point when they enter school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class are supported well.

### **Commentary**

74. Standards are similar to those expected in Year 2 and above in Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards at the end of Year 6 matched those expected nationally. Last year, pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2 was below the national average but above average for similar schools. Inspection findings are that attainment is average, overall, this year due to the good quality of teaching and good support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils achieve very well considering

their well-below average starting point when they enter nursery. The school's performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well above the national average and the gains in learning from Year 2 to Year 6 were also well above average. Statistics indicate that girls do better than boys but observations in class show that both are achieving equally well according to their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Pupils in the Years 1 and 2 intervention class make very good progress because of the very carefully targeted work and the very good support provided. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as their classmates.

75. The quality of teaching is good, leading to a good quality of learning. Teachers plan lessons that build effectively on pupils' prior attainment. They split the lesson into small sessions to maintain a good pace of learning and to develop specific skills and understanding. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that *'pupils are not given enough chances to explain their thinking and that there is an inconsistent approach to teaching mental arithmetic'*. Teachers have overcome these weaknesses successfully and pupils are competent in mental arithmetic and explain their thinking very clearly. In a good Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher used the first part to practise adding 10 to different numbers. Some higher-attaining pupils applied their understanding well and moved on to adding 100. In Year 6, the teacher offered a good level of challenge to pupils at the start of the lesson, asking them to carry out mental addition and to improve on their own scores when doing so. They rose to the challenge well, and worked hard to improve their speed and accuracy.
76. Pupils readily explain their strategies for finding answers. For example, in one lesson, pupils were calculating the areas of rectangles. One pupil clearly explained that in order to work out  $36 \times 25$ , he would make the first digit four times smaller and the second four times larger, thus simplifying the problem to  $9 \times 100$ . This demonstrates a very confident approach and good mental agility. Teachers plan suitable work for the different ability levels in the class so that pupils make good progress. They use a good range of methods and organisational strategies to enhance learning. In the Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher kept pupils involved by introducing music and activity into the lesson. Pupils sang a number bond song and displayed the relevant numbers. Teachers revisit concepts frequently during the lesson and over time, thus helping to pupils to learn well and to apply their knowledge and understanding.
77. There are some good examples of teachers and pupils using ICT in their work. In Year 4, for example, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very well to demonstrate the correct way to use a ruler for measuring straight lines. Teachers also use number practice programs and some pupils have created graphs and incorporated these into presentations.
78. There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Year 6 are better than they were and teaching has improved. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behaviour is very good. This enhances their quality of learning because they are keen to participate and settle quickly to group and individual tasks, maintaining a good level of concentration. The subject is led and managed well. The subject co-ordinator checks on teaching and learning effectively and offers useful support and guidance. There are good systems for measuring pupils' progress and the information gained from these systems is used well to identify what pupils need to do to improve and to reach their challenging targets.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

79. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in teaching and learning in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils weigh objects in air and water accurately or draw graphs showing the rise in temperature when water is heated. Pupils make time-lines in history and measure carefully when making their structures in design and technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. There are some strengths and one area for development.

### Main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By Year 6, pupils have a good level of scientific knowledge and understanding.
- There is good support in lessons so that pupils are fully involved.
- Good management ensures that the quality of teaching and learning are checked regularly and that problems are identified and acted upon.
- Skills of scientific enquiry are not as well-developed as pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

### Commentary

80. In Year 2, the majority of pupils are on target to reach the expected level 2 but there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group, so a smaller than average number is likely to reach higher levels. This is similar to pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 in the 2003 teacher assessments, when 100 per cent attained the expected level but none achieved the higher one. This represents good achievement as children enter nursery with limited knowledge and understanding of the world. Inspection findings are that, by Year 6, standards are average. This conforms with the results of Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2003, in which the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was similar to the national average. Achievement is good, with gains in learning that are above average for schools with similar levels of prior attainment. Pupils have a good knowledge of scientific facts but their understanding of scientific investigation is not as good. Those who have special educational needs achieve well because they are given a good level of support and tasks that build carefully on their prior learning.
81. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall; there are some good features, but one weakness. Teachers make lessons interesting, which helps pupils to learn. In a good Year 2 lesson, teachers used recorded material effectively to teach about the potential dangers of electricity. The pupils answered the teachers' questions in a way which showed that they had been concentrating well. Year 4 pupils enjoyed a practical lesson when the visiting park rangers brought an owl to the classroom. By the end of the session, they showed a good understanding of how animals are adapted to their way of life and about feeding relationships and food chains. Teachers plan lessons effectively, using the school's guidelines for teaching. These guidelines help to ensure that pupils learn scientific facts well but do not provide enough emphasis on teaching about scientific enquiry. Consequently, although pupils take part in practical activities, they do not systematically develop these skills. For example, pupils are more likely to be seen following the teacher's instructions for setting up and recording an investigation rather than asking their own questions and finding ways to answer them. In discussion, Year 6 pupils try to explain what makes a test fair but they miss out some important features. Nevertheless, they have a good range of scientific knowledge.
82. Leadership and management are good. Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning are effective. The subject co-ordinator has already identified the weaknesses in the teaching of scientific enquiry. Some work has already been completed but there is still some way to go. There has been a sound degree of improvement since the previous inspection; standards are broadly similar and achievement over time is now good. Teaching has improved

well. Pupils have sound opportunities to use mathematical skills, for example, when weighing slices of apple as part of their investigations into decay. They use ICT for research purposes and record some of their findings on computer-generated graphs and charts.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strength and weaknesses**

- Resources, staff confidence and expertise have all improved. Teaching is good.
- Pupils achieve well and are making rapid progress.
- There is good overall use of ICT in most subjects to support learning.
- The school has adopted a good scheme of planning to guide its work.
- There are good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision and pupils' standards.
- Teachers use the computer effectively to enhance their teaching.
- Skills of control and monitoring are as not as well developed as other aspects but the school is working on this.

### **Commentary**

83. By Year 2, pupils have satisfactory skills in ICT and a very confident approach to their work. They have benefited from the school's enhanced provision during their period of learning, especially the facilities of the computer suite. Year 6 pupils also reach satisfactory standards but their learning is not built upon such secure foundations since their early experiences were limited by inadequate provision of computers. In spite of this, pupils of all ages in the school are now achieving well. This is a good improvement on the judgements made at the time of the previous inspection.
84. In Year 2, keyboard skills and mouse control are well developed and pupils have opportunities to learn about, and use, many of the computer functions. They know how to present their work using different font styles, size and colour and illustrate it using the tools of the 'paint' program. Pupils use word-processing facilities effectively and use them to write and edit their short stories. They are aware that the computers offer a rich source of information and enjoy programming a floor robot to follow routes. Pupils explore the wider use of technology, for example, when they use the digital camera, tape recorders or electronic keyboards.
85. By Year 6, pupils are accustomed to using the computer for many purposes and to support their work in other curriculum areas. Computer-generated graphs are used in both mathematics and science. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils learn how to develop and use a spreadsheet. Pupils work independently and confidently as they explore the use of icons and tools. However, more advanced skills in control (for example, developing instructions to make a set of lights work in sequence) and monitoring (for example, using an electronic thermometer) are not as evident. This is well acknowledged by the school and an action plan is in place.
86. The better resources have been very significant to improvements in ICT. The development of the computer suite is a good example of creative thinking and imaginative use of the very restricted space in the building. It enables more 'hands on' time when pupils practise and apply their newly acquired skills. The system, by which the teacher has overall remote control of all the computers, is a great boon to effective teaching.



87. The confidence and skills of the teaching staff have greatly increased and this is another important factor in the improved provision. Teacher confidence is further supported by the introduction of a good scheme to guide lesson planning. The result is good teaching in all the lessons seen.
88. The subject manager, with the support of colleagues, has led the school forward successfully in the development of teaching and learning. Issues have been identified and prioritised appropriately and the governors have been supportive of the school in its efforts to improve resources. Assessment systems are developing well and teachers have a sound overview of progress in each aspect of the subject.

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

89. This is an area of comparatively recent, but significant, improvement. Many lesson plans include activities for a group or individuals using the computer. Sometimes whole lessons, for example, a literacy session on story settings, use the computer as a central resource. The interactive whiteboard in Year 4 is in constant use, especially in whole-class introductions. It adds an extra dimension to learning and allows pupils to try out ideas, for example, when editing work or making writing more interesting. There is good use of the digital camera and of the electronic keyboards in music to create effects. The school has plans for further development of ICT in other subjects, especially in mathematics for the older pupils.

## **HUMANITIES**

Two history and two religious education lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements are also based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils and an examination of planning. In religious education, evidence from collected worship was also used. Only one geography lesson was seen so it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching.

### **Geography**

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

- Achievement is good.
- Lessons include a sound element of fieldwork so pupils gain direct experience.
- The subject supports pupils' cultural development soundly.

#### **Commentary**

90. Pupils reach the expected standards at the end of Year 2 and of Year 6 in geography. They start in the nursery class with a knowledge and understanding of the world that is below that expected from pupils of that age. The sound standards reached by the time pupils leave school demonstrate a good degree of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
91. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. This was a soundly taught lesson during which Year 1 pupils used directional vocabulary to describe the routes they would take to reach places in the locality. During Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about features of their school and the local environment and follow the adventures of a favourite bear as he travels around the world. In Years 3 to 6 they extend their work to include a survey of traffic patterns, to follow the course of a river and to find out about weather systems. By Year 6, pupils are able to compare and contrast locations and have a good awareness of environmental issues.
92. The subject is soundly led. The subject manager has a clear overview of provision through checking planning and completed work and by observing classes at work. Geography lessons make a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development. In Year 4, for example, pupils compare the similarities and differences of their own area with an Indian village. Older pupils

make good use of a residential visit to study the geographical features of a rural location on the Scottish borders. Teachers use information and communication technology to support teaching and learning by, for example, finding resources or encouraging research.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Mains strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils in the intervention class are well supported.
- Pupils engage effectively in historical research and enquiry.
- Pupils do not always evaluate whether sources of evidence are totally reliable or biased in any way.

### Commentary

93. Pupils reach the expected standards by Year 2 and by Year 6 in history. They achieve well from the time they enter nursery with a knowledge and understanding of the world that is below expectations for that age group. All groups of pupils (boys, girls and pupils of different ethnic backgrounds) reach similar standards of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
94. The quality of teaching observed was at least good. In Year 2, a lesson for the lower-attaining pupils was very well taught. The teacher had a very good understanding of how these pupils learn and used a good variety of resources and many different strategies to teach the pupils about the Great Fire of London. Consequently, pupils made very good progress. In a well-taught lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher led a discussion about how evacuees might have felt. Some photographs evoked a good response from the pupils. Their comments and questions showed thoughtfulness and empathy and, consequently, the lesson made a good contribution to their personal development. There were some good links with literacy as pupils wrote a letter to someone who had been evacuated during World War II. Pupils are encouraged to find out about history from different sources. For example, Year 2 pupils know that much information about the Great Fire of London comes from Samuel Pepys' diaries. Older pupils use documents and artefacts from the past to find information, as well as reading accounts, or talking to those who took part in past events. However, they do not always evaluate the reliability of the evidence. Because lessons are interesting, pupils behave well and work hard. This enhances their learning.
95. The subject leader is effective and enthusiastic. Pupils have studied a satisfactory range of topics in history, soundly extending their knowledge of recent events and those from the past. Teachers use information and communication technology to support teaching and learning by, for example, finding additional resources on web sites. The history curriculum is enriched effectively by visits and visitors.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning covers all elements of the subject and includes a good emphasis on world religions.
- Lessons pay good attention to supporting pupils' personal development.
- Teachers are skilled at explaining difficult concepts and in making links with pupils' everyday lives.
- Collective worship supports learning well.

- Pupils have limited opportunities to meet people of different religions.

### **Commentary**

96. The curriculum meets fully the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and it has been enhanced to include more work on religions and cultures from around the world. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and makes a good impact on pupils' cultural development. Pupils' attainment matches expectations and they appreciate gifts in life such as friends and family.
97. Teaching is satisfactory overall and one lesson seen during the inspection was very good. Teachers find interesting stories to illustrate the learning objectives and are skilled in leading class discussions where everyone has the opportunity to contribute. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher read the story of Papa Panov and was successful in guiding pupils' thoughts towards the principle that 'helping others is doing God's work'. Year 1 pupils talked in detail about feelings in a very good lesson. First, they explained how they felt when they received a present and then went on to explore, through some practical work, the pleasure of giving. The lesson made a significant contribution to their spiritual development. Across the age groups, pupils have a sound understanding of Bible stories and older pupils understand that religious belief often influences people's ways of life.
98. The subject is enhanced by an after-school 'storytellers' club and the work of a local minister who takes worship regularly. Assemblies are well planned, often involve pupils themselves, and are interesting. During the inspection the local minister took up the theme of 'sacrifice' and used some amusing cartoons as he told the story of Jonah. Pupils enjoyed the story and gained an understanding appropriate to their ages. There is a good range of resources, including artefacts. The space in the main library is very limited. To compensate for the lack of research space, pupils' books are kept in topic boxes so they can be displayed in relevant classrooms at relevant times. This is an intelligent way of using the resources efficiently. Some visits are planned alongside the curriculum, for example, one year group will visit the synagogue. However, the school population is largely Christian and pupils have little opportunity for contact with others of different religions, either face to face or using e-mail.

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

During the inspection lessons were seen in art and design, music and physical education. No lessons were seen in design and technology. Additional evidence was taken from pupils' completed work, photographs, video material and through talking with pupils.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

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

- Attainment is above expectations in Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching is good and the specialist teacher provides some very good challenges for pupils.
- The subject supports pupils' spiritual and cultural development effectively.
- There are good links with other subjects to enhance learning.
- Pupils study the work of a wide range of artists.

### **Commentary**

99. Pupils are familiar with the work of artists from various times in history and from around the world. This supports their knowledge of culture and tradition well. Over the year, pupils investigate and use a good range of media. Those who have special educational needs often

do well in this creative subject and work hard during lessons. Pupils have clear ideas about what they do and do not like, and this helps them to make decisions about how they should improve their work.

100. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils used their imagination to create a strong pattern around liquorice allsorts sweets in order to camouflage them. Some very good standards of work were seen as pupils visualised the whole image and used line and colour very effectively. Without prompting, many reviewed their work as they went along, deciding to make changes where appropriate. Year 6 pupils have produced some high quality 'action' pictures, inspired through their study of Keith Haring. The project had included research of the artist's work, sketching ideas and refining them. Pupils are now moving on to develop the style into three dimensions. Throughout school, pupils use ICT programs imaginatively to create patterns and pictures. In Year 2 the pupils drew views that they saw through a view-finder and then took a digital photograph of the same scene to compare the two images. The learning outcomes were above expectations for the age group.
101. Good links with other subjects extend learning effectively. For example, pupils in Year 3 are studying Egyptian art as part of their history topic. Visits to art galleries and sessions with a visiting artist add a further dimension to learning. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, with a greater emphasis on critical appraisal and refinement. The subject manager is constantly looking for ways to develop the curriculum. She takes great care to choose good quality materials to meet the requirements of all aspects of the Programmes of Study. As a result, resources are good for this subject.
102. Teaching is good, overall. It is very good where the specialist teacher takes the class because she inspires pupils with her skills and enthusiasm. She is also the subject leader and, through this role, ensures that art has a high profile in school. The after-school club is well attended and allows pupils to extend their talents further. They have opportunities to try out a wide range of techniques, including batik, pastels on cloth and clay work. Attainment in art is celebrated around school in some high quality, eye-catching displays.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have opportunities to appreciate a good range of music.
- They enjoy performing and creating music.
- Attainment is above expectations. Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good.
- Out-of-school clubs, specialist lessons and performances provide enhancement for learning.

### **Commentary**

103. Pupils sing tunefully and with good expression. Their rousing performances during collective worship add a strong spiritual element to the proceedings. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn to recognise a good range of instruments and know how to create different effects when playing them. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils used this knowledge to create 'animal noises', improvise patterns and combine sounds in an effective way.
104. Teachers are knowledgeable and allow good opportunities for pupils to experiment with sound and music and to use their imagination. Lessons consist of different short activities that promote a good pace of learning and much enjoyment. In Year 6, pupils have been working on their performance of a song written for them by the teacher. During the inspection, they rehearsed and refined their work, recording two versions. There is some very good use of ICT in the subject. The older pupils understand the processes of recording, mixing and know how

sounds may be combined and altered. They discuss how the two versions can be put together, how the auto-tune will improve any imperfections and how other effects might be added. Their work is highly valued and, at the end of the year, each one is presented with a CD recording of their completed class work. In their electronic keyboard sessions with the specialist teacher, pupils make full use of the different effects and styles of music to enhance their performance. There have been good improvements in the subject since the last inspection, especially in the time given for pupils to review and refine their work and in the range and quality of instruments. Resources are now good.

105. Pupils experience a wide range of music from different times and cultures, which supports their cultural development. Those who have special educational needs often do well in the subject and those who have special talents are recognised and challenged appropriately. The subject is well led and managed and music has a high profile in school. It is often played as a calming effect during the school day, for example, as an introduction to worship or when pupils are working in class. This enhances pupils' spiritual experiences and all say that they enjoy having music in the background and that it helps them to think. There is good enrichment for this subject. The lunch-time choir sessions are well attended and enjoyed and pupils have several opportunities during the year to perform. Pupils have 'taster' instrument lessons in Year 3, after which they may decide to take advantage of the peripatetic lessons provided. These include tuition in flute, clarinet and keyboards. Other enrichment includes visits to the Liverpool Philharmonic, which are very much enjoyed, singing and playing in church and participation in school performances. One teacher writes the words and music for the annual school production and allows pupils to interpret and refine the work. This provides great motivation and videos seen are evidence of pupils' hard work, application of skills and enormous enthusiasm.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of attainment are good throughout the school.
- Teaching is predominately good.
- There is a good balance in the curriculum between gymnastics, dance and games.
- Lessons in creative dance are of especially good quality.
- The school ensures that pupils from Year 3 have very good opportunities to learn to swim.

### **Commentary**

106. In three out of the four lessons seen during the period of inspection, teaching was good. The range of lessons seen covered the age range in the school and included at least one in each aspect of gymnastics, dance and games. The good quality of teaching and a varied and interesting curriculum have helped bring about the good improvement made since the time of the previous inspection.
107. Lessons are well planned and there is a good emphasis upon safety issues. All lessons start with appropriate and enjoyable warm-up activities and conclude with a cooling-down period. These help pupils to appreciate the effects of exercise on the body and support their health education. Both the teachers and the support staff are very well involved, working alongside the children and commending their demonstrations of good work.
108. The dance lesson observed for Year 2 children illustrated how well pupils listened and behaved. They were able to interpret the music expressively, and imaginatively, through their improvised dance. The teacher encouraged pupils to explain how the music made them feel and this made a good contribution to their speaking and listening skills. Year 3 pupils

demonstrated their agility in a gymnastic lesson. They worked co-operatively to improve their performance and made good progress as they showed 'crispness' in the final stance of their sequence. The games lesson for Year 6 pupils involved them practising skills of sending, receiving, striking and travelling with a ball. They demonstrated good stamina and worked hard to improve skills and accuracy.

109. Subject management is good. The school sports co-ordinator from the high school works with staff and pupils on a regular basis to develop provision and this is helping to promote good levels of expertise.
110. The school provides a wide range of sporting activities over the year, including tennis and golf. Pupils take part in inter-school leagues and have been successful recently in winning the swimming gala. Games are open to both boys and girls, thus ensuring equality of opportunity. During the inspection, the cross-country and netball teams were seen practising enthusiastically in preparation for forthcoming competitions.

### **Design and technology**

111. No lessons were seen in design and technology, nor was it possible to see any substantial amount of completed work. Information gathered concerning the subject comes from an interview with the manager and scrutiny of planning, together with records and photographs of pupils' work. Design technology is taught as a three-day, blocked unit, at the end of each term. This is a new arrangement and was introduced so that pupils can have an intensive block of time to make, refine and finish their work rather than extending topics over many weeks. Planning follows national guidance and includes elements of design, making and evaluation. There is inclusion of food technology and good problem-solving activities. Links with other subjects provide extended opportunities for pupils to practise their skills; for example, they make models of Roman houses to link with history work and use pneumatics (that they learn about in science) to make models with moving parts.

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

112. The school makes satisfactory provision for the teaching of personal and social and health education and citizenship. There are timetabled lessons for the subject and themes are well integrated into other subject areas, such as science or religious education. Lessons cover aspects such as healthy eating or conservation issues. In food technology, pupils learn and follow hygiene rules and know the importance of clean hands. As part of their religious education lessons, pupils study different religions and cultures to help them prepare for life in a multicultural society. In art and design, pupils had drawn pictures of people and asked others to say what relationship there might be between them. They had used some subtle techniques, such as facial expression and body position to indicate the possible links. The school council members act as good citizens in representing the views of pupils in the running of the school and the caring school ethos is built on mutual respect.
113. There are good arrangements for pupils to work collaboratively and to share equipment; one notable example being during ICT lessons. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to act as monitors, look after younger children and raise monies for a range of causes. There are planned occasions, such as 'circle time', where pupils discuss social and moral issues, talk about feelings and consider dilemmas. The residential experience for the older pupils extends their social skills successfully and presents them with new challenges.

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