

INSPECTION REPORT

MAB LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 131480

Headteacher: Mrs J Todd

Lead inspector: Mrs E Parry

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th March 2004

Inspection number: 256813

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

Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	294
School address:	Mab Lane Liverpool Merseyside
Postcode:	L12 6QL
Telephone number:	0151 259 4282
Fax number:	0151 259 4284
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Wylie
Date of previous inspection:	18 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mab Lane is a large primary school on the edge of Liverpool and, from information provided by governors about the ward that the school is in, the school is in one of the most economically deprived parts of the country. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is well above the average. There are 294 pupils on roll. Fifty-nine children attend the nursery on part-time basis and there are 39 children in two reception classes. The school has few pupils from minority ethnic groups and only one is at the early stages of learning to speak in English. Only one pupil has a statement of educational need but there is a high percentage of pupils on the school's special educational needs register. Most of these pupils have difficulties with learning and some with their emotional and behavioural development. In addition, there is a unit attached to the nursery, called the I CAN unit, which helps eight children who have specific needs with their speech and language; they come mostly from other schools. Attainment on entry to the school is very low.

The school receives funding as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative which is used to provide two learning mentors. It is situated in an area that receives support for families through the Sure Start programme. The school received the Healthy Schools award in 2001 and was one of the first in Liverpool to be awarded Investors in People status. The headteacher takes part in the national Leadership Development Strategy.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2615	Eileen Parry	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; music
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	
16722	Noreen Buckingham	Team inspector	Special educational needs; science; art; religious education
40745	Patricia Thorpe	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology; history
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology; geography; physical education

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus Ltd

BPS Business Centre

Brake Lane

Boughton

Nottinghamshire

NG22 9HQ

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
THE WORK OF THE I CAN UNIT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mab Lane is an effective school that provides a good education and good value for money.

The headteacher leads the staff very effectively in improving the quality of pupils' education. The management of the school is good as is the governors' support for the school. Although the standards are below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6, they have risen in the last year as a result of the predominantly good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' achievement is good by Year 6. Standards are well below average in reading and writing by Year 2 and below average in mathematics and science. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception and satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very effective leadership by the headteacher and key staff ensures very good relationships and develops positive attitudes to learning.
- Provision for the large number of pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The provision for children in nursery and reception classes is very good and good teaching gets children off to a good start. The very good links with the I CAN unit benefit children other than those who are placed there (the I CAN unit is a special provision for nursery children who have difficulties with speech and language).
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and, as a result, standards are rising and overall pupils achieve well.
- Standards by Year 2 are below average and pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching.
- Teachers' marking does not always guide pupils to improve their work.
- Sometimes more able pupils are not challenged enough.
- The curriculum is worthwhile and provides a good range of extra activities.

The school has made good progress in tackling the issues from the previous inspection. From being unsatisfactory, the curriculum and the roles of subject leaders are now good. Standards are rising by Year 6; they are improving in reading by Year 2 but are not moving in writing or mathematics. The quality of teaching is stronger in nursery, reception and Years 3 to 6 than at the last inspection and weaker in Years 1 and 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is much better; it was satisfactory, and it is now very good. The new school building provides good facilities including a well-equipped ICT suite.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools: information based on what pupils achieved at Year 2

Pupils' achievement overall is good. In Years 3 to 6, standards are well below those expected nationally. The table suggests that the pupils who took these tests did not make as much progress since they were in Year 2 as did pupils in similar schools. However, achievement is good when account is taken of the large numbers of pupils in this year who had special educational needs that affected their rate of learning. Although this does not show in the letter grades, these results are

better than those of the previous year. In addition, compared to schools in similar circumstances based on the take-up of free school meals, they are above average in English and average in science and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6, including the large number with special educational needs, achieve well in English, science, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and satisfactorily in religious education. More able pupils achieve satisfactorily because they do not always have work that is hard enough to challenge them. In Years 1 and 2 standards are well below expectations in reading, writing and mathematics; pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but their rate of progress is less than in the younger or older classes. A large minority of children in the Foundation Stage do not reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year but they achieve well. There are good opportunities for pupils throughout the school to develop their skills in speaking, listening and reading in other subjects but fewer for writing, numeracy and ICT skills.

Pupils have good attitudes towards work. They enjoy learning and behave well. This is a significant achievement considering the high number of pupils who have special educational needs and need support with their behaviour. This achievement is due to the emphasis that the school puts on pupils' personal and social development. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is below average and each day there are some pupils who arrive late to school.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good. Taken overall, teaching is good although it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.** Where the teaching is good, teachers plan interesting activities and lessons are conducted with a brisk pace. Teachers mark pupils' work well when they provide advice on how pupils can improve but this is inconsistent. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make slower progress than in other year groups because teaching is satisfactory overall; both lessons that were unsatisfactory were in these year groups. Reception classes provide a very good range of activities and build effectively on what children have done in the nursery. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support throughout the school and the I CAN unit benefits children in the main nursery as well as in the special provision because of the very good links between the two. There is a good range of interesting activities outside normal lessons which benefits a large number of pupils. Adults in the school care about pupils and treat them with respect and consideration. The school is promoting good attendance and its efforts in reducing some pupils' poor attendance are succeeding.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is very good and management is good. The headteacher has a very clear view of what she wants for the school and is willing to look for innovative solutions to help pupils' learning. Governors and staff offer good support and the school is well placed to improve further.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. Pupils think it is a good school to come to and that there are interesting activities to do.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improving the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils' good progress made in the Foundation Stage can be built upon
- Continuing to seek ways to improve standards throughout the school
- Helping pupils to understand how to improve their work more by ensuring that all teachers use the agreed marking policy more consistently

- Ensure that higher attaining pupils have work that is always demanding enough for them.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, and **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2. **Standards by Year 2 are well below average** in English but **below average** in other subjects. Standards are **below average by Year 6 in all subjects**. Standards are lower than those described at the previous inspection by Year 2. They are higher in English and science by Year 6 and rising in all subjects due to teaching that is predominantly good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below the average in the nursery and reception classes but children make good progress in their learning because they start from a very low baseline
- The good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are a good achievement since so many pupils do not bring these to school to start with
- Standards are rising by Year 6 in all subjects and pupils achieve well
- Satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 does not sustain the good progress children have made in earlier years and pupils' achievements are satisfactory
- All pupils with special educational needs, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, achieve well
- More able pupils could do better in some lessons

Commentary

1. Results in the national tests have been consistently well below the national average for pupils in Year 6. In 2003, they were above the average for similar schools in English and average in science and mathematics but pupils appear to have made much less progress from what they achieved in Year 2 than in most schools. However, there are many more pupils in this school than usual who have special educational needs because of difficulties with learning or behaviour and the results reflect good achievement. Over five years the trend in standards by Year 6 is below that nationally but in 2003 results rose in English, mathematics and science. The pattern for boys' and girls' results varies from year to year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (24.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.5 (23.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.9 (24.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Results in the national tests rose more rapidly in one year in this school in English, mathematics and science than in most schools. Standards in the work seen are below average by Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, and ICT but pupils achieve well. In religious education, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. The improvements in pupils' standards and achievements are a result of teaching that is often enthusiastic and predominantly good. Teachers put a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through the many opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their learning to the class or to work together. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to write and use their

numeracy skills in other subjects. Standards in ICT are below average by Year 6 but this represents a good level of achievement particularly in the last year because the vastly improved resources in the new school give pupils better opportunities.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.4 (13.2)	15.7(15.8)
Writing	11.3 (13.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.6 (15.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Results of the national tests and assessments for 2003 for Year 2 show a fall in mathematics and writing but remain at a similar level in reading. Reading and mathematics were all well below the national averages and writing was in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. However, pupils' achievements are satisfactory when judged against their starting points at the end of nursery which were very low in key areas of speech and language, numeracy and in writing skills. In the work seen, standards are well below the average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. The rate of pupils' progress slows down in Year 1 and 2 because the teaching is satisfactory and does not maintain the good start that the pupils have in the nursery and reception classes.
- By the end of the Foundation Stage, children achieve well in all areas of learning as a result of the very good provision that is made for them. Children have a very wide range of abilities when they start at the nursery but many start with very poor communication skills and little experience of writing and drawing activities. This means, on entry to nursery, children's attainment is much lower than is usual for three year olds. By the end of reception some will reach and even exceed the targets that are set for them nationally but taken overall standards are well below the average in the key areas of communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. Children's personal and social development is likely to be below the expectation with a good number of pupils who find listening in large situations difficult. Children's physical development is in line with expectations for the 'big' activities but well below in those that require fine hand and eye control such as drawing or controlling the computer mouse.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because these are clearly focused and based on a good assessment of pupils' specific individual needs. Targets are realistic and rooted in a thorough understanding of where each pupil is, and they are specific enough to be easily tested for success. In addition, pupils benefit from high quality support from classroom assistants and from the learning mentors. Evidence from the increasing difficulty of the tasks set in their individual education plans shows that pupils achieve well and make a similar rate of progress to that of their peers even though most do not achieve the expected level in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, by the time they leave school. Those who have individual behaviour plans also achieve well and improve their behaviour as a result of the well-planned support and guidance. The more able pupils throughout the school are not consistently given work that challenges them so that their achievements are satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Throughout the school pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**, enabling maximum time to be spent on learning. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also **good**. However, attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to the good opportunities for personal development
- Pupils are eager to learn and show interest in all school activities
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory, although both have improved in recent years
- The pupils' knowledge of other cultures is very limited

Commentary

6. The school's values are successfully incorporated into all aspects of school life. Pupils' personal development, especially social development, has a high priority and underpins all activities throughout the school day. Adults in the school know and manage the pupils very well and help them to learn acceptable patterns of behaviour. The learning mentors support the social development of all pupils, including raising the self-esteem of pupils lacking in confidence. Activities such as circle time help pupils to understand themselves better. Provision for the personal and social development of children in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
7. The school's behaviour code is very well known to pupils and they are well motivated by the rewards they can earn for behaving well. They also understand, and respect, the sanctions which are applied for unacceptable behaviour. The code is built on pupils learning to make the right choice for themselves and consequently it makes a significant contribution to their personal development. For those pupils whose behaviour is challenging, and for whom concentration is difficult, clear strategies are employed, including the involvement with the learning mentors. These measures work well in most cases. Staff work very well together as a team and consistently reinforce good behaviour.
8. Pupils show pleasure in the achievements of other pupils. They work well together when paired for activities and are always polite to each other and adults, including visitors. Throughout the inspection, levels of politeness to visitors were exemplary and spontaneous. When there are opportunities to show initiative, pupils respond very well, including contributing to discussion and decisions made at the school council.
9. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged and supported to understand themselves and their feelings. Developing self-control is a key focus in the school and pupils are encouraged and supported to become more independent and take responsibility for themselves. Across the school pupils discuss and develop classroom rules that promote the values of honesty, justice and care. Pupils respect and understand that everyone is different, and have opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures through religious education lessons and assemblies.
10. Pupils are interested in their lessons, eager to learn and very enthusiastic to join in practical activities, and co-operate with each other well. The school has a range of additional activities after school, including a range of sports, dance and booster classes for extra school work. These are well supported by the pupils.
11. Attendance at the school is below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory. However, both have improved since the previous inspection and attendance has improved by 0.5 per cent for the current academic year in comparison with last year. There has been significant progress in reducing the number of unauthorised absences. Much of the improvement is the result of the influence of the learning mentor programme and working with children and their families. Some of the absences are due to pupils taking holiday in term time. The school's own analysis has identified pupils whose attainment is adversely affected by low attendance at school.
12. Pupils have limited understanding of the multi-cultural nature of life in Britain today. They have relatively few visits out of school and insufficient use is made of visitors to build rich cultural experiences for the pupils. They have knowledge of other faiths and the associated cultures through their religious education lessons and school assemblies, but very little first hand experience of any of these cultures.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black African
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
258.5	2	1
2	0	0
2	0	0
2	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**. Teaching is good overall. The curriculum is good and has some unique features which give added relevance for the particular needs of the pupils; there is a good range of extra activities which many pupils attend. The school places a strong emphasis on supporting and guiding pupils, and the care they receive is very good. Parents and pupils think highly of the school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** overall. It is **good** in Years 3 to 6 and in the Foundation Stage but satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Staff assess children's learning **well** in nursery, reception and Years 3 to 6 and in other classes teachers use assessment information **satisfactorily**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to learn well
- There is good teaching in every class from Years 3 to 6 that helps pupils settle quickly to their work and learn effectively
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but does not maintain the good progress that children have made in nursery and reception
- Some marking is helpful in telling pupils how to improve but this is inconsistent

Commentary

13. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory; two lessons seen in these year groups were judged unsatisfactory. This picture of teaching is different from

that of the previous inspection. Teaching then was strongest in Years 1 and 2 and is now strongest in nursery, reception and Years 3 to 6.

14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The very good provision in all three classrooms is strengthened by the adults' effective teamwork. Assessment is a regular part of teaching and learning and is used effectively to plan what the children need to learn next. The structured sessions of language skills in the nursery (*salley*) are built on well in the reception classes and the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. However, in some of the short, whole-class activities in reception classes, the very diverse needs of children of all abilities are not met as fully as they are in the small groups and throughout the day. There are very good links with the children in the I CAN unit and the special skills of the I CAN staff are utilised in the main nursery, benefiting other children whose speech and language is poor but not poor enough for them to receive specialist support. Staff are particularly effective in providing good models of speech and teaching children to use signs to enhance meaning.

15. In Years 1 and 2, teaching moves at a slower pace than in other year groups, it does not challenge the more able pupils enough and on occasion, is slow in getting the pupils' full attention when activities are changed. Teachers in Year 1 and 2 are, however, supportive of their pupils, encourage positive attitudes and good behaviour, and ensure that teaching assistants provide appropriate help to their groups. Most of the planning in the school is good, even where the teaching is satisfactory; the best makes it clear how the lesson will challenge pupils who are working at different levels. Teachers throughout the school work hard to make learning a positive experience for their pupils; they are constantly encouraging and building very good relationships. This is helped by the relatively small class sizes and the good number of support assistants. The planned activities are often interesting, relevant and practical. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson pupils learnt about Greeks by organising a banquet. The best lessons move at a good pace. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 6, for instance, the teacher had very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and ensured that all of them were fully engaged in the activities. Different activities snapped into place, as a result; no time was lost and pupils worked hard throughout. Good use is made of particular expertise, for example in physical education and religious education when teachers exchange classes, thus improving all pupils' achievement. The best marking makes it very clear to pupils what they do well and what they need to work on next. In some classes it is not as good and teachers miss opportunities to indicate how pupils' work could be improved.

16. Pupils are encouraged to use their speaking skills to discuss and debate in many subjects. Their writing and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily overall, but pupils' use and application of these skills in other subjects are limited.

17. Teachers make an effective use of the well-written individual education plans to guide the work of pupils with special educational needs. The high quality teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants has a positive impact on what they do and significantly contributes to pupils' learning as does the innovative work on raising pupils' self-esteem. Classroom assistants know the pupils very well and target support accurately because they are well briefed and skilful in what they do. The positive relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils feel comfortable and confident enough to try hard in lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9 (23%)	15 (38%)	11(28%)	2 (5%)	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. Two lessons were not judged because they were observed for too short at time therefore percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum. The approach to curriculum development and to the introduction of new ideas is **very good**. There are **good** opportunities provided to extend learning activities outside of lessons. Overall the quality of the accommodation and resources for learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are offered a good range of learning experiences in lessons and good opportunities are provided to enrich the pupils' learning beyond lessons
- The high quality of provision for the pupils' personal and social development is a major factor in creating a very secure and supportive learning environment in the school
- Curriculum development is very good. The provision of learning mentors, the I CAN unit and the designated quiet area are very effective in providing additional support for pupils' learning
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good but the more able do not always receive appropriate levels of challenge

Commentary

18. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in planning in all the subjects. However, in a number of subjects, for example mathematics and science, sometimes planned activities do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and links with the I CAN unit strengthen the provision for developing speech and language, which is a particular need for many of the children when they start at the nursery.
19. The pupils are offered a good range of sporting and arts activities outside the school day, which are well attended. The involvement of the learning mentors in these activities enhances their quality and range. Educational visits, such as visits to museums, environmental projects and on skiing trips, effectively add to pupils' overall learning.
20. The school's curriculum takes into account the personal and social needs of pupils. The well-informed learning mentors, the specialist input for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties in the I CAN unit, the high quality provision for pupils with special educational needs and the development of a quiet area, provide a worthwhile range of opportunities for a significant number of pupils. These experiences boost the recipients' self-confidence and self-esteem and are effectively delivered by learning mentors and therapists. The personal, social and health education curriculum makes pupils aware of drug abuse and provides appropriate sex education.
21. The school's very strong commitment to equal opportunities means that the curriculum is fully inclusive and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit from all the activities. Most of their learning takes place within the classroom and when they are withdrawn it is as part of a well thought out programme relating to their individual needs. In literacy and numeracy sessions these pupils are supported by classroom assistants in small groups; the arrangements work well and the pupils learn at a faster rate. The provision for pupils with special educational needs meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The pupils' individual education plans are very well monitored to make sure that pupils receive the help identified. As a result they achieve as well as they are able. Pupils benefit from the wide range of resources. The role of classroom assistants and learning mentors is crucial to the successful implementation of the school's policy.
22. There are satisfactory links with local secondary schools to ensure the smooth transfer of Year 6 pupils when they leave the school. The nursery makes good arrangements for children to move smoothly into the school.

23. The good accommodation provided by the new buildings creates a pleasant learning environment and there is a good range of resources to support the activities in the different subjects. The building is fully accessible to all pupils, including those with physical disability. The building has a number of smaller rooms used by both staff and pupils which have no glass in the doors so that it is not possible to see what is happening inside. Older pupils, particularly girls, comment on the absence of changing facilities when getting ready for physical education lessons; they have to make do with changing in small toilet areas.

Care, guidance and support

The school meets a **high** standard in the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides **very good** support, advice and guidance for its pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The extent to which pupils' views are taken into account is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school pupils receive very good support to help them make progress in their academic and personal development
- Learning mentors and classroom assistants play an important role in supporting pupils with special educational needs
- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is very good, adding to the pupils' confidence and trust in staff
- The welfare staff who are responsible for children at lunchtime have had no recent child protection training

Commentary

24. The school offers a wide range of opportunities to support pupils' care and welfare. The Breakfast Club welcomes pupils before the school begins and settles them for the classroom environment. The club has also had a positive effect on punctuality as well as providing the opportunity for pupils of all ages to socialise. All pupils benefit from participating in circle time, where pupils learn to recognise their feelings and talk about them. Over time they begin to understand how they react to situations and whether their reactions are appropriate. They also begin to understand the impact of their behaviour has on others. The Quiet Place is a significant initiative in supporting pupils' all-round personal development and in improving pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The successful implementation of these initiatives promotes pupils' trust in the adults who work with them.
25. The high quality of the assessment procedures in the school for mathematics, English and science and the good use which is made of the information enable early identification of any difficulties pupils may be experiencing in these subjects. Having identified a need, the school has developed a wide range of intervention strategies to address them. However, not all pupils have clear knowledge themselves of what they need to do to improve.
26. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good throughout the school and contribute to pupils' positive attitudes towards their work. Adults are patient, kind and very supportive, which means pupils feel very secure and willing to contribute ideas in lessons. Pupils feel that there is at least one adult in the school in whom they can confide and pupils know they will be treated fairly.
27. Teachers and other staff know pupils' capabilities well. Children's personal and social development is systematically monitored in the Foundation Stage as well as of those working on an identified difficulty with a learning mentor. However, it is not as systematic for the pupils in the rest of the school.

28. The school works hard to seek and take account of the views of its pupils. All adults in the school listen to pupils, valuing and supporting their ideas wherever possible. For example, there is currently a charity fund-raising initiative in school which was suggested by one pupil and is being administered by that pupil. There is a vibrant, although recently formed school council, comprising a representative from every class from Years 3 to 6. It meets regularly and discusses all aspects of the life of their school. As yet, the council has had limited influence on the development of the school.
29. Effective child protection arrangements are in place and all statutory checks are completed appropriately. Pupils are well supervised and cared for at lunchtime. However, although staff have an awareness of the school's child protection procedures, welfare staff have received no training about child protection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established **good** links with parents, other schools and the local community. The effectiveness of I CAN unit and its services to other nurseries is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school supports parents well by providing good information and opportunities for training
- Parents are insufficiently involved in children's learning at home and at school
- Very good support is given to pupils transferring from one stage of education to the next
- The school has good links with the local community, which work to mutual benefit
- Some parents are unhappy about the way the school deals with pupils with behavioural difficulties

Commentary

30. The school works hard to involve parents in the work of the school. The Parents Partnership runs regular courses in school to improve parents' learning and parenting skills and encourages parents to become partners in their children's education. Learning mentors run courses addressing specific issues such as managing difficult behaviour and also give individual support where this is needed. A number of parents, who work in the school as lunchtime assistants, have taken advantage of the opportunities available to them and are now trained as classroom assistants. Despite these initiatives, the school is unable to engage the majority of parents to actively support their children's education at home or at school. A parental questionnaire issued by the school in 2003 showed clearly that a significant minority of parents do not want to help in school or with after-school activities, and do not want additional information about what their children are learning.
31. Parents are informed at a very early stage if there are concerns about their children's progress and they are regularly informed and updated. Pupils' individual targets are discussed and agreed at Open Days. Visits to the Primary Support Centre with the learning mentors effectively help to prepare pupils with special educational needs for transfer to secondary school. .
32. The information available to parents to enable them to be partners in the education of their children is variable. Throughout the school year there is no specific information available to parents giving guidance and ideas as to how their children's learning can be supported. Teachers give this detailed information to parents who request it, but it is not generally available. However, in the Foundation Stage parents are given significant information to help them work with their children and a significant number of parents regularly help in the classroom.

33. Arrangements for transferring pupils from one stage of education to the next are good. Pupils are fully prepared for each change. Learning mentors have developed a range of materials to support the transition of pupils from Year 2 to Year 3 and from Year 6 into secondary education.
34. The school has good links with the local community, especially the local church. Good use is made of the few businesses in the immediate area to extend and enrich the school's curriculum. For example, pupils have baked at ASDA and Pizza Hut, visited the Post Office and Alder Hey Hospital and are developing links with the fire service. The school also supports the community well by offering school facilities for courses in ICT and a parent and toddler group. Plans are already in place to extend the links further by developing a community woodland adjacent to the school.
35. Occasionally the school's policies are not fully understood by parents, for example over the treatment, perceived to be 'privileges', awarded to 'naughty' children. These 'privileges' are part of the school's programme to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The school also believes that these help develop self-control in pupils with behavioural difficulties and minimise disruption for the benefit of all pupils. The inspection team is satisfied that the school deals with these situations well from the point of view of all pupils, but further effort is needed to convince parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is clear vision and very good leadership from the headteacher
- Key staff show a very clear commitment to supporting the future of the school[NCC1]
- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
- The school's finances are managed efficiently
- The very good management of special educational needs has a positive impact on learning

Commentary

36. The leadership of the school has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher provides the school with very clear and purposeful leadership. The headteacher and staff have a strong commitment to the development of good relationships and the care and support of pupils. Senior staff make a very good contribution to the leadership of the school through a strong and a mutually supportive senior management team. They invest a great deal of time and energy in monitoring and evaluating success in pastoral and academic provision. This is reflected in the good progress pupils make in their personal development throughout the school and in the rising standards in national tests at Key Stage 2. The school makes full use of it being part of the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities. It has gained awards, such as Healthy Schools and Investors in People. Management procedures work well and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
37. Development planning is thorough. All subject co-ordinators construct detailed plans and these are incorporated into the whole school improvement plan. Performance management targets focus on raising attainment and link with this improvement plan. This helps to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the school's priorities for development and are able to play a constructive part in meeting its objectives. Subject management is very good. Co-ordinators have appropriately delegated responsibilities for their subjects and carry out the work diligently. New ideas and creative thinking, such as the I CAN provision and the initiatives for raising self-esteem, are encouraged and as a result the school provides an interesting curriculum for its pupils with some unique features. The provision for professional development of staff is good and the school has a good quality induction programme for newly qualified teachers.

38. The school serves an area in which many pupils suffer from educational disadvantage and it has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator has worked well to establish effective teamwork and well-understood procedures. As a result, staff are clear about what must be done to help pupils with special educational needs so that they make the best possible progress. Many of the support staff are experienced and trained in helping pupils with special educational needs and they make a good contribution to their achievement. Although the school rightly places strong emphasis on supporting pupils with special educational needs, pupils of higher ability have not had as much attention and are sometimes insufficiently challenged. They do not always make as much progress as they could.
39. The governance of the school is good. The chair and other governors maintain close contact with the school and forge a constructive link with the local community. Governors are kept well informed about developments in the school and decisions are only taken after due discussion and consideration of the available information. The governors fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously, including those relating to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex education. Governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. They make sure that they are familiar with the available data to understand and deal with issues arising from analysis. For example, governors are aware of the need to raise standards of writing throughout the school. Governors provide good support for senior staff and challenge the school's performance when needed. The school's financial planning is sound and specific grants are used appropriately. Careful consideration is given to ensure that the best value is obtained. In view of the quality of education that makes such a good contribution to giving pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds a positive attitude to learning, the good standards that most pupils achieve and the rising results in national tests at Year 6, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	832,305
Total expenditure	859,489
Expenditure per pupil	3,114

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	88,523
Balance carried forward to the next	50,339

THE WORK OF THE I CAN UNIT

The school has an accredited I CAN nursery providing for the special language needs of up to eight children. Children are admitted following assessments by a multi-professional panel of health personnel. There is a designated teacher, support assistant and full-time speech and language therapists who work with the children. The nursery operates during mornings only and gives outreach support to other nurseries in the afternoons.

The provision for the children in the I CAN nursery is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very enthusiastic, knowledgeable and experienced staff are committed to, and successful in meeting, the very specific needs of these children
- Very good links with the school's nursery benefit all pupils and staff
- The very effective outreach service supports staff and children in other nurseries

Commentary

40. The current team of four staff have worked together since September 2003 and have developed a strong sense of teamwork, both within the I CAN nursery and with the school nursery staff, resulting in a sharing of expertise which benefits all children. They provide training to nursery staff, outreach nurseries and parents. As a result, all are better equipped to perform their roles. There is a very positive atmosphere in the nursery where children are treated with respect and every little step in improvement is recorded and celebrated. The welcome session in the morning sets the tone for the rest of the day and the activities build on the children's communication skills and their experiences. The very good relationships and in-depth knowledge of children's capabilities mean that the teacher can set questions for individual children and reinforce their targets. Because of this high level of understanding, the teacher has high expectations of the children but also is patient and allows them time to respond, always using consistent praise. Signing is used very well to support language development.
41. There is a very positive approach to including the children into the main school nursery. Children from both nurseries join in outdoor play together which gives good opportunities for them to mix with each other and as a result supports their personal and social development and language development. This arrangement is fully in tune with the school's commitment to inclusion. I CAN staff work in the nursery with mixed groups of children and both nursery staff discuss and exchange plans so that each knows the focus of the sessions. Four times a week all the children are involved in short *salley* (structured activities for language and literacy in the early years). The emphasis of these sessions is to develop 'good, sitting, good looking and good listening' which focuses children's attention on the teacher and the task in hand and facilitates learning for all children. The sessions are fun and the children do not see it as work but as playing their favourite games together. The teacher knows children's literacy skills and questions are targeted appropriately. At other times children play and work together without any apparent differences, which is one of the aims of the nursery.
42. Currently staff work with 15 nurseries within Liverpool and support 16 children who have specific and severe language difficulties. Most children receive a weekly visit which is clearly planned and follows the targets in the child's individual education plan drawn up by the I CAN team. In one such visit a little boy happily left what he was doing to join the I CAN teacher for his individual session. Learning was made fun through games and the age-appropriate stories and toys which focused on his current targets. His joy in this session was very evident as he responded with smiles and giggles and obviously had a very positive and comfortable relationship with the teacher.
43. The teacher, speech and language therapists and well-trained classroom assistant work very well as a team using their specific expertise to support the children and parents very well. Individual education plans are drawn up by the team, together with input from parents. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is maintained through regular open days, weekly newsletters, daily home/school books and activity books from the speech and language therapists. The daily welcome session involves all the multi-professional team and is a delightful start to the day. One of the team is always making written assessments of children's comments and actions. This ensures that no step in progress is missed and the information is added to during the day by 'post-it' notes which record any incident which happens, and which are helpful when writing future individual education plans and reports.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. The Foundation Stage consists of a nursery which has currently 59 children attending part-time, and two reception classes with 39 children. On entry to the nursery children's overall achievement, particularly in key areas of speech and language and their skills in handling pencils and drawing materials, is well below that expected for three year olds. By reception, there is a wide range of ability with some able children exceeding the expected goals in all areas of learning and some with special educational needs who will not do so. Taken overall, however, standards are likely to be well below the average. Children are likely to be a little below the expected goals in their personal and social development but a good number are unlikely to achieve them in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children achieve well in their creative work although standards are below the expectations by the end of reception. There was too little evidence to make an overall judgement of children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world. Physically children are adept in coping with climbing and riding bikes but weak in the finer physical work that involves eye and hand co-ordination such as writing and drawing. This means their physical development is below the expectations. Taken overall, children's achievements are good. The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and teaching is good; these represent a good improvement from the previous inspection. Particular strengths are the very good systems for assessing how children are getting on because these are an integral part of the teaching and learning, and also the links to the I CAN unit (a special provision that helps eight children from a number of local nurseries who have difficulties with their speech and language) that support children within the unit and also benefit those with similar learning needs in the mainstream nursery.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good arrangements to start the day help the children to settle down to more formal activities
- The provision encourages children to be independent
- Staff know children well and respond well to their individual needs

Commentary

45. Standards are likely to be a little below those expected by the end of the reception year. This means children's achievement in this area of learning is good. Weather permitting; the day begins in both nursery and in the reception class with physical activities outside and a free choice of activities to encourage independence. This helps children to settle down which is particularly important to those who are in the I CAN unit because they arrive in buses and have been sitting down for some time. Teaching is very good in all classes. Teachers plan well and provide a wide range of activities in which children work on their own, with a partner, supported by an adult or in a group. This ensures that children have the opportunity to develop good working relationships with one another and with the adults who work with them. A good example of this is the parachute game that the children in the nursery were involved in during the inspection and were seen to be listening, taking turns and working co-operatively. Adults in the Foundation Stage work together very well, moving flexibly between activities to support children as needed. This ensures that there is always a calm purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms. Adults set good examples for the children which help the children to understand how they should treat one another.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision in the I CAN unit benefits children in the main nursery who have similar needs
- Adults provide the children with good models of speech that help them to speak more clearly
- Children enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to learn to write and some become quite skilled by the end of the reception year

Commentary

46. Although the majority of children are on course to reach the expected standards stipulated in the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, there is a significant minority who are not and so standards are well below the expectation. However, children's achievements are good as a result of the very good teaching they receive.
47. There are a good number of children whose speech is not clear when they start in the nursery and some who prefer to respond to questions by gestures rather than words. The adults provide good models of clear speaking and they encourage children to talk as they play. As a result, children learn better ways of talking and become more confident in speaking. Children and adults in the nursery benefit from the links with the I CAN unit because some of the support that is offered takes place with other children; for example, a simple signing technique is used along with talk in order to make meanings clearer, and all staff and children learn by watching. The staff have introduced structured activities for language and literacy in the early years (*salley*) recently in the nursery and these are developing children's skills well. Children listen well in activities such as stories when adults capture pupils' attention through using their voices expressively, but in reception, there are a good number who find it hard to listen in contexts such as when they are asked to observe and reason when watching science experiments.
48. Early reading skills are developing well. In the nursery children quickly learn to read their names and find out activities on offer. By reception more able children are starting to read simple stories themselves and most children will pick up a book and tell the adult the story by looking at the pictures. Children love to write in their 'shops' as they draw up invoices and bills, on the playgrounds in chalk and on whiteboards which they can pick up whenever they want. By the end of reception, there are some children who are starting to write their own stories with a good number of simple words correctly spelled. The majority of children have made good progress in making letter shapes since so many of them had very little pencil control when they made their first efforts. They write their own names clearly and show an understanding of writing by putting down some of the letters that they know; for example, "the water dripped in the cup" was written as "the uutrdriap in tneud". There are some children who can put a set of pictures in the correct order to tell a story but who find it difficult to write unaided.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults use every opportunity to develop children's mathematical knowledge through play
- Whole-group mathematical activities are well planned for most children but do not stretch the most able.

Commentary

49. Standards are below those expected by the end of the reception year, but, considering children's achievement was well below the average on entry to nursery, this achievement is good. Teaching of mathematics is good and much good learning takes place as children play; for example, they pick up objects to play with and match them to shape and size as they put them back. Their play in the shops, cafés and home corners encourages them to learn shopping skills, such as buying and exchanging money for goods.
50. Children in the nursery happily take part in singing number songs and holding up their fingers to represent numbers. Children continue to develop counting skills in reception through counting activities and songs. Whole-class sessions work well for the majority of children but are a little slow for the more able; for example, when the teacher put out four objects and asked how many there would be if there were one or two more or less, the majority of the children were working at a suitable level but clearly some children found this too easy. This means the four adults in the two reception classes need to consider grouping children into manageable small groups according to their needs and provide suitable support and challenge in their mathematical work. Many children can name three-dimensional shapes. Children's written work shows that they can recognise and use numbers, and add and subtract small sums. Their books show that they have made good progress in recording, since their first attempts at numbers were faint and poorly formed. By reception most children are recording competently although some reverse numbers such as 2, 3 and 5.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

51. There was insufficient information across all elements of the knowledge and understanding of the world area of learning to make overall judgements about provision. Children in the nursery use the computer with varying degrees of skill. Some easily manipulate objects around the screen using the mouse and others find it extremely difficult to move the mouse. Similarly their competence in investigating objects and materials varies. In a science lesson in a reception class, adults worked very hard to try to keep the children's attention in observing group experiments but the children were difficult to engage in this whole group activity; they were more engaged when they were personally involved in doing things at their own speed rather than in listening.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor areas are used very well for a variety of activities, and starting the day in this area of learning suits the children's needs

Commentary

52. Teaching is good; children are likely to achieve those elements of the early learning goals that involve larger movements such as climbing and running but not those that involve finer hand and eye co-ordination as in drawing and writing. On fine days, nursery children are collected at the gate and start the day with learning outside. This gives children who have arrived on a long bus journey time to relax and some fresh air to revive them. Staff are clearly aware of their responsibilities and either lead an activity or respond flexibly to children's choices. As a result, the children behave very well and join in whenever invited. The children from the I CAN unit join in all the activities. Children in reception have a similar start and are encouraged to choose indoor or outdoor activities. Some of the children already show quite good control in throwing and catching balls or riding bikes; they are good at building and joining construction toys but

much finer movements such as those for writing and drawing or controlling the computer by using the mouse are often very weak.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many worthwhile activities for children to explore different materials and to act out their own personal ideas
- There are not enough opportunities to use small tools for drawing and painting activities.

Commentary

53. Teaching is good. Children achieve well although standards are below the expectations by the end of reception. Children's first artistic efforts on entry to nursery indicate a very limited prior experience as so much of their drawing are faint marks with little control. This continues through into reception, for example in the very simple shapes of observational drawings of people or plants. There is an emphasis on activities which are large scale for painting and drawing but less on the very small ones. Children are given many opportunities to explore materials such as glittery black water and play dough. They paint walls outside and playground floors with water to give them confidence in holding brushes. Children enjoy seeing colour appear on their paper and most of them like including objects, such as ribbons and feathers, on their work. Children often hear songs throughout the day and some will join in remembering tunes and words, whilst others listen rather than taking part. All classrooms have areas for dressing up which boys and girls use with equal enthusiasm; costumes during the inspection were quite glamorous and included some from different countries as well as ones that children could use to retell stories. Home play and shop corners stimulate imaginative play well; in fact one boy gave quite graphic detail about needing to go into hospital because "my waters have broke and the baby is coming"! All adults support children's learning well, encouraging them to talk and to explain what they are doing as they work and play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average but achievement is good by the end of Year 6
- Strategies to improve speaking and listening are effective
- Leadership of the subject is very good
- Support for special educational needs is very good
- Standards in writing throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 1, are not high enough
- There is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons

Commentary

54. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards which are similar to those found at the last inspection. Although standards are below the national average, mainly due to the large number of pupils with special educational needs, achievement has improved and this is now good. Teaching is consistently good. By the end of Year 2 achievement is satisfactory but standards have fallen since the last inspection and are now well below average. This is because teaching is only satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

Pupils of all ages with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, achieve well. Support for these pupils is very good. They are often taught in small groups with work and targets planned to meet their particular needs. In addition, many pupils are given extra support through the school's involvement in programmes especially designed to improve language and literacy skills.

55. Improving writing skills for all pupils is a high priority in the school. This is proving effective in Years 3 to 6 where teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan lessons well. They use a wide range of texts, illustrate the features of good reading and writing, and bring enthusiasm to literacy sessions. As a result, they capture pupils' interest and give pupils a better understanding of what they have to aim for. Teachers manage discussions well, they ask good questions and try to make sure that everyone has a chance to contribute. Pupils regularly write for different purposes. Specific skills are taught well; for example, pupils in year 6 develop their skills of story writing through careful planning and checking to make sure they have used every appropriate technique to create their desired effect.
56. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In most lessons the oral work and explanations went on too long and this did not leave sufficient time for pupils to engage with their own writing. Often the tasks themselves were not very interesting and teachers made too many allowances for pupils who find writing difficult or who were making little effort. Overall, this indicated that teachers' expectations were too low. The school's marking policy, designed to increase pupils' own knowledge of how they can improve, is not used consistently. Some teachers give very good written guidance on improvement and some concentrate on giving praise rather than constructive criticism.
57. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are improving and pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Younger pupils and pupils with special educational needs often have a restricted vocabulary but the good relationships within the school mean that pupils gain confidence and are willing to talk in both formal and informal situations. Teachers provide good role models of speech. There are good opportunities for discussion when teachers and support assistants ask probing, open-ended questions that stimulate responses from pupils. The habit of using 'talking partners' so that pupils can briefly share ideas in lessons is well established and older pupils rise to the challenge of being on the 'hot seat' and answer questions well, both from their teacher and fellow pupils.
58. By the end of Year 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading, although standards remain well below average. Teachers build on pupils' previous skills and pupils begin to read with increasing confidence. Pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and are familiar with some traditional stories. Achievement is good for older pupils even though standards are still below average. They are beginning to use their voices expressively when reading aloud to emphasise the meaning for the listener. Pupils do have access to the school library and each classroom has a good supply of books. However, pupils' library and research skills are under-developed.
59. The subject is managed very well by the co-ordinator who has a clear view of what needs to be done. She has worked hard with staff to give the subject a high profile in school. The systems for checking how well pupils are doing are fully in place and standards in the older classes are beginning to rise.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Literacy skills are used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Teachers encourage pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and they emphasise specialist vocabulary in subjects like science, history, geography and ICT. There is limited use of writing skills across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the national average because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the school
- The majority of the pupils' achievements and progress in Years 3 to Year 6 is good and is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2
- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to solve problems involving numbers, data handling, geometry and measures. Because of this the more able pupils are not always challenged by the activities
- Standards of marking are inconsistent. Pupils are not aware of their learning targets
- There is very good co-ordination of the subject

Commentary

61. Standards in Year 2 and 6 over the past two years have been well below the national level for all schools but have been in line with those of schools with similar intakes of pupils. The reason for the low standards is because of the high number of pupils in the school who are identified to have a range of learning difficulties. However, because of the good teaching in Years 3 to 6, the pupils' achievements and the progress they make in comparison to their ability are good. In Years 1 and 2 where the teaching is not as good the pupils' achievements and progress are only satisfactory. The activities are not as well matched to the needs of all the pupils in the class and do not provide an adequate amount of challenge. The older pupils make good progress in their understanding of the use of number operations because they are provided with ample opportunities and good support to practise and consolidate these skills. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher carefully planned a range of problem-solving activities based on the handling of money to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. The buzz in the classroom and the pupils' concentration illustrated their obvious enjoyment in the challenge provided by the activities. They worked well together to find solutions to the problems that were posed. A small number of more able pupils from this group join a Year 6 class in order to extend their learning and another group of pupils receive more concentrated attention from a learning mentor. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in the class. This arrangement ensures that all the pupils' needs are met.
62. Overall, in many lessons, opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems are limited. This means in particular the more able lack the challenge that enables them to use their basic skills in meaningful situations. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. The quality of marking in the pupils' books is inconsistent. In the majority of cases the comments do not provide the pupil with any guidance on how they can improve. Individual learning programmes are devised for the pupils with special educational needs but the rest of the pupils are not aware of their individual targets in mathematics.
63. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has effectively used the analysis of test results to identify specific areas that require further development. For example, the present focus on improving the provision for problem solving arose from this analysis. Actions are already being taken to deal with identified areas that require further development and improvement since the last inspection has been effective.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics in other subjects are limited and there are no clear plans to ensure that this happens. When planned

effectively, as in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils are motivated to use computers as part of a data-handling activity. The limited opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects further reduce possibilities in solving problems.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Key Stage 2 is good because teaching is good
- The increased emphasis on investigations has given pupils more opportunities for practical work
- The curriculum is well organised and monitored to ensure appropriate coverage
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good and the co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the subject

Commentary

65. Standards are below national averages overall. In comparison with similar schools they are average, even though there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher's brisk and effective introduction included checking of pupils' previous learning and was successful in totally engaging them. Pupils carefully listened to the teacher's verbal explanations of various processes and learnt the correct scientific vocabulary, for example thermal conductor, vacuum, condensation and evaporation. In this well-organised lesson there was good balance of activities to maintain pupils' interest. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils gained a clear understanding of how to conduct a fair test. Analysis of work shows that all aspects of the curriculum are covered and pupils take pride in presenting their work as neatly as they can.
66. Pupils' investigation skills are being well developed because of the increased opportunities planned for practical work. This was an area of weakness in the last inspection. Scientific enquiry is a part of every lesson and during the inspection pupils handled basic equipment carefully and they understood what conditions were necessary for a fair test. They know that scientific ideas are based on first hand evidence, learn to make simple predictions about their investigations and record their results. Pupils in Year 2 can explain their investigations about growing seeds and how they were going to find out what was needed for healthy plants by changing the conditions for different seeds. Scrutiny of work shows that investigations have been included in every topic and they have been clearly recorded. Pupils enjoy the practical element of science lessons best and can remember some of the investigations they have done.
67. The curriculum for science has improved since the last inspection because the co-ordinator has completely reviewed the scheme of work and adapted it to meet the needs of the pupils. Monitoring in science includes an analysis of pupils' written work and its match with planning, and observation of lessons. The emphasis on the teaching of correct scientific vocabulary originated from monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning. As a result, lists of key words for every theme are in place for teachers' use.
68. The current subject co-ordinator has worked very hard to address the areas of weakness identified in the last report and has been successful in this. She has a good overview of the subject and has used her specific scientific knowledge very well to develop a very good range of assessment and monitoring procedures as well as producing a very useful booklet for each year group, listing resources for each module within the curriculum. Booster classes for Year 6 pupils have been introduced and an analysis of results in national tests identify areas for

development. The subject action plan shows a clear vision for the future development of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have developed a good range of ICT skills by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good
- Provision of ICT and its use have improved since the last inspection
- Leadership and management of the subject are good
- The keyboard skills of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not sufficiently developed

Commentary

69. The school has made significant progress in ICT since the last inspection when it was judged as unsatisfactory. The school has made a heavy investment in both equipment and staff training. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory for younger pupils. Standards have improved from well below to below average for all pupils. Standards are beginning to rise for older pupils and, although they remain below the national average largely due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs, achievement is good. Support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, is very good throughout the school and they achieve well.
70. Many pupils do not have access to computers at home, which means they lack some of basic ICT skills, such as confidence with keyboard skills. The school is working hard to enable pupils to overcome such barriers. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are slowly improving their keyboard skills which are underdeveloped. Teachers now teach dedicated lessons in ICT to develop pupils' skills stipulated in the school's programme of work, which covers the full ICT curriculum. Teachers use every opportunity to enhance pupils' competence in ICT. For example, pupils in Year 3 regularly send and receive emails from the teacher's contact in Japan. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop their skills on a regular basis. An ICT technician provides valuable practical support for teachers and pupils in the ICT suite. In Year 6, one teacher, with good subject knowledge, teaches ICT to both classes. This arrangement is working well because pupils benefit from the expert teaching. In a good Year 6 lesson pupils used *PowerPoint* to link two pages of graphics and text. Conversations with pupils show that they have a reasonable understanding of the many ways ICT is used today and how dependant society is upon it. They are enthusiastic about ICT and its use in lessons.
71. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The newly appointed co-ordinator is building on the progress already made by the school and is working hard to maintain ICT as a high priority in school. She has supported other staff in acquiring the basic ICT skills for themselves and is evaluating the success of the recently introduced procedures to check how well pupils are progressing.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. There is satisfactory use of ICT in other subjects and the school has appropriate plans for this to increase. Examples of how ICT is used to support learning in other subjects were seen in literacy, mathematics and science. Pupils have opportunities to draft their written work in English and to produce graphs to show their findings in mathematics and science. ICT is used very well to support pupils with special educational needs and particular programs have been purchased to support the targets included in pupils' individual education plans.

HUMANITIES

73. Only one history lesson was seen and none in geography. It is not, therefore, possible to make firm overall judgements about the provision, standards or quality of teaching in these subjects.
74. Examination of teachers' planning in **history** and discussion with teachers and pupils show that the school is teaching a broad and balanced curriculum. In the one lesson seen pupils enjoyed a Greek banquet as part of their work on life in Ancient Greece. This occasion not only increased pupils' knowledge and understanding of the period but made a good contribution to the development of their personal and social skills as well.
75. An examination of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work indicate that the pupils receive a satisfactory range of activities in **geography** but pupils' knowledge of all aspects of geography is likely to be below national expectations. For example, when interviewed, Year 6 pupils had difficulty in recalling what they learnt in geography lessons although they were able to describe their study of survey maps of the local area. Year 2 pupils run their own travel desk which gives them some awareness of foreign countries. In Year 5, pupils study the local amenities in Huyton village and in Year 6 compare different mountain ranges in the world. The schemes of work are based on a nationally recognised scheme of work and the improvement of standards of achievement in the subject is identified as a priority in the school's improvement plan.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good use made of resources enhances pupils' learning, especially in Year 6
- The curriculum follows the locally agreed syllabus and has been adapted to meet the age and abilities of all the pupils

Commentary

76. The school has a good range of relevant resources to enhance learning in lessons and they are used well to engage pupils' interest. For example, the Year 2 lesson in which pupils were studying Judaism and Shabbat, in particular, was well organised with an interesting range of resources. The calm atmosphere made by dimming the lights and lighting candles gained pupils' attention while the teacher read a special prayer in Hebrew. They discussed the ritual of laying the table and the Challah bread which they all tasted. Chatting to the pupils showed how much they remembered about the rituals of Judaism, because they had been able to handle artefacts and were able to make connections with particular ceremonies. Pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically used books and ICT to research different beliefs relating to Creation and beavered away in groups to prepare a presentation for the class. The enthusiastic and lively approach of the teacher stimulated pupils' imagination and interest, leading to a high level of interest and activity.
77. The curriculum follows the locally agreed syllabus and gives pupils opportunities to consider other major religions of the world such as Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism as well as Christianity. Assessment procedures have been developed but are not yet established. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' written work and matches it with medium-term plans to ensure full coverage. Discussions with staff ensure that topics and resources meet the needs of all pupils. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection but the level of resources has improved. The subject satisfactorily supports pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

78. Too few lessons were seen in art and design, music, physical education or design and technology to make overall judgements about the quality of provision in any of these subjects.

Art and design

79. An analysis of the school's policy and planning shows that the curriculum is satisfactory although it has limited opportunities for studying the work of different artists. Pupils do not draw very well when they start the school and their drawing skills remain below average by Year 6. However, their work is better when exploring colour and design. Teachers display pupils' work with care and respect.

Music

80. The school offers a good number of extra activities for music and encourages pupils to participate. Pupils learn to play wind, brass and stringed instruments, some of them performing to a good standard and taking external examinations. The school choir leads singing in assembly, when all pupils sing tunefully. Pupils take part in musicals in school, and some with particular talent sing with choirs and groups in the community.

Physical education

81. The teachers' planning and discussions with the subject co-ordinator and Year 6 pupils confirm that there is a good range of activities taught throughout the school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. In a very good Year 6 netball coaching lesson, involving both classes and their teachers, the pupils display a good range of catching and throwing skills. The pupils can explain why a warm-up session is necessary and are asked to suggest appropriate exercises for specific muscle groups. This is because of the specialist knowledge of the teachers and the high expectations of pupils' performance. The very good pace, the quality of the instructions and the challenge offered by the activities ensure that the pupils are fully occupied and motivated throughout the lesson. In a satisfactory Year 2 gymnastics lesson the pupils are not asked the reason for the warm-up and too much time is spent sitting and watching the setting up of the apparatus.
82. There is a good range of out-of-school activities. In after-school athletics and dance clubs the pupils show enthusiasm and improve their skills. The subject co-ordinator has started a school football team and, through contacts with a local teacher training college, has introduced the pupils to rock climbing and orienteering. In liaison with teachers in local schools, he is revising the physical education programmes of study.

Design and technology

83. The work on display in classrooms, pupils' books and teachers' planning indicate that there are appropriate opportunities for all the pupils to be able to create their own designs, and to use these ideas to manufacture and to evaluate products. This is well illustrated by the display in Year 6 where the pupils have designed and made slippers for a young child and in Year 2 where the pupils have constructed and evaluated the best way of making axles for a model vehicle. The implementation of a nationally recognised scheme of work has given a sound structure to the curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
84. In Years 3 and 5 lessons pupils were fully involved in describing and evaluating their work with making sandwiches and bread. In the Year 3 lesson, because of the teachers' encouragement, the pupils learnt to be more precise in their descriptions of the sequence of activities required to produce a sandwich. Following a good introduction by the teacher, the pupils in Year 5 displayed imaginative designs for their bread wrapping.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is prepared to look for innovative ways of helping pupils to become more confident and self-aware

Commentary

85. The school puts great store in creating a learning environment that is calm and encouraging and a haven where pupils can trust the adults. The headteacher leads the staff very well in this area by seeking new initiatives as well as those that are tried and tested. There is a whole-school programme to support achievement through rewards. Teachers and learning mentors provide circle time activities where pupils raise and discuss a wide range of issues. The school offers a quiet room which is supported by a therapist. Pupils, staff and parents use this room in times of stress and there is a planned programme for pupils to learn to control their emotions and to relax.

Example of outstanding practice

This is an example of one of the ways that the school is teaching its pupils to control their emotions

The room is small. A serene atmosphere is created by the way it is presented. There is no natural light. The room is painted in light blue as an underwater scene with marine life. Subdued lighting, interesting objects, different kinds of lamps and quiet music with sounds of whales and seabirds add to the atmosphere. The child sits on a soft chair hugging a large, soft turtle toy. She is connected to the computer by a finger sensor that measures her heart beat. The adult sits on the floor by her, talking in a soothing voice. The child reaches into herself to control her anger or anxiety; the calmer she becomes, the lower the heart rate and the more of the picture on the screen is coloured in. She has not yet produced the completed picture but she is getting closer.

86. The result of this provision is that the large majority of pupils are polite and very helpful without losing their chirpy confidence. Those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped to see school as a positive experience and to take part in the activities it offers more fully.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
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	3
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

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).