

INSPECTION REPORT

MALVERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Knowsley, Merseyside

LEA area: Merseyside

Unique reference number: 104427

Headteacher: Mrs C A Kinsella

Lead inspector: Mr P Mathias

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th February 2004

Inspection number: 256826

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	446
School address:	Willoughby Road Huyton Knowsley Merseyside
Postcode:	L14 6XA
Telephone number:	0151 477 8230
Fax number:	0151 477 8231
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Graham Morgan
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Malvern Primary School is much larger than most primary schools. It is situated in Huyton in the Knowsley area of Greater Liverpool. The school moved very recently into a new building. Ground works to landscape the site were continuing during the inspection. There are 446 pupils on roll. Fifty-two children attend the nursery on a part-time basis and 43 children attend the two reception classes full time. The school holds a Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People. The school is also involved in the Excellence in Cities Initiative. It caters for boys and girls between the ages of three and eleven. Nearly all pupils come from the local area where there is a variety of affluence and social backgrounds. During the last year, 22 pupils entered the school and 23 pupils left at times other than normal. This is a typical proportion for primary schools.

Children's attainment on entry is broadly the same as for most children of this age. There are 82 pupils who are considered to have some degree of special educational needs, of whom 26 receive help from outside agencies. These are above average figures. A further three pupils are in receipt of statements of special educational needs, which is about an average proportion. Nearly all pupils who have special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties.

About 19 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is an average proportion of pupils. A very small proportion of pupils have English as a second language. Nearly all pupils come from white British backgrounds. Some 6.5 equivalent full-time teachers left in the last two years following a fall in pupil numbers and two teachers were appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21945	Mr Peter Mathias	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Citizenship English as an additional language
13526	Mr Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
25509	Mrs Judith Clarke	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage
30398	Mr Christopher Scola	Team inspector	English Physical education Religious education Special educational needs
32283	Mr Denis Goodchild	Team Inspector	Design and technology Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus ltd
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Malvern Primary School is an effective school, which gives good value for money. Standards in pupils' work in subjects seen are generally above average and, currently, pupils achieve well. The school is a purposeful and positive place where the quality of teaching is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good quality of leadership shown by the headteacher and senior management team has been a major factor in the school's improvement since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Pupils benefit considerably from the very constructive and caring ethos in the school.
- The school now has excellent accommodation.
- Currently in classes pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science and achieve well in these subjects.
- Insufficient use is made of the information the school collects from its assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science to identify and follow up short-term achievable targets for individual pupils and small groups of pupils to achieve, and the quality of marking is inconsistent across the school.

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection and the key issues of the inspection have been thoroughly addressed. There is now a strong and effective senior management team and the quality of teaching has improved, as have the standards of pupils' achievement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well overall. The results in 2003 shown above were lower than the school normally achieves. The school considered that about one third of pupils in that group had some degree of special educational need. Children under six achieve well, and are on course to reach the early learning goals set for them. Nearly all are ready to begin the National Curriculum by the age of six. In Year 1 and Year 2 pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. These are reflected in the consistently above average test results at the end of Year 2. In Year 3 to Year 6, pupils achieve well in lessons in English, mathematics and science. Current standards in Year 6 are above average in these subjects. Standards are average in information and communication technology and religious education. Standards are good in history.

Pupils' personal qualities are very successfully developed and encouraged. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and pupils have very good opportunities to be aware of their responsibilities and to discharge these very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is consistently good. In the lessons seen, particular strengths in the teaching were the teachers' very good questioning skills, which prompted pupils to think things out for themselves, and teachers' very good subject knowledge. Marking is not always helpful towards pupils and information from marking and assessments is not consistently well used to set short-term targets for individuals and small groups of pupils with similar difficulties to overcome and reach the higher standards. The curriculum is wide and interesting and meets all pupils' needs well. There are very good arrangements for pupils to be involved in activities outside the school day and to participate in sports, the arts and other activities. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school. The accommodation is excellent and is already having a very positive impact on staff and pupils' morale. Resources for learning are very good in quality and quantity in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school. An exception to this is in information and communication technology where many of the computers are unreliable. The care, guidance and support provided for individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very good. Partnerships with parents and other schools are also very good. Links with the community are good. There are very strong links with the local secondary school to which many pupils transfer and this enables pupils to move smoothly on to the next phase of their education when they leave Year 6.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The school meets all its statutory requirements. The school is very well governed. The headteacher and senior management team provide a very purposeful and well-organised lead to the school. The governing body and professional leadership of the school worked very well and effectively together to tackle the key issues of the previous inspection. There is a very clear sense of direction to the work of the school backed up by detailed and very effective strategic planning, both by the governing body and the senior management team. This has resulted in much being achieved, for example in improving the quality of teaching and successfully raising standards in nearly all subjects. The headteacher is now very well supported by a committed and energetic senior management team who work closely and constructively together. The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school and governors have a particularly well-developed understanding of how and when to act as a critical friend of the school and to ensure that its decisions achieve the best value possible.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents expressed very positive views of the school, as did the pupils who in discussion with the inspection team were very enthusiastic about their new school and the way they are treated by their teachers and helpers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make the good quality of marking in some classes consistent across the school and link this with the school's assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science to identify short-term achievable targets for individual pupils and small groups of pupils to work towards

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in these subjects. Standards in history are above expected levels. A particular strength is the standard pupils reach in the end of year national assessments at the end of Year 2 compared to schools nationally and to schools considered broadly similar.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach above average standards in classes in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and they make good progress in these subjects.
- Pupils achieve well above average standards in the national assessments for seven year olds, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- A weakness is that the average standards in information and communication technology do not match the higher standards found in many other subjects.

Commentary

1. Standards attained in English and mathematics in the 2003 national tests for eleven year olds were below average when compared to schools nationally. In science standards were average in these tests. The results in English and mathematics were also below average when compared to schools considered broadly similar. In science these results were in line with most of these similar schools. This group of pupils in 2003 achieved less well in English and mathematics than could reasonably be expected of them judged on how well they achieved in the national assessments when they were seven. In science pupils achieved in line with what could reasonably be expected. These results were in contrast to higher standards previously. This dip is closely related to the high proportion of pupils in Year 6 in 2003 who were considered to have some degree of special educational need. Overall boys and girls attained the same in these tests. The school did not meet its targets for the national tests for eleven year olds for 2003.
2. Standards at the end of Year 2 national assessments in 2003 were well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Results in these assessments have been consistently above average in writing and in mathematics. Overall, since 1998 the trend of improvement in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 has been above the national trend. The trend of improvement in the national tests at the end of Year 6 has been in line with most schools. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and the expectations teachers hold for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, which are closely linked to this improvement in standards.
3. In English by Year 2 and Year 6, pupils speak and listen well. They read fluently and confidently for their ages. Pupils by Year 2 and Year 6 make good progress in their writing as a result of recent initiatives the school has taken to strengthen the teaching of this aspect of English. In mathematics and science pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well and reach above average standards in their classes. In history, standards of attainment are above what is expected of pupils by the ages of seven and eleven, reflecting the wide and interesting curriculum and the quality of teaching in this subject. In information and communication technology standards are in line with those expected at the age of seven and eleven. While the school has a new, large computer suite, many of the computers are unreliable and, as a result, pupils are not always able to learn well and make good progress. Standards in religious education are in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

- In the nursery and reception classes, children under six make good progress in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. It was not possible to make a firm judgment about standards in Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development and Creative Development. Because of a lack of evidence during the inspection it was also not possible to form judgments about standards in geography, art, music, design and technology, physical education and citizenship.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.0 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.1 (16.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (27.3)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.1 (27.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.1 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Punctuality is **good** and attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well because of the school's good guidance and clear rules.
- Relationships between the pupils and with the staff are very good and create a good climate for learning.
- There is a strong sense of community.

Commentary

- The school helps pupils to gain a very good understanding of what is right and wrong and so their moral development is very good. They respond very well to the school's expectations of good behaviour, know the rules and keep to them. The school council was involved in implementing the anti-bullying policy and the pupils' respect and concern for one another ensure that this is a school where pupils behave very well towards one another. This is evident in the calm way in which pupils move around the school. The pupils enjoy and appreciate the various incentives the school has devised to reward good attitudes, work and behaviour. Behaviour is very good in the dining areas and lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion. Pupils know the routines and why these are necessary. They are well mannered and greet visitors politely. There were no exclusions in the previous year.
- Pupils' social development is very good. They get on well together, regardless of age or background, whether at work or play. They willingly take on responsibility and are helpful in the daily running of the school. They have been very active in organising various charitable events

such as the 'Shoe Box Appeal' and their concern for others is a strong feature. Older pupils help in the Nursery. The emphasis on community spirit is particularly well taught through the 'I belong to Malvern' initiative and this has raised the sense of self-esteem of many pupils. They have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and are proud of what they do to help it thrive.

7. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Although adults set a consistently strong example of sensitivity and respect for others that pupils follow, opportunities in assembly to have meaningful reflection and develop a sense of awe and wonder are sometimes missed. Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about their own and others' cultural heritage through work in geography, history, art, music and religious education. Pupils in Year 2, for example, learn about how Hindus worship and celebrate.

Attendance

Attendance levels are in line with national averages. Rates improve consistently as pupils move through the school because of the very high importance the school places on promoting attendance and the very thorough systems in place to record and monitor it. Constant reminders, along with very effective liaison with the educational welfare service, result in levels of attendance for pupils in Year 6 being above the national average. Improving attendance rates reflect the pupils' love for their school. A small number of parents take children on holiday in term time in spite of the good efforts made by the school to discourage them. Learning suffers for these pupils who miss important parts of their schooling. Punctuality is good and lessons start on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Particular strengths are the consistency of good teaching across the school, the enrichment of the curriculum by a very good range of out-of-school activities, the very good quality of nearly all of the resources and the excellent accommodation. A limitation is that some computers in the new computer suite are unreliable. The curriculum is wide and interesting and provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for children when they begin school are very thorough and effective. Pupils are very well cared for when they are in school. Links with parents and other schools are very good. There are very effective arrangements for the transfer of pupils to their new school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good**. Across the school pupils make good progress and learn well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Teachers question well to enable pupils to think things out for themselves.
- Teachers have positive relationships with their pupils.
- Work is well matched to different abilities in classes.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are taught well.

- A weakness is that teachers' marking does not always indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers do not use the information they assemble from national tests and other reliable sources well enough to identify in all classes short-term achievable targets in English, mathematics and science for individual pupils and small groups of pupils to try to reach.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	15 (26%)	32 (56%)	9 (16%)	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.

- Across the school the quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good and fosters the early learning goals for children of these ages well. Teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 is now good where at the time of the last inspection it was a weakness. Then three out of ten lessons were unsatisfactory in Year 1 and Year 2 and there was very little good or very good teaching. In this inspection nine out of ten lessons were good or better and one in three of these lessons was very good or excellent. In Year 1 to Year 6 the teaching of English is good and teachers have a good understanding of how to teach literacy. They often show a good knowledge of the mechanics of English. The teaching of mathematics and science is good and teachers question well to encourage pupils to think things out for themselves. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good and pupils work willingly and enthusiastically because they know that their efforts are recognised and their views are respected. Teachers plan carefully, particularly in English and mathematics, to ensure that all pupils receive work which is well matched to their different abilities. This enables pupils to make good progress in these lessons.
- Teaching is good in all subjects seen where it is possible to make secure judgments about its quality. However, teachers do not consistently make best use of the information they carefully collect in English, mathematics and science from their marking of pupils' class work and from the national tests and other reliable assessments they carry out. This information is not sufficiently well used to inform and to provide short-term targets for individual pupils and small groups of pupils with similar difficulties to aim to achieve in the future.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage of their time in school. A suitable programme of learning is planned and work is very well matched to the pupils' needs. The school employs the services of several specialist teachers who provide good training and support to the school. They also work very effectively with small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from class. A small team of skilled and well-briefed teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs both within class and by teaching them in small groups. The individual plans and targets that are set for these pupils are particularly good. Both the pupils and their parents easily understand these plans and the targets that are set for learning. This enables the pupils to be very involved in judging how well they are progressing in their learning and ensures they achieve well.
- Overall, pupils learn well and make good progress. In the lessons seen there was no difference in the way boys and girls learnt. Teachers are always keen to ensure that boys and girls are given equal opportunities to play a full part in their lessons. Teachers regularly encourage pupils in lively and sensitive ways to be proud of their school and to take seriously their responsibilities to it.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and the opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. Staffing is **good**. Accommodation is **excellent** and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a very significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
- The way other subjects are used to support learning in literacy is good.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health development is good.
- The quality of the accommodation is excellent.

Commentary

12. There has been very good improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection. Teachers now plan together very effectively. Lessons are now directly linked to learning objectives that relate to the National Curriculum. Work is well matched to the pupils' abilities. High attaining pupils are now very appropriately challenged. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and a very suitable level of support is put in to ensure they make good progress. Very clear and effective plans for their learning are drawn up. Because of the very clear way these plans are written, the pupils themselves are fully involved in knowing exactly what their short-term targets are and this ensures they achieve very well. For the majority of pupils, this individual target setting is not as effective. In some classes, pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve their learning, but this does not happen consistently across the school.
13. Many opportunities are taken to enrich the curriculum. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that supports the pupils' learning such as a reading club, a choir and drama clubs, as well as a very good range of games and sporting activities. The school takes part in a wide range of local sports events such as swimming galas, and football, netball and rugby matches. The drama club puts on productions for the local community and the choir has performed in public events with other schools. In the humanities and the arts, the school provides a good range of visits to support the curriculum such as visits to museums, theatres and field centres.
14. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to apply literacy skills across the curriculum. The pupils have many opportunities to write for different purposes to extend their skills in many subjects across the curriculum. For example, in religious education the pupils 'interview' Jonah to find out what happened when he disobeyed God. They carry out research on the life of Louis Pasteur as part of their work in history. They produce high standard work on a range of topics such as 'Computers' and the life of Picasso.
15. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It is clearly rooted in learning through play. Planning is thorough and fully reflects the agreed areas of learning for children of this age. The outdoor area is well used to promote active learning. Great care is taken to monitor the well-being of the children. The school places great emphasis on ensuring the children feel at ease so that they can enjoy their learning and be aware of their achievement.
16. The school's academic curriculum is well supported by the personal development of pupils. It is also a 'Healthy Eating' school and emphasises the importance of a healthy life-style. Pupils know the importance of eating fresh fruit, exercising regularly and recycling as much waste as possible. The school ensures there are opportunities to put these values into practice by, for example, recycling printer cartridges.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is well planned, effective and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. There is an effective team of skilled staff, who

provide good support to pupils who have particular difficulties with their work. The expertise of outside agencies is called in when necessary. Classroom assistants provide good support but there needs to be more of them, especially in the juniors.

18. The quality of the accommodation is excellent. The new school is spacious, light and very well and interestingly designed. The priority has been, quite rightly, to focus on the building and improving the reliability of the computers in the information and communication technology suite.
19. The school has identified the need to raise standards in information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good** and has improved very well since the previous inspection. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is **good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are valued and very well involved in school.
- Health and safety procedures are very good.
- There are very good child protection procedures.
- There is very good pastoral support for pupils.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Support for learning is limited by shortcomings in the use the school makes of the assessment information it collects.

Commentary

20. All members of staff provide strong pastoral care that ensures every pupil feels valued and cared for. Parents agree that the school takes very good care of their children. Very good induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure the youngest children quickly settle into school and make good progress in their personal development. Children joining the school later are made very welcome and soon are settled and happy. Pupils are enabled to feel safe and work in confidence due to: effective child protection procedures and awareness, very good evaluation of health and safety risks, and very good first aid procedures and supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes, especially given the current limitations of the site.
21. Pupils' personal development is supported very well, as members of staff, with the headteacher setting a fine role model, all know their pupils and their backgrounds very well. Pupils in Year 6 are very appreciative of the excellent mentor system that ensures they all have an adult, other than their class teacher, with whom to discuss problems or concerns.
22. Academic support and advice for pupils are satisfactory, but not all teachers set short-term targets, based on ongoing marking and assessment information, that are then shared with pupils. Pupils feel that members of staff value their views and this gives them confidence to discuss issues and raise questions. Their say in the life of the school is enhanced very well by the provision of the school council. Pupils speak very forcibly about the very strong impact that the bullying policy, on which they were consulted, has had on behaviour, especially in the playground.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents, which has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Links with the local community are **good**. Links with local schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents support the learning of their children very well.
- There is very good information to parents on their children's progress.
- Parents are very much welcomed into the life of the school.
- There are very strong links with other local schools.

Commentary

23. The quality of partnerships has improved well since the last inspection. The very good support and value parents place on their children's education, and the way these are harnessed and encouraged by the school, are strong factors in pupils' very positive attitudes to school and achievements. Most parents ensure their children attend regularly and promptly and want to learn. They encourage them through supporting homework. They provide very good help in the classroom, especially with reading. In particular, they provide financial contributions through the Parent Teacher Association, which has also provided a range of social events that foster the team and family feel to the school. Parents receive very good information to help their children further in their learning. Information on the curriculum or topics has been provided in newsletters, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Reports give very good information on progress and achievements and on targets for improvement, although some of these are not sufficiently specific. Consultation sessions give high quality individual information.
24. The school is open to parents; teachers are available regularly and issues are dealt with promptly and to high levels of satisfaction from most parents. Consultation with parents is very good and helps parents to feel an important part of the school. Regular consultation on the school development plan, behaviour policy, and a recent 'Working as a Team' document are very good examples of how seriously the school values the views and involvement of parents. The school uses the local community well for visits and local visitors help in school. The partnership with the local schools, especially the secondary school to which many pupils transfer, ensures pupils are very well prepared for and confident about their move to secondary school.
25. The very strong link with the local special educational needs resource centre provides very good support both for members of staff and for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. Leadership, management and the governance of the school are all **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issues of the last inspection.
- There is a close and constructive relationship between governors and the headteacher. Governors are knowledgeable about the school, helping to shape its future and to challenge and support the senior management team.
- There is a very clear sense of purpose and vision for the school shown by the headteacher and senior management team.

Commentary

26. The quality of leadership shown by the headteacher and senior management team is very good. The school is very well managed. At the time of the last inspection the headteacher was

newly appointed. Then the school lacked a cohesive and committed group of senior teachers to help in the leadership of the school. This has now been very successfully addressed. The senior management team is very hard-working and with the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership to teachers who now all share the same commitment to high achievement and to the provision of a very good education for all of the pupils. The positive relationships between the professional staff are now a significant strength.

27. The quality of teaching is now consistently better than it was. This has been achieved through a determined lead from the headteacher, and co-ordinators that keep a careful eye on the quality of teaching and learning. They share their expertise and experience effectively. Standards in subjects are much higher than they were, and particularly in Year 1 and Year 2 there has been much success in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve in the national assessments of seven year olds. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 now build well on the good experiences and teaching they receive in the nursery and reception classes; previously they did not. However, while standards in information and communication technology have improved and are now in line with those expected, the computers in the computer suite are unreliable and form a barrier to raising standards further.
28. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are well directed and appropriately used. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides a strong lead and ensures that individual educational plans are sufficiently detailed and kept up to date.
29. There are rigorous procedures in place for the governing body and senior management team to identify the long-term needs of the school, which are addressed very thoroughly through the school's school development plan. These priorities closely match the needs of the school and are carefully linked to long-term financial management. The move from the adjacent previous school buildings to the bright and excellent accommodation of the new school has been accomplished smoothly. Pupils and teachers have continued to work effectively and cheerfully together despite the recent inconveniences associated with this operation.
30. The governors support the school very well and share the headteacher's vision for the future. They are familiar with national and school results and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and chair of governors meet regularly to monitor and review the school's performance. Appropriate committees are in place to manage the school and the governors have all statutory policies in place. Governors are supportive but act very effectively as critical friends to the senior management team through their committees.
31. Financial management is very good. There are good procedures to ensure that the budget is well spent and a recent audit showed that all systems were in place and well managed. The school adheres to principles of best value. Educational and financial planning is cross-referenced in the school development plan and the headteacher and governors work very closely together. For example, governors receive regular reports on expenditure from the headteacher and they critically review this expenditure against standards.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,193,361
Total expenditure	1,173,423
Expenditure per pupil	2,333

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	16,014
Balance carried forward to the next	19,938

32. Bearing in mind the good quality of education provided, the standards currently being achieved and the way the school is run, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is **good**. The school has worked hard to maintain the strong position reported in the last inspection report. Teaching and learning are consistently good in each class. The children start in the nursery as soon as they are three years old. There are two classes of children; the majority of the children attend part time although some of the oldest children attend full time. The numbers of children in the reception classes has fallen this year, as there are 43 children in the two classes. Most of the children from the nursery classes move into the reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five.

The staff in the nursery and reception classes work well together as a team and they are very well led by the Early Years co-ordinator. Management is effective. The accommodation, in this new school building, for the Foundation Stage children is excellent and the resources for them to use are very good. Judgements have been made about the provision and achievements of the children in the nursery and reception classes in their personal and social development, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, and work has been sampled in the other three areas of learning. The attainments of the children in this year group are broadly average and their achievement is good; however, the spread of ability is wide.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables the children to feel secure and at ease, and to develop their self-confidence.
- Staff enjoy good relationships with children and parents.
- Class routines help the children to become independent and to plan their own learning.

Commentary

33. Good teaching in this area of learning helps the children to learn and achieve well, so that the majority of the children will at least reach the levels expected of this area of learning by the end of the reception year. The teachers and support staff have quickly established new routines in the new building so that the children have settled quickly. They work with a happy confidence. Snack time is orderly and companionable. The children sit in a circle and chat or listen to a story about 'Percy the Park-keeper' as they eat their toast. The children are polite and readily say "thank you" and help each other. These are happy sociable occasions, where the children learn good social skills. The nursery children try hard to put on their coats before they go into the outdoor classroom and chat happily to visitors about their work and play.
34. The staff enjoy very good relationships with both children and their parents. This means that there is a good partnership established between home and school. There is very good quality information available for the parents. The weekly newsletter enables the parents to know exactly what the children are learning that week. This ensures they are fully involved with life and work at school. As a result the children are confident and relaxed in their surroundings and consequently learning is effective.
35. The children work happily together. They settle to their tasks well and show good levels of perseverance. They work together to construct train tracks in the area outside the classroom and work cheerfully to make beds for the three bears in the construction area. The children are expected to plan their work and become independent as they work on the tasks they have

chosen. The children are growing in confidence and developing very positive attitudes to work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Focused teaching allows the children to learn well.
- Children show positive attitudes to their work.
- Parent partnership is strong and makes a significant contribution to the way the children learn.

Commentary

36. Good, carefully structured teaching enables the children to achieve well in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. They are well on the way to meet the early learning goals in this area. The staff employ a wide range of strategies to encourage the children to develop their vocabulary and confidence in speaking. For example, in the nursery class the children were encouraged to retell the story of 'Bertie Bear's Day' using the sequence cards displayed for the children. Such was their confidence that they readily did this, pointing to the cards as they talked about what was happening in the pictures. A focused teaching group worked with the class teacher to tell the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' as they looked at a set of illustrations. In the reception class the children chatted happily about the items they had brought from home and how if they sang the weather song the rain might stop!
37. All the children enjoy stories and rhymes. The nursery children enjoy singing their greetings at the beginning and the end of their sessions. In the reception classes the children share books at the beginning of the day and enjoy in particular the stories the teachers share with them. The children clearly enjoy these activities and talk knowledgeably about fairy stories starting with 'Once upon a time' and ending with the fact that they all lived happily ever after. The children were also sure that Goldilocks was not a typical fairy story, as it did not end in this way. Writing is displayed in all areas of the classrooms and this is effective in encouraging the children to write. They write their own sentences, for an alternative ending for the Goldilocks story. They have good ideas and suggestions. More able children can write their sentences independently. Writing skills are taught carefully and systematically and the children are encouraged to be confident writers. The staff work with small groups of children, giving them very individual focused help and as a result they make good gains in their learning and do well.
38. Parents make a significant contribution to the children's learning. Parent helpers in both the nursery and the reception classes give good help to the children. They hear the children read, change their reading books and library books and help the children as they work. Parents also hear their children read at home and this additional help and support give the children good opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt at school. The children enjoy their reading and talk enthusiastically about what is happening in their books. The children have made a good start in developing their reading skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good practical teaching allows the children to learn well.
- Good use of self-assessment enables the children to recognise their own achievements.

Commentary

39. As a result of the good provision of carefully focused and targeted teaching and a wide range of interesting and exciting activities, the children achieve well in developing their mathematical awareness. The children in the nursery enjoyed their baking session. They measured the ingredients carefully and counted how many eggs they needed to add. The children work in the sand and water, developing good mathematical skills of quantity and capacity. In the reception classes the children work with different coins gaining an understanding of their different value. They enjoyed working in the shop buying and selling fruit and vegetables. Other children played money lotto and learnt to wait their turn as they played. In the construction area the children made a house for the three bears and differently sized beds for the teddies to sleep in. They talk happily about the comparative sizes of the beds and in this way develop and extend their mathematical language. The staff make good use of a wide range of activities to promote the children's learning and because their activities are at the correct level of demand the children do well and learning is successful.
40. In the nursery class the teacher was skilful in ensuring that the children understood that they were doing well with their learning. One child had worked with the teacher to match small coloured models of vehicles to a pattern printed on a card. The child did really well and was successful. The teacher ensured that the child recognised her achievements and valued her success by discussing whether she should choose a smiley or a sad face to reflect on how she had got on. Both the child and the teacher decided a happy face was the most appropriate and so the child understood clearly that she had done well and should rightly be pleased with her learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Work in this area of learning was sampled and so no judgements have been made about teaching, learning or standards. The children in the nursery and reception classes have successfully celebrated Chinese New Year. They have made money packets and Chinese dragons. Chopsticks, woks, fans and moon cakes all aided the children's understanding of this exciting time of year for the Chinese people. Small world activities based on the animals that live in very cold climates and a developing understanding of the changing seasons help the children to marvel in the world around them. The children in the nursery and reception classes had a wonderful opportunity to watch a display by a group from the local T'ai Chi club. The children then had a go, their actions reflecting the swooping of birds and the arc of a rainbow in the sky. The children were entranced and tried hard to capture the spirit of the slow, purposeful and graceful movements. This excellent cultural learning opportunity enabled the children to see another dimension to their Chinese activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Work in this area was sampled and so no judgements have been made about teaching, learning or standards. The children have opportunities to use the outdoor classroom to work with a wide range of resources. This area enables the children to have opportunities to climb, balance and work with large toys as well as use their imagination in creating play with the many materials available. The children enjoy their play and activities in this area. The nursery children were especially pleased that it was not raining hard and they could go outside. The children use small equipment with increasing

control; for example, in the reception class some children were particularly interested in making the train track as long as they could. Work in the sand and model making are great favourites with the children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Work in this area of learning was sampled and so no judgements have been made about teaching, learning or standards. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned art and design and role-play experiences to stimulate their imagination. They enjoy working in the home area or acting out the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The children are beginning to relate well to each other and play and share imaginative ideas. They enjoyed printing on their Chinese money packets and creating Chinese-style paintings. Glitter is a particular favourite with some of the children and was used effectively on their winter pictures. It is clear from the teachers' planning that a wide range of creative activities ensures that the children are engaged, intrigued and want to learn.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing have improved.
- There are good reading resources.
- The co-ordinator provides a strong lead to this subject.
- Pupils do not have sufficient awareness of what they need to do to improve.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

41. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in both standards and teaching. This is especially evident in Year 2, where the recent initiatives to improve teaching and raise standards have had the greatest impact. In Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing, with more pupils working at or above the level that is expected for their age than in most schools. In 2003, standards in Year 6 were below average, but this was because more than a third of the pupils were identified as having special educational needs that related to their learning, behaviour or attitudes. Currently this is a much lower figure. In the present Year 2 standards are above average. Across the school all pupils achieve well.
42. Very good recent management, including the careful analysis of what is needed to raise standards and subsequent action to do this, has brought about considerable improvements in the teaching and learning of English. This has involved improving the quality and range of reading resources, providing better opportunities for writing and a closer focus on what motivates boys to learn.
43. Overall, teaching is good. There has been a very successful emphasis on improving writing. The pupils are keen to write because there has been good discussion of their ideas. Teaching takes account of the way they learn and they are provided with suitable resources to support their writing. Writing is purposeful. For example, older pupils produce some very high standard work on projects, with a lot of work being done at home. Teachers are very good at setting clear learning objectives, providing work that challenges the pupils and appropriately catering for all levels of ability. The way more able pupils are set challenging work has particularly improved since the previous inspection. Equally, pupils with special learning difficulties are supported very effectively both within the classroom and in small withdrawal groups. The

weakness in teaching is that, although in some classes the pupils are set targets to improve their work, this is not applied consistently and effectively across the school. Also there is an inconsistency in the way books are marked where not all teachers set appropriate and relevant short-term targets in the pupils' books to help them improve.

44. The group reading sessions are very effective in ensuring that the pupils read at a suitably challenging level and are motivated and interested in their reading. The provision of many new reading books has ensured that there is now a wider range of books for pupils of all abilities to read. Many pupils regularly read these books at home and receive support and encouragement from their parents. For those who do not, there is good regular support from the teaching assistants and volunteer helpers. The pupils pay good attention to punctuation when they read and show a good understanding of what happens in stories. The library is not yet fully functioning because of the move to the new building, but is already being organised very effectively. One of the strengths of the teaching in English is the way other subjects are used to support learning. For example, some Year 6 pupils were particularly keen and had read all the books of Robert Swindell, because of their enjoyment of one of his books set in World War II, which had been used to support their learning in history lessons.
45. Speaking develops well through teachers' good encouragement and prompts that enable pupils to extend their replies. Most teachers are good at insisting that pupils give answers in sentences and pupils' language reflects the good vocabulary used by teachers. The value placed on the pupils' contributions to discussions means that they are eager to speak. There is a good emphasis on drama, which all pupils enjoy. The school puts on various public productions as well as giving the pupils opportunities to take part in Theatre Workshops. For example, pupils have written their own versions of some of Shakespeare's plays such as *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and performed them.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

There are very good opportunities for pupils to use and extend their skills in speaking, reading and writing across the curriculum. Discussion is used in most lessons and pupils are given confidence to express their views. Other subjects are very well used to support the development of literacy skills. For example, in history pupils write about the lives of famous Tudors. In geography they use the Internet to produce factual writing on how mountains are formed. In religious education they describe how Moslems worship.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers organise their lessons well so that work is well matched to the different abilities in classes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Standards in the national assessments for seven year olds have improved significantly since 2001 when they were average.
- The quality of marking varies in quality. It does not always indicate clearly enough what pupils need to do to achieve more.
- The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

46. Since 2000 there has been a steady improvement in the national results of seven year olds. This is in part due to the effective teaching now taking place in Year 1 and Year 2 where teachers have a particularly secure understanding of the numeracy strategy and know how to make the subject interesting. The results of the national tests in mathematics for eleven year

olds have been in line with the national average since 2000, except for those in 2003, which were lower. This decline is linked to the large proportion of these pupils who were considered by the school to have some degree of special educational needs. The school did not meet the targets it set for itself in mathematics in last year's national tests for eleven year olds. Evidence from this inspection shows that standards of work for the current groups of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are above average and pupils achieve well. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2003, girls performed slightly better than boys, although in the lessons observed boys and girls attained about the same.

47. The quality of teaching is good. Within Year 1 and Year 2 pupils build well on the good progress they make in their mathematical development in the reception classes. Pupils of this age enjoy working out strategies to find out answers for themselves; for example in their mental arithmetic work, they are keen to explain their ways of finding an answer to a problem. The teacher warmly acknowledges their efforts and encourages them positively to think again when their answer is "a very awkward way."
48. In Year 3 to Year 6 teaching remains a strength. Across the school, teachers have a very good understanding of how to teach numeracy effectively. Teachers are very adept at explaining clearly what they wish pupils to learn and then in sustaining pupils' interest and enthusiasm throughout the lesson. Pupils are eager to rise to the challenge which the teacher sets, for example when examining parallel and perpendicular lines in regular and irregular shapes, or when explaining the links between fractions and percentages. However, while pupils' work is regularly marked, there is inconsistency in the way teachers identify areas for improvement and then suggest what pupils need to do to overcome these difficulties. There is no consistent approach to getting pupils to recognise the small, short-term steps they should take to overcome any difficulties.
49. The co-ordinator provides a very positive lead to the subject and has achieved much in improving standards overall and in ensuring that all teachers teach the numeracy strategy well. The improvements have come about through a careful analysis of national test data and other assessments and in identifying where teaching is or is not successful. For example, as a result of this analysis teachers have been successfully encouraged to give more emphasis in their teaching to the importance of using and applying mathematics. There are good arrangements for the co-ordinator to visit classes on a planned basis to look at the quality of teaching and learning going on and to evaluate pupils' progress by regularly reviewing the work of pupils across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils use the skills of mathematics well in other subjects, for example in handling and interpreting data in science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in science.
- Teaching and learning are good, with a clear emphasis on developing the pupils' skills of investigation and observation.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their science lessons.
- The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very effectively.

Commentary

50. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils' achievements in science are good. This is the result of consistently good teaching and the very positive attitudes to their learning shown by the pupils. The school has been effective in bringing about improvements in the achievements of the pupils and is by no means complacent, constantly aiming for improvements.
51. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good throughout the school. The teachers plan their lessons well and are clear about their learning objectives. The work set for all the pupils is carefully matched to their needs and builds securely on previous science learning. The teachers ensure that the pupils' learning is rooted in scientific enquiry and investigation. Many of the lessons use as starting points questions or problems, which relate to pupils' everyday life; for example, which kitchen roll is the best at mopping up spills? The use of technical scientific language is also a common feature throughout the school. This enables the pupils to answer the teachers' questions with good use of scientific terms and as a result this aids explanation and discussion. The teachers are effective in engaging the interests of the pupils. Resources are used well and the teachers ensure that the pupils can make best use of the tools that are available. For example, a wide range of Newton meters was used by a Year 6 teacher to show the different graduations on the different meters. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and this is reflected in the way that they confidently share their ideas during lessons. For example, in Year 2 the pupils could not quite work out why a bulb they had placed in a circuit would not light. The pupils suggested a number of plausible ideas for the teacher to test out. This really stretched the pupils and made them think about this very puzzling problem. Teachers mark pupils' books supportively but they do not always give good guidance on how the pupils could improve their work, nor do the pupils have individual targets to work towards. This is an area for further development.
52. Pupils enjoy their science lessons. Throughout the school the pupils get on well with their investigations and work well together. The high levels of participation and co-operation are reflected particularly well in Year 6 where mixed gender groups work very effectively together. In group work, tasks are allocated fairly and all the members of the group are active participants. These good skills of collaboration ensure that learning is effective for all the pupils.
53. The leadership of the subject is very good. The science co-ordinator has been very effective in helping and supporting colleagues. There is a carefully structured approach to monitoring the work of the school. Test results are analysed and the findings are used to improve the curriculum. The co-ordinator is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of science throughout the school. He is active in supporting colleagues throughout the school but especially in Year 6 where he spends some time helping to prepare the pupils for the national science tests.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The unreliability of computers in the computer suite militates against successful teaching.
- The leadership of information and communication technology is good.

Commentary

54. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards of work are at the levels expected of pupils of their age. Achievement is satisfactory. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average and all aspects of the required curriculum were not taught. Statutory requirements are now met. By the end of Year 2 the pupils can write using information and communication technology, their own sentences, putting in capital letters and

full stops. They are able to use an art and design program to create their own artistic pictures. In Year 3 the pupils have further developed their skills and can highlight text and align their work appropriately. In Years 4 and 5 the pupils are working with databases creating graphs and interrogating the databases to find out a range of information. In these lessons the pupils use information and communication technology effectively to support their mathematical learning. Information and communication technology is used well to support the pupils' learning in Year 6. Here pupils used *Hyperstudio* to create their presentations of the life and work of John Lennon. The pupils can insert buttons on their pages, import text and illustrations and were beginning to use these techniques to create interesting interactive presentations.

55. The quality of teaching is good. The suite has only recently been operational. The teachers use the suite well and present their lessons with good use of guidance sheets to lead the pupils through the applications they are using. However, the computers in the suite are not always reliable and often break down. This detracts from the teachers' lessons and where they break down this has a negative impact upon the pupils' learning. The teachers and the pupils cope well but it is not an ideal situation. When the computers do not work a number of pupils have to share a computer. This is particularly unacceptable in the classes, which have bigger numbers. In one particular lesson, the pupils' learning was unsatisfactory because some of the computers crashed, the sunlight streamed into the classroom making visibility difficult and as a result not all the pupils were able to meet the objectives of the lesson. Although the suite is well used, the computers in the classrooms are not as well used to support the pupils' learning in other lessons.
56. There is good leadership and management of information and communication technology. The subject leader has ensured that the subject has developed well since the last inspection. There are plans in place to improve and develop the information and communication technology equipment in the school. There is recognition in the school that the computers in the suite are old and in need of replacement. The subject manager is knowledgeable and has a good capacity to further develop the subject. The strategic management of the subject is effective and it is clear that with better resources the school is well placed to raise standards further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in other subjects to enable the pupils to develop, refine and use their skills. Information and communication technology is used particularly well in mathematics to enable the pupils to consolidate their mathematical skills. Older pupils use the computers to access information for their projects and in their learning in history and geography.

HUMANITIES

It was only possible to sample work in **geography** and so no overall judgement on provision could be made.

In **geography** only two lessons were observed and a sample of pupils' work analysed. The available pupils' written work and planning documentation indicate that coverage of the subject is adequate. There was not enough evidence to judge teaching and learning.

Pupils made good progress in a very good Year 2 lesson. The teacher used Barnaby Bear dressed in various outfits to develop pupils' understanding of the effects of weather and how it varies from place to place. Clear explanation of the task helped the pupils complete a holiday diary linking activities to weather. The subject is well resourced. For example, a good range of videotapes and theme packs supports a study of distant locations. In a good Year 4 lesson, slides on India were used to develop pupils' understanding of how man adapts to different climates. A well-led discussion focused pupils' attention on key aspects of the slides and they identified similarities and differences between different cultures. Pupils made good progress in this lesson because of a good emphasis on the acquisition of geographical skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils have drawn and used maps of

varying scales. They have compared contrasting locations and studied different landscapes. They are familiar with river features and use the appropriate vocabulary. In their study of mountains they used their numeracy skills to construct a graph comparing climate to height. The Internet was well used in their research on mountain ranges.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching places emphasis on developing pupils' research and historical skills.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their writing skills in their lessons and in homework.
- Leadership and management are good and seek to further develop the enquiry approach.
- Marking does not consistently advise pupils on how to improve their work.

Commentary

57. Evidence shows that pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make progress and achieve well. This represents an improvement on the last inspection.
58. Teaching overall is good because within lessons pupils are encouraged to use their research skills. Teachers also use objects in their discussions, which sustain pupils' interest. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils sat engrossed through a video on home life in the early 20th century. Pertinent questions kept the pupils focused on key aspects and they developed a good understanding of differences and similarities between then and now. Good use was then made of irons from three different periods in a discussion. This was very effective in developing pupils' skills in interpreting historical evidence. Pupils in a good year 5 lesson were fascinated by a video on the ancient Olympic games. A well-led discussion sustained interest and encouraged the pupils to arrive at interesting conclusions. One remarked that the Greeks must have been "proud of the human body". Research skills were well developed as pupils accessed reference books and the Internet in their investigations. Teachers use history well to develop pupils' writing skills. Year 6 pupils produced some good quality work in their study of World War II. They have opportunities to write from different perspectives and for different purposes. For example, they write letters home from an evacuee child and a soldier at the front. They make notes from their investigations of ration cards, identity cards and posters on 'Digging for Victory'. They write diary extracts inspired by Anne Frank. Pupils are encouraged to carry out their research at home and have produced some high quality project folders.
59. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently. It often includes positive remarks but there is less evidence that marking is used to tell pupils what they need to do to improve.
60. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject manager has time allocated to check on teaching and learning and has a good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Programmes of study support teachers' planning. The subject is well resourced with a good emphasis on the provision of articles for research purposes. The subject leader is looking to further strengthen this area and the use of information and communication technology. At the end of each unit of study, teachers carry out a check on teaching and learning. However, this does not indicate the progress pupils have made.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with literacy and other areas of the curriculum.
- A well-planned scheme develops the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions.

Commentary

61. Standards in religious education are in line with the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6. A well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils learn about a range of faiths, including Christianity. They are aware that there are many different ways of worshipping. The school has good links with local churches. Representatives from Christianity and Judaism come into school to lead assemblies. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are good links with literacy and other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, food technology was used very successfully to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the meaning and symbolism of the ingredients of the Passover meal.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It was possible to observe only a small number of lessons in art and design, design and technology and music. It is not possible to make firm judgments about provision in these subjects.

Only two lessons in **art and design** were seen. It is not possible, therefore, to make a firm judgment about provision. In addition to observing these lessons, the views of the newly appointed co-ordinator were sought. A sample of some finished artwork was scrutinised.

It is evident that pupils have good opportunities to learn how to draw and paint; for example, in Year 2 pupils know how to use a 'drawing frame' to highlight detail. By Year 6, pupils are able to paint skilfully landscapes in the 'Pointilliste' style and after Georges Seurat. In Year 3 pupils are currently using photographs as an inspiration to work in the style of Renoir and are learning how to mix colours carefully to build up a portrait. Pupils also have good opportunities to look at and paint in the styles of other cultures. For example, in Year 4 pupils have studied some aspects of Aboriginal art.

However, pupils have limited opportunities to work in three dimensions, which the school has recognised as an area of weakness. The newly appointed co-ordinator has recently carried out a thorough review of the strengths and areas of weakness in the provision for art and design. The co-ordinator has begun an initiative to start the process of securing the Arts Mark Award for this subject at some stage in the future.

In **music** the pupils experience an appropriate programme of musical activities. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their music lessons. They enjoy listening to music and singing songs and particularly enjoyed studying the 'Blues' and writing their own lyrics. In a Year 5 music lesson, the pupils sang in three parts and put their own accompaniments to their tunes. They created their own tunes and worked well together in their groups to refine and improve their work. The pupils are all prepared to work together and to contribute to the learning in their groups. The pupils listen to a range of different music and talk about their own preferences. The pupils sing well in lessons and assemblies. The pupils are involved in many enrichment activities. They have the opportunity to join a number of school choirs. One of the choirs is at present working hard to prepare some songs to sing at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall with other schools from the authority. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play tuned musical instruments. Visitors to the school give the pupils opportunities to listen to accomplished performances. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and is very enthusiastic about the subject and is keen to strengthen the subject even further in the school.

In **design and technology** only two lessons were seen. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement on overall provision in this subject. The evidence seen and a discussion with Year 6 pupils indicate that pupils understand the design process.

In a very good Year 2 lesson pupils were able to transfer their design for a puppet from paper to fabric. Pupils confidently discussed their work with adults and used the appropriate vocabulary, such as 'seam' and 'template'. They accurately used scissors to shape the fabric and with the support of adults suggested solutions as they encountered problems. Pupils achieve well because of good support from all adults and within this lesson worked at above national expectations. There is strong evidence to show that a good emphasis is placed on researching a product before designing and making. This was seen in a Year 5 display on making bread in which pupils first evaluated the quality of commercial products. In a Year 6 lesson pupils were very articulate and knowledgeable as they discussed the design and quality of different slippers. For example they pointed out that a child's slipper might need more support round the ankle and incorporated cartoon characters in its design to appeal to children.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is wide and interesting.
- There is very good accommodation for gymnastics and outdoor games.

Commentary

62. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in physical education are average. Pupils enjoy lessons and achieve well. This was evident in a good dance lesson where pupils interpreted the music imaginatively and used composition well to put together some good dance sequences. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
63. There is very good provision for a wide range of sporting activities which take place after school. The pupils have good opportunities to take part in various matches and competitions outside the school day.
64. The school provides the full range of physical education activities, including outdoor and adventurous activities. These take place during residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is good provision for swimming at a local pool, with the result that nearly all pupils are swimmers by the time they leave the school. There is a very good range of games included in the curriculum. This ensures that there are very good opportunities for all pupils to take part in a variety of competitive sports and games. The gymnastics teaching seen was good overall and the pupils showed good levels of skill. A strong feature of the teaching was the very good demonstrations given by the teachers. Although the playing fields are in the process of being re-laid, the area set aside is of a good size and has the potential to provide very good facilities. The large school hall is excellent accommodation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Only two lessons were seen in this area so no judgements are made about the overall provision. However, from these lessons and by talking to pupils and teachers and by studying plans and policies for this subject, it is clear that the school is now beginning to give considerable emphasis in its overall curriculum to this subject. A new initiative to raise pupils' self-esteem, 'I belong to Malvern', has recently been put in place. This is already having a significant impact. For example, in the lessons seen pupils discussed openly and confidently about 'sharing' and 'making up for mistakes'.

Their teachers set good examples in the friendly and confident way they lead discussions and take care to make all pupils feel that they have important roles to play in their classes and in the life of the school in general.

As part of the wider 'I belong to Malvern' initiative, an active school council meets every Monday in a dedicated area and discusses significant issues, knowing that the headteacher and teachers listen carefully to and respect their views. There are very good arrangements for two older pupils from the school council to represent the school in the Knowsley Young People's Parliament. The school also highlights, through a series of attractive displays, the success that past pupils have achieved and the importance of being 'a team player'. Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their city – 'A City of Culture' – and to develop responsible views to environmental issues, for example in improving the quality of life by walking to school and building up 'fresh air miles'.

A particular strength is the school's approach to personal, social and health education in the development of a 'learning mentor' system. In this pupils are paired with adults in the school community who are not directly involved with them in their day-to-day work. These mentors show a real interest in their pupils' work and in their well-being. Pupils appreciate these arrangements very much and look forward to the regular opportunities, which exist to share their successes and concerns.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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