

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW BRIGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

New Brighton, Wallasey

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 104992

Headteacher: Mrs C Hibbard

Lead inspector: Mr F Ravey

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 March 2004

Inspection number: 256998

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;	533
School address:	Vaughan Road Wallasey Wirral Merseyside
Postcode:	CH45 1LH
Telephone number:	0151 639 3869
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Jones
Date of previous inspection:	29 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

New Brighton Primary School has far more pupils on roll than most primary schools nationally. A significant number of pupils join or leave school at other than the start or end of the school year. Nearly all pupils are from the White British ethnic background. No pupil is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs is broadly average. These needs are identified as difficulties with learning, language and communication and behaviour. The school has two classes designated for pupils with special educational needs, one for pupils in Foundation Stage 2, Year 1 and Year 1; the other for pupils in Years 3 to 6. As a result, the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average. Pupils' entitlement to free school meals is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, and this is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. Over the past six years, the school has had many changes in senior management.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11371	Mr F Ravey	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology
19431	Mr J Holmes	Lay inspector	
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	English, geography, history, special educational needs
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, religious education
22359	Mrs J Havard	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, design and technology
34182	Mr C Truman	Team inspector	Music, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's performance is satisfactory overall, with some notable strengths and some areas for improvement. Achievement, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but are good in some key areas of the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall although the school's new leadership is working effectively to move the school forward after a long period of instability in senior management. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs, owing to the good quality of education they receive, and particularly to good teaching;
- standards are above average in English and mathematics at Year 2 and in art and design and history at Years 2 and 6;
- there are some weaknesses in achievement in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 when teaching in these year groups lacks challenge and sufficient focus on pupils' learning;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, and is particularly strong for those pupils in the classes designated for special educational needs;
- the school's new leadership shows strength, vision and commitment to improvement;
- planning and assessment are not used effectively to help pupils improve their work in Years 3 to 6;
- attendance is below the national average and should be higher;
- the school takes good care of its pupils.

Although the school's effectiveness has declined from the high position reported at the previous inspection, this decline has been halted by the appointment of a new headteacher and a new senior leadership team. Satisfactory improvement has been made overall in relation to the key issues raised last time, and in information and communication technology (ICT) improvement has been good. However, standards at Year 6 have not risen sufficiently overall since the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs. Achievement for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but with some weaknesses. Standards are average at the end of the Foundation Stage. They are above average in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 and are average in English, mathematics and science at Year 6. This broadly reflects the most recent Year 6 national test information in the above table although achievement is not above average this year, as the grades against similar schools indicate it may have been in 2003. Well-focused teaching of skills leads to above average standards in art and design and history at Years 2 and 6. However, pupils do not always achieve as well as they should in English, mathematics and science in parts of Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 achieve well in history.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall although achievement is stronger in the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall. Pupils in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the special needs' classes have good attitudes and behave well. This is also the case sometimes in Years 3 to 6 but, overall, behaviour in these year groups is satisfactory. The school provides well for pupils' moral and social development but provision for developing pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity is weak. Attendance is unsatisfactory, mainly due to a small number of pupils being taken on holidays during school time and despite the schools efforts to change this state of affairs. The punctuality of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but it is good in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the special educational needs classes. In these areas it has a good impact upon the way pupils learn and upon the progress they make. The impact of teaching on learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but is less effective than in the other parts of the school due to a less successful approach to helping pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Planning and assessment are not used consistently or effectively enough in Years 3 to 6 to help pupils improve their work. The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory range and quality of learning opportunities, with some strengths, particularly in special educational needs and also in opportunities for activities outside the school day. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The school looks after its pupils well. It maintains a satisfactory partnership with parents and the community. It links well with other schools. It works hard to seek the views of parents and pupils and where possible acts on these.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the recently appointed headteacher and new leadership team is good and is providing the school with a much-needed sense of direction for improvement. School management is satisfactory, with new systems bedding in but at an early stage in most cases. School governance is satisfactory. The governing body shows great commitment to the school. It fulfils all statutory requirements. Governors and school staff have done well to provide stability for pupils during the recent years of uncertainty in senior management.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils express positive views of the school. A small minority of parents expressed concern about the quality of communications between school and home. Inspectors found this to be satisfactory.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science where this is not as high as it should be;
- raise the level of challenge and improve the approach to learning in Years 3 to 6;
- plan more consistently and make more thorough and effective use of information gained about pupils' progress to help those in Years 3 to 6 learn more effectively and achieve more highly;
- raise the level of attendance to at least satisfactory levels.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** overall. It is **good** in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. It is **satisfactory** overall in Years 3 to 6 with some weaknesses. Achievement for pupils with special educational needs is **good** in the special educational needs units, in mainstream classes in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. It is **satisfactory** overall in mainstream classes in Years 2 to 6. Standards are **average** overall. They are **above average** in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 and in art and design and history at Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 achieve well owing to good teaching and a well-planned curriculum that has a strong focus on learning.
- Pupils in the two special educational needs units achieve well owing to good teaching and a curriculum that is tailored effectively to their individual learning needs.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at Year 2 owing to the quality of education provided for all pupils.
- Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good.
- Standards in art and design and history are above average at Years 2 and 6 and achievement is good.
- There is some underachievement in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 owing to unchallenging teaching in some lessons and, in science, owing to a lack of sufficient rigour in developing the skills of scientific inquiry.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.4 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.8 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.6 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 76 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	26.7 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.7 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.4 (29.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 91 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The tables show that pupils at Year 2 last year attained higher than average standards overall whilst those in Year 6 attained standards that were very close to the national average broadly reflects inspection findings, which indicate stronger performance in Years 1 and 2 than in Years

3 to 6. Last year the school did well when compared with similar schools nationally in enabling pupils to reach higher levels in national tests in English, mathematics and science.

2. Children presently starting in the nursery year have below average attainment. The good quality of learning opportunities provided for them and the good teaching they receive means that they make good progress in acquiring the early skills of literacy and numeracy. Their social skills also develop well. A stimulating approach to learning through play activities means that children are keen to work and as a result they achieve well. They also make good gains in other areas of their learning. The good quality of teaching support available makes a positive difference to children's learning.
3. This effective focus on learning is continued throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils work in a stimulating environment, surrounded by resources that encourage them to be inquisitive. This desire to learn is nurtured well by teachers and support assistants and is translated into well-structured tasks that challenge pupils of all attainments. As a result, all achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics to reach above average standards at Year 2. A strong focus on active and enquiring learning also ensures good achievement in science.
4. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement in mainstream classes is more variable and whilst it is satisfactory overall it has areas of weakness. Owing to an approach to teaching and learning that overall is not as effective as that in their earlier stages of education, pupils do not learn as actively or build up the learning skills as solidly as they need in order to achieve well. As a result, in a minority of lessons in Years 3 to 6 pupils do not achieve as strongly as they should in English, mathematics and science. Achievement overall in lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 was satisfactory but that extra spark in the teaching and a close focus on actively developing pupils' skills and understanding was evident in relatively fewer lessons than in other parts of the school. An example of where success was achieved consistently in Years 3 to 6 by using a well-planned, active approach to learning was ICT.
5. In other subjects, pupils From Year 1 to Year 6 achieve well in information and communication technology owing to a combination of good teaching and very good resources. They achieve well in art and design owing to a very stimulating curriculum and good teaching of skills. Pupils achieve well in history in Years 1,2 and 6 because their teachers encourage a lively, inquiring approach to work whereas in Years 3 to 5 pupils are not encouraged consistently to develop the skills of historical research. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in sport and the arts, especially where expert and specialist support is provided.
6. Pupils with special educational needs in the main school achieve as well as other pupils. In literacy and numeracy, the school's practice of teaching pupils in groups of similar attainment supports good progress because it concentrates support where it is most needed. Pupils in the special educational needs units benefit from very effective provision for individual support, and they achieve well in relation to their individual learning targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **satisfactory** overall as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. Attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the classes designated for pupils with special educational needs. Occasionally, older pupils in the Year 3 to 6 age group behave less well than they should.
- Provision for personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are good.

- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good but opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity are limited
- Attendance during the last academic year was below the national average and unauthorised absence was above the national average.

Commentary

7. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to take part in the range of activities provided for them. In the Foundation Stage, children settle quickly into school routines and make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills because of the very effective way staff work with them and behave towards them. Most pupils are very clear about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and of the rewards and sanctions associated with them. Attitudes and behaviour are better overall in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the classes designated for pupils with special educational needs than in Years 3 to 6 because of the better quality of education provided for pupils in the younger age groups and special educational needs classes.
8. Behaviour and attitudes in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory overall. However, there are some instances when a small minority of pupils, particularly in Year 6, behave inappropriately around school and during lessons. When this happens, it hinders not only their own progress but also that of other pupils in the class. During discussions with pupils some voiced concerns over some bullying in the playground, particularly at lunchtimes. None was observed during the inspection and pupils are confident that any such behaviour is dealt with satisfactorily by the school. The school has recently had a small number of exclusions. Parents of those excluded were very supportive and fellow pupils fully understood and agreed with the reasons for the exclusions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	536	4	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

9. Staff value pupils and offer them positions of trust as class and school monitors. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and carry them out willingly as, for example, older pupils look after younger pupils and help them with their reading or act as play leaders at lunchtimes. This contributes to the good relationships evident throughout the school.

10. The personal and social development of pupils in the classes designated for pupils with special educational needs thrives in the secure context of clear and consistent codes of behaviour, caring relationships, patient encouragement and excellent example.
11. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings, opinions and concerns with others and through adults' use of praise and encouragement to boost confidence and self-esteem. The school takes a strong stance on promoting acceptable social values and on encouraging in its pupils an attitude that doing what is right is more important than popularity. Posters throughout the school, especially around the Years 3 to 6 classes, emphasis this and similar points. Good opportunities are provided to develop social and collaborative skills both inside and outside the normal school day through, for example, participation in after school clubs and sports activities. However, while pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own culture, they do not receive sufficient planned opportunities to learn about the richness and diversity of cultures in British society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	0.4

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

12. The attendance rate has been below the national average for the last three years although last year it improved slightly. A significant minority of parents take their children on holiday during term time without the school's approval and this contributes significantly to the below average attendance. The school has identified this issue and is working with other agencies and partners to address it. The strategy had an initial impact but unfortunately still leaves a significant minority of parents who do not ensure that they send their children to school on a regular basis. A significant minority of pupils are late on a regular basis despite the school's efforts to prevent this.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. They are **good** in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and in the classes for pupils with special educational needs. They are **satisfactory** overall in Years 3 to 6. Assessment is not used effectively to help pupils improve their work in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, a well-focused approach to teaching and learning enthuses children and pupils to learn. High expectations and a good match of work to pupils' learning help them develop their skills and understanding well. More occasionally this is the case in Years 3 to 6.
- Good relationships are the basis for a good climate for learning in most lessons
- Effective management of pupils' behaviour results in a positive climate for learning in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and the special educational needs units. This happens more occasionally in Years 3 to 6.
- Skilful teaching of art and design and history enables pupils to reach above average standards in Years 2 and 6.

- Ineffective planning, ineffective match of work to pupils' learning needs and a lack of pace and challenge restricts pupils' achievement in a minority of lessons in Years 3 to 6
- Assessment in Years 3 to 6 is insufficiently thorough and does not help pupils improve their work or help teachers plan rigorously to develop pupils' skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 75 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (16%)	35 (48%)	23 (29%)	5 (7%)	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.

13. Two distinct approaches to teaching and learning are evident in the school. One, in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2, the two classes for pupils with special educational needs and parts of Years 3 to 6, has a strong and effective focus on engaging pupils actively in learning. The other, found in other classes in Years 3 to 6, focuses more on the teaching of pupils in a way that does not always fully engage them as active learners. This results in pupils being given less challenge in their work and less opportunity to think things out for themselves and to solve problems.
14. The first approach is much more effective. Pupils are provided with a stimulating environment in which to learn. In the Foundation Stage a good balance is struck between activities selected by the teacher and those selected by children themselves, encouraging independent thinking from an early age. Work is well planned to encourage children to think and is presented imaginatively so as to make them keen to learn. Support staff play an important part in providing small groups with well-focused learning tasks and in helping direct their learning.
15. In Years 1 and 2, teachers and support staff continue to provide a rich learning environment. Teaching is well structured and there is a high expectation that pupils will work hard. Tasks are imaginative and are well matched to attainment so that learning takes place effectively. Good relationships are maintained between pupils and staff and this also helps pupils to be eager learners. They work productively and achieve well in many of their lessons. In art and design and history, teachers make very good use of resources to focus closely and effectively upon developing skills. Very largely, teachers and support staff are successful in enabling pupils to become actively involved in learning and thinking for themselves and sometimes they combine several strengths in very good teaching. For this reason, pupils make good progress and those of all attainments achieve as well as they should. All the most effective (very good) teaching was observed in lessons in Years 1 and 2, the Foundation Stage and in the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs. These lessons combined several aspects of the good teaching mentioned above and provided extra-effectiveness in team work between staff, a very high degree of motivation and challenge for pupils and very good use of resources to promote learning. This resulted in pupils achieving very well.
16. In Years 3 to 6, this approach to learning is also evident, for example in ICT lessons throughout the age group and in some lessons in literacy and numeracy, especially in Years 5 and 6, but it does not predominate. It is much less evident in Years 3 and 4, with the exception of teaching seen in art and design in Year 4, where pupils were given well-planned opportunities to explore ideas and techniques. The quality of teaching by recently-qualified teachers in Years 3 to 6 shows some significant strengths, especially in respect of engaging pupils to learn actively. In

ICT, teaching focuses effectively on enabling pupils to have 'hands on' experiences at computers, focusing on a closely defined set of skills often demonstrated well by the teacher. Occasionally in science, pupils are encouraged to think in an inquiring way. In literacy, tasks in Years 5 and 6 are often well planned to meet pupils' learning needs, especially for those in groups set for lower attaining or higher attaining pupils. In Year 6, good planning for history results in interesting and challenging learning experiences that help pupils to develop a good range of skills and understandings. As a result, they achieve well. However, in Years 3 and 4 this variety and level of challenge is much less evident and pupils' achievement is only satisfactory.

17. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is less effective when pupils are given tasks to perform that do not stimulate them and give them little need to think in any depth. On such occasions, learning is weak and patchy. Similarly, when learning does not focus sufficiently on the development of subject skills, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Teaching becomes unsatisfactory either when pupils are given work that they do not understand or when opportunities to develop their thinking are missed to a significant degree. Lack of rigour in teachers' planning contributes to less effective teaching and learning. Where teaching is weaker, planning is often sketchy and fails to identify sharply enough the focus for learning. Further, it does not show clearly how the learning needs of different groups of pupils are to be met.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is good in Years 1 and 2. The teachers use good assessment information to match work well to the needs of these pupils, and they deploy the good teaching assistants effectively to provide necessary support in literacy and numeracy. This quality is less consistent in Years 3 to 6, where it is satisfactory overall. In the two special educational needs classes, very good teaching enables pupils to achieve well despite their language and learning difficulties. Teamwork is highly effective. All staff have very clear roles and work together to promote and monitor individual progress through activities that are precisely fitted to individual needs. Formal and informal assessments maintain accurate and detailed records that provide the firm basis for individual targets and intensive support.
19. Assessment is used well in the Foundation Stage in order to check children's progress and to plan the next steps in their learning. This is also the case in Years 1 and 2 although marking of pupils' work in these year groups does not always provide a sharp focus on improvement. In Years 3 to 6, assessment systems are not sufficiently rigorous and teachers' marking often fails to provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve. Information gained about pupils' progress is not used sufficiently well in order to agree individual targets for improvement with them or to keep track of their progress through the school. Overall, systems and procedures for planning and assessment lack the coherence of a shared, whole school approach and this impacts negatively upon pupils' progress.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory** overall. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, provision is satisfactory. In the classes designated for pupils with special educational needs, provision is very good. **Good** opportunities are provided for enriching the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of child centred opportunities for learning in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in the designated classes, owing to the quality of teaching and very well planned learning opportunities.
- The school's strong commitment to developing provision for ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

- The curriculum is enriched by the provision of a range of activities during and outside the school day.
- Curriculum effectiveness is reduced by lack of consistency and effectiveness in planning, especially in parts of Years 3 to 6.
- The number of teaching assistants is low, with support staff not always available to support learning.
- The school building is used well. The school uses very attractive wall displays to enhance the learning environment.
- Accommodation for the children in the nursery is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

20. Teachers in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 make every effort to provide a curriculum that is centred upon knowledge of how young children learn. Staff are skilful in planning a wide range of learning activities that are exciting and stimulating, motivating children to learn. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 successfully build on this good work, planning practical activities to encourage learning. As a result, children achieve well.
21. Planning in other parts of the school lacks consistency and does not help teachers to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. The school uses national guidelines and commercial schemes to suit its needs. However, plans often lack clearly defined learning objectives and assessment opportunities, and are not designed to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Information and communication technology is an exception to this, with detailed plans providing a clear structure that is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
22. Provision in the two designated classes for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive sensitive and intensive support for their difficulties in language and learning within a full curriculum that offers good opportunities for their particular strengths. Planning is very good and staff use a rich variety of strategies and resources to help pupils to engage and learn in active ways. Pupils have good opportunities to work in mainstream classes wherever it is judged that this will be beneficial.
23. Provision for special educational needs in the main school is satisfactory although there are some inconsistencies. The demands of the curriculum usually match individual needs well in English and mathematics because pupils with similar needs work together and those who teach these groups write their individual education plans (IEPs) and are ably assisted. Class teachers play too little part in writing IEPs, and cannot often call upon enough support in subjects other than English and mathematics. At times, therefore, pupils' work on activities and in contexts that are not best tailored to their needs.
24. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for gifted and talented pupils. Those with talents in art, music and physical education are given well-focused opportunities to develop their potential. This was evident, for example, in the after-school art and physical education clubs. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, provision for higher attaining pupils is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 but is not always as effective in Years 3 to 6.
25. The range of additional activities available to the pupils is good, especially in sport and the arts. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 can take part in a wide range of sports clubs including sailing, 'tag' rugby, basketball and football. Pupils also have access to choir, cross-stitch, and art clubs. The curriculum is well supported by visitors to school. Visits from a writer in residence have led to an improvement in standards, especially in boys' writing. An artist in residence has also inspired the pupils into producing work of a high standard. The curriculum is enriched by visits; for example, the week before the inspection a group of Year 6 pupils visited Liverpool to listen to an orchestral concert.

26. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The buildings are used well. Pupils' work is very well displayed to celebrate achievement and enhance the appearance of the school. The school has worked hard to improve the accommodation. Since the last inspection, for example, it has created a very well resourced ICT suite. The school has no playing fields or grassed areas. However, pupils play well on the newly acquired playground equipment bought with funding from the Sporting Playgrounds initiative. Play equipment is of a very high standard. Markings in the playgrounds for the younger pupils, including Year 3 and 4, are good although those for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not yet so well developed. Accommodation for the nursery class is unsatisfactory because there are no toilets within the unit. Plans are in place to rectify this situation in the near future. The school also has ambitious plans to create facilities for the community on the site.
27. Adequate resources overall are in place to meet the needs of the curriculum although in some areas, such as ICT and art and design, resources are good and make a strong and significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are assisted well by support staff, including teaching assistants. Their contribution is very good in the Foundation Stage where they take on responsibility for organising many of the practical activities. However, the number of teaching assistants available to support learning in Years 1 to 6 is low and this sometimes impacts negatively upon the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **good** care of its pupils. Support and guidance for pupils are **satisfactory** overall. The school takes **good** account of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe, secure environment.
- Induction of pupils into the school is good.
- Pupils' views are taken into account well through the School Council.
- Assessment procedures are not used effectively in Years 3 to 6 to help pupils improve their work.

Commentary

28. The school carries out all statutory duties and risk assessments relating to health and safety conscientiously and effectively, having a teacher with overall responsibility for this aspect of pupils' care. Governors are actively involved in the process.
29. The school has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Pupils play an active role through the School Council, which was formed last year. They are very well informed about how the school operates. Pupils are also involved as play leaders to help others at break-times. Staff know pupils well and are able to give sound advice and support on personal development.
30. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The newly appointed headteacher has been trained in child protection procedures and is to undergo training in local procedures during the summer term. These new procedures will be included in staff training in the summer term. Any concerns are reported to the headteacher, who liaises with outside agencies. However, the school does not yet have a named child protection governor to monitor procedures.
31. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes receive good guidance and support for their personal development, and are confident that they can always depend on adult help when they need it. Guidance and support for their academic development are satisfactory although individual learning targets are not always precise enough to make planning effective, and support and assessment information are not available in all subjects. Pupils do not yet have as much involvement in setting and reviewing their targets as is recommended nationally. Provision for pupils' personal and academic development is very good in both the designated

classes for pupils with special educational needs. Staff show great care for the welfare, health and safety of their pupils. This extends to planning the fine details of travel arrangements, both for daily journeys and for small educational visits.

32. The school has good induction procedures for its pupils, with parents being invited to visit the school when a place has been offered. Last term, home visits were introduced for nursery children and are to be further developed. The school admits children in small groups in order to help them settle more quickly to school life and routines. It provides parents with a helpful 'induction pack'. Pupils who join the school at a time other than the start of the school year are shown around the school by the headteacher and are paired with a pupil mentor in their class to help them settle in quickly.
33. Pupils report that they experience some bullying and that the issue is being discussed at School Council. Staff have suggested strategies to help pupils in these circumstances. If staff are made aware of any such issues, they deal with them quickly and effectively. Pupils express the view that teachers help them and expect them to work hard. They are happy to approach and discuss with staff any concerns and generally enjoy good relationships with staff and fellow pupils.
34. Whilst pupils' academic performance is supported well in the Foundation Stage and soundly in Years 1 and 2, the use of assessment information in Years 3 to 6 is insufficiently rigorous and effective to provide adequate support that will help pupils improve their work.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **satisfactory**. Links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes good account of parents' views.
- Parents are supportive of the work of the school.
- Arrangements for involving parents in the review of progress for pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently up to date.
- Good links are maintained with other schools in order to enrich the curriculum in physical education.

Commentary

35. Parents are generally happy with the work of the school. They like the school's friendly atmosphere and the approachability of staff. They feel the school cares well for their children and that it is fair to them. A few parents help in school and a small but active Parent Teacher Association organises fund raising and social activities. The school takes seriously and deals effectively with any concerns from parents. It informs parents of the need for their children to attend regularly and not to take holidays in term time unless unavoidable.
36. The school provides satisfactory information for parents by means of regular newsletters. Parents have satisfactory opportunity to consult teachers and a satisfactory report in the summer term. A significant minority of parents indicated that they did not feel they were kept well informed about progress and that they would like more information about how to help their child to learn. However, inspectors found that overall the quality and amount of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school has an informative prospectus and written annual report to parents, which provides satisfactory information and fully meets statutory requirements. Last year, the school carried out a survey of parents to establish their views and to take these into account for the future. This is one example of how the school is keen to build links with parents. Another is seen by its involvement in a local Education Action Zone through which it has

established a comfortable and welcoming room for parents and has held courses to encourage parents to help in school. The school plans to introduce further courses to reflect parental needs.

37. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept satisfactorily informed of their children's needs, targets and progress but the school recognises that its arrangements for involving them in the reviews of individual education plans still fall somewhat short of revised practice for special educational needs. Parents whose children are in the special educational needs classes are fully involved in termly reviews and have good access to staff at other times by request. Teachers in these classes make good use of video recordings to show parents examples of the progress their children have made.
38. The school has satisfactory links with the community and local churches. It has had visits from local people who contributed to the 'time line' including some ex-pupils. The school is part of a cluster group of school that work together with one of the receiving secondary schools and the Education Action Zone. There are satisfactory transition arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the receiving schools. The school sends pupils to five secondary schools and has sound links with these, with staff coming in to help teach art and design, sports and languages. Good links with a local specialist sports college are resulting in an extended programme of opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of sports. This enriches the curriculum for physical education, providing pupils with a greater than usual range of learning opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership by the new headteacher and leadership team are good. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher and leadership team provide strong and effective leadership.
- They have a clear and detailed vision for the school's success and are providing a strong sense of direction for the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher motivate staff very effectively and are successfully starting to build a team to secure improvements.
- School leaders and managers have a strong commitment to enabling all pupils to have full access to educational opportunities.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently developed.
- School administration is both efficient and a welcoming introduction to the school for visitors.

Commentary

39. In the six years since its previous inspection, the school has undergone extensive changes in its senior management. Governors and staff have coped well with the uncertainty that this situation has generated, providing a stable environment for pupils, but it has resulted in a downward drift in standards and quality in parts of the school. The recent appointment of a new headteacher and the formation of a new leadership team are already having a positive impact upon the school. The school's senior managers recognise with great clarity the strengths and weaknesses in the school's performances. Their analysis of school performance is accurate and detailed. Their initial plans for improvement are sharply focused.

40. Morale at the school is high. Staff show great willingness to contribute to improving school performance. Good leadership of the curriculum by senior managers is providing a focus for this willingness. At present, systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently developed to support improvement systematically but the headteacher has already undertaken some monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work that is the basis for a more extensive programme of self-evaluation to involve all staff. Her strong and effective leadership and sharp

focus on performance management of staff is a key factor in the school's development. The expert support she is receiving from the deputy headteacher is also central to the school's drive for improvement.

41. Subject co-ordinators are adjusting well to new and strong leadership. Much of their work is at the early stages of development but positive signs are emerging, including sharp and accurate analyses of strengths and weaknesses. This is evident, for example, in science, where a sound action plan for improvement has been developed, based upon a sharp analysis of data and other information.
42. Leadership and management of the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs are very good and have resulted in very effective teams to provide for the range of needs of all their pupils. This strong teamwork provides continuing professional development for staff, who learn from each other's example, and monitoring and evaluation are a natural part of day-to-day work as well as of periodic self-review. As a result, provision is better than at the time of the previous inspection. The new co-ordinators for special educational needs in the main school have made a good start. They have involved themselves in monitoring individual education plans and have significantly improved systems for gathering evidence into individual case files. They are very committed to improvement and know what needs to be done to make procedures more robust and more consistently effective.
43. The school shows strong commitment to enabling all its pupils to benefit as best they can from their education although at present this translates into action more effectively in some areas than in others. Very good provision for pupils in the classes designated for special educational needs is backed up effectively overall by provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes. Good provision is made for pupils to extend their skills in the arts and in physical education through after-school clubs. Higher attaining pupils receive good provision in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and also in parts of Years 3 to 6 although there are some weaknesses in this regard in Years 3 to 6.
44. The governing body shows great commitment to the school. They have supported the school community through a difficult transition and have secured stability through recent appointments. Governors make a significant contribution to the work of the school. They are aware of the need to challenge what is going on in the school and are doing so as critical friends. Governors liaise appropriately with school leaders to offer support and to monitor developments in provision and standards. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this enables them to hold the school to account for its work. Governors fulfil all their statutory obligations.
45. The school has satisfactory procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it are properly used to provide for the needs of its pupils. An appropriate strategy is in place, in consultation with the local education authority, to control and reduce a projected budget deficit over the next three years. The present budget surplus does not reflect the school's future financial position and is the result of underspending over the years of change in senior management. It is now being used effectively to help improve resources. Governors are aware of the need to apply best value principles when securing goods and services and the decision to take on an LEA officer to act as a bursar has proven to be most cost effective. School administration ensures the school runs smoothly from day to day. It also ensures that visitors are made to feel welcome and this contributes well to the school's ethos.
46. Expenditure per pupil at the school is below average but, given the current budget underspend and the variations in performance in different parts of the school, overall it gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1217072
Total expenditure	1362984
Expenditure per pupil	2198

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	99496
Balance carried forward to the next	89587

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

47. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The nursery and reception classes are well organised, with the emphasis on active learning and effective team work amongst staff having a positive impact on progress. Good teaching and the organisation of a wide range of exciting and well-structured activities ensure that children achieve well in all areas of learning. Planning and assessment are good, with teachers and support staff closely monitoring the progress the children make. Staff make very good use of the limited accommodation although overall it is unsatisfactory as there are no toilets in the Foundation Stage unit.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and are happy in school because of the very good support, care and respect shown for each child in both the nursery and reception classes.
- Staff provide a wide range of well-structured activities to enhance personal development, enabling the children to develop confidence and independence and to work well co-operatively.
- The good induction programme ensures all children settle in well to school.

Commentary

48. When children start the nursery year their personal, emotional and social skills are below average. Most leave the Foundation Stage with average personal, social and emotional skills and a small but significant number display above average levels of skill. New entrants display a lack of confidence in using resources independently and playing with other children co-operatively. However, within a very short time they are making very good progress in this area. As a result of staff's effective intervention, most children make very good progress in developing their skills. From the time they start school they are encouraged to be independent, choosing their own resources to complete activities. High priority is given to allowing children to play together.

49. Teachers in the reception classes build on the very good teaching in the nursery. Children learn how to co-operate and persevere in their tasks. By the time they end the reception year, they can share and take turns. They develop a good sense of right and wrong. Staff have very high expectations of behaviour and provide a very good example in how to practise social skills. The children are reminded of the high standards expected in a very supportive and courteous manner. They are aware of the routines and settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff plan a wide range of purposeful activities to develop children's language and communication skills.
- Children make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills.

- Good links across all areas of learning help to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing.

Commentary

50. Although attainment on entry to the nursery class is below average, especially in speaking and listening, good teaching enables children to make good progress and achieve well. By the time they end the Foundation Stage, most have average levels of skill. When the children start in the nursery class, a small number have language problems and many are not confident in communicating their thoughts. The development of communication skills is a high priority, with every opportunity taken to encourage children to talk and listen. This has a very positive impact. On transfer to the reception classes, most can speak confidently to other children and to adults. Children in reception have good listening and speaking skills, especially when teachers give lively and interesting presentations, inspiring the children into wanting to learn more.
51. On entry to the nursery class, many children have below average reading skills. However, the development of reading skills is a high priority and as a result children make good progress. The new reading scheme is having a positive impact on learning. Children achieve well in developing their reading skills, the majority using their knowledge of letters, sounds and words when reading text.
52. Children in the nursery class develop good pencil control and early letter formation. The practise of early writing skills is included in many activities, with children encouraged to write lists, letters and stories. For example, when writing their own invitations for a birthday party the children completed the invitations with confidence and good early writing skills. The motivation to write provides a good foundation for the next stage of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a wide range of useful activities to develop learning in this area.
- Children make good progress and achieve well as they start school with below average mathematical knowledge and understanding

Commentary

53. Initial assessments in the nursery class show that children have a good knowledge of numbers. However, their mathematical development in calculating and shape, space and measure is less secure. From work seen in the nursery and the reception classes, children make good progress, responding well to the wide range of practical activities to develop mathematical skills. Teachers have high expectations, and well-planned work provides challenge for higher attainers. Children achieve well and good teaching has a successful impact on their learning. By the end of the Foundation stage, standards are average.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, with staff providing a wide range of activities and experiences to develop curiosity and learning in this area.
- Very good opportunities for imaginative play help children's learning.

- Learning is supported well by local visits.

Commentary

54. Children achieve very well, most attaining the standards required by the time they finish the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Staff provide a wide range of exciting, well structured activities to widen the children's experience and develop their knowledge and understanding. As part of their work about the world around them, children in the nursery planted their own seeds and recorded their observations in a booklet, displaying good observation skills. Children make very good progress in their sense of time and place, in an area of learning where the children are below average on entry to the nursery class. For example, very good achievement was seen in a history lesson when children displayed a very good understanding of school life in their grandparents' time. Children develop good computer skills; the older ones completing simple programs successfully and using computers with confidence.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use the hall and outside play area well to develop physical skills
- Children achieve well, demonstrating good co-ordination and control.
- Outdoor facilities do not offer enough opportunities for children to ride on wheeled toys, balance, slide or climb.

Commentary

55. On entry to the nursery class, children's physical development is average. They develop their physical skills well and make good progress, achieving standards that are at least in line and sometimes above average by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is due to good teaching. Teachers provide a wide range of activities to develop skills. The outdoor play area is secure and has a variety of interesting and colourful markings on the ground to support number and physical activities. Children play well with the resources and those in reception show good co-ordination and control. For example, some children can walk confidently on stilts. Good ball control skills were also seen when children were playing football. However, the outdoor facilities do not offer enough opportunities for the children to ride on wheeled toys, balance, slide or climb.

56. Children make good progress in developing their manipulative skills, especially through creative work. The older children in the nursery and reception classes handle scissors, glue spreaders, play-dough, paintbrushes and construction equipment well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, staff providing a rich environment with a wide range of activities to develop learning. As a result, children achieve well.

Commentary

57. Children start in the nursery class with below average attainment, especially in their imaginative development. They make good progress as a result of a good range of planned activities and effective teaching. Although the reception classrooms are small, teachers have created good

space for imaginative play. Children have good opportunities to work with a range of artistic media, for example, crayons, collage, paint and modelling activities. Their learning activities are closely linked to a theme. For example, in the nursery the children had an opportunity to paint birthday cakes, wrap presents, create wrapping paper out of pictures and string and make birthday cakes out of play dough. Overall standards are average at the end of the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils in the Year 3 to 6 age group do not achieve as well as they can because of inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school lacks a clear and effective strategy for developing pupils' English skills by using them to support learning in other subjects.
- The new co-ordinators for English work well together to spread their good vision of what needs to be done to improve provision and standards.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well, particularly those in the designated classes for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers' marking and use of learning targets do not consistently help pupils to see how well they are doing and how they can do better.

Commentary

58. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and writing. They have held up well since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, particularly in writing, because very good teaching consistently engages them in varied, active and richly resourced learning opportunities. In Year 6, standards are average overall. Test results are higher than at the previous inspection, but have fallen steadily from a peak in 2000. This is partly because several pupils with significant levels of special educational needs take the tests and this has a negative impact upon test results. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. It is lower than in Years 1 and 2 because teachers do not work with the same clear and shared understanding of strategies that motivate and enable all pupils to do as well as they can.

59. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. Those in mainstream classes make steady progress towards the specific targets in their well-written individual education plans. The good arrangements for grouping pupils according to their prior attainment in English helps the school to place good support where it is most needed. Pupils in the two special educational needs classes benefit from very good provision for their significant language difficulties.

60. The school serves pupils well in most of the basic skills of English, and the great majority make satisfactory and often good progress in, for example, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, accurate reading, and listening with understanding. The difference in achievement between Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 relates to particular but important aspects of learning where progress falters in Years 3, 4 and 5 because of shortcomings in provision:

- standards in spoken English in these year groups are not high enough because pupils lack regular and challenging opportunities to extend answers, reason things out, solve problems collaboratively and negotiate agreements. The school's approach is not yet shaped by policy, assessment or targets;
- pupils' skills in reading with critical understanding are not as strong as they should be by Year 6 because they are not developed with consistency and rigour through Years 3 to 6;
- pupils have too few opportunities to write independently and at length. Also, teachers' marking of pupils' work, in draft or finished form, is too inconsistent to guide individual progress effectively.

61. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 it is very good. In Years 3 to 6, however, the high proportion of less effective teaching slows pupils' progress. The most telling features of the better lessons are:

- teachers value all their pupils, expect the very best of them, and use lively methods, interesting activities, attractive texts and good support to help them learn;
- pupils learn actively as speakers, listeners, readers and writers;
- the lesson develops coherently, and with rising demand, in relation to clear aims that are kept in view and reviewed, so that pupils understand what they are learning;
- teachers and pupils use assessment as a natural and useful part of teaching and learning.

62. A handful of the lessons seen combined these strengths. Most teaching in Years 3 to 6, however, was less effective because of one or more of the following factors:

- lack of a clear shared focus for learning;
- failure to engage, stretch and excite, because of slow pace, routine tasks and resources, and insufficient expectation of what pupils can achieve;
- a tendency to limit pupils' independent thinking.

Pupils' written work shows that these shortcomings lead to periods of underachievement for certain groups in Years 3, 4 and 5.

63. The new co-ordinators have made a good start. They have a clear grasp of what to do first to improve provisions and standards, and they are taking robust action in these areas. Better book resources and a stronger strategy for teaching the complex relationships between sounds and letters in English are already improving attitudes and skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. The school has yet to develop a strategy by which English and the rest of the curriculum support each other. Some good opportunities for pupils to research information about their work, in geography or history for example, and to put that information in their own spoken or written words, show what can be done. However, the use of routine worksheets suppresses opportunities for pupils to develop independent language and learning skills, and restricts achievement generally.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2 and in the classes designated for pupils with special educational needs.
- Inconsistencies in teaching in Years 3 to 6 impacts negatively on standards and achievement, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers' planning does not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Most pupils show good attitudes to their work and behave well.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to help teachers plan future learning.

Commentary

65. Standards attained by Year 2 are above average and achievement is good. This is because teaching is good. Standards attained by Year 6 are average and achievement is satisfactory. This indicates a decline in standards since the last inspection which has now been halted by the

school's strong new leadership. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Curricular planning across the school is inconsistent. Although pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 are grouped according to attainment, some teachers, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are not successful in ensuring that the range of pupils' attainment within these groups is adequately planned for. As a result some pupils, particularly higher attainers, do not achieve as well as they could.

66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, in the special educational needs classes and more occasionally in Years 3 to 6, teachers' secure subject knowledge of the national guidelines enables them to plan an effective range of practical activities to meet the needs of all pupils. Clear learning intentions, sharp questioning, teachers' precise explanations and good demonstrations when working with the whole class ensure that pupils are clear about what they are to learn. These strengths, together with pupils' good attitudes to their work and teachers' effective use of humour and praise to boost confidence, have a positive impact on learning.
67. Less successful teaching in Years 3 to 6 does not build well enough on pupils' previous learning. Over-reliance on textbook exercises, often requiring only answers to be recorded, results in a lack of challenge and insufficient focus on learning. This, in turn, results in pupils not achieving as well as they can. Time is not used to best effect as opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss their work and explain strategies. The inappropriate attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils, particularly in Year 6, adversely affects not only their own learning but that of others.
68. Leadership and management are good. Although the co-ordinator was absent through illness during the inspection, discussion with a senior manager confirms that the co-ordinator has an accurate view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, and a firm commitment to raising standards and achievement. Her clear action plan is firmly focused on reviewing the subject to address weaknesses in teaching and learning, planning, assessment and the use of resources. Currently, assessment systems are not rigorous enough and information gathered is not used well enough to check pupils' progress through the school or to set individual learning targets for them. Teachers' written marking gives pupils little information as to how well they have achieved or what they might do to improve their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils use their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects as for example, they read and make charts and line graphs in science and time lines in history. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support pupils' learning as they collate and input data to produce bar graphs and spreadsheets. However, it is not used well enough to support daily learning in the classroom.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and a curriculum that is well focused on developing pupils' skills and scientific thinking enables all groups of pupils to achieve well in Years 1 and 2
- Insufficient focus on the development of pupils' skills of scientific inquiry limits achievement in Years 3 to 6.
- Marking of work in Years 3 to 6 does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance and support to help them improve their work.
- The clarity of vision and sharp analysis of performance by the new subject leadership team provide a good foundation for improvement.

Commentary

70. Standards are average at Years 2 and 6 but performance is stronger in Years 1 and 2 than it is in Years 3 to 6. Whilst pupils' knowledge and understanding in Years 3 to 6 enable them to achieve broadly average levels, weaknesses in the development of their skills of scientific inquiry results in pupils not always achieving as well as they should.
71. In contrast, the skills of scientific learning are developed well in Years 1 and 2. The result is good achievement in these year groups. Pupils are encouraged to think about *why* things happen in their investigations. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and a well-planned curriculum provide good opportunities for this. Good use of resources means that pupils have the equipment they need to focus their thinking scientifically. This is true for pupils in the special educational needs class as well as for pupils in mainstream classes. Teachers pose questions for pupils to think about and encourage them to predict from a scientific viewpoint what might happen as the result of their investigations. Work is mostly well matched to pupils' learning needs.
72. In Years 3 to 6, teaching generally places insufficient emphasis on encouraging this sort of scientific thinking. Too great a focus is placed upon completing written tasks that do not do enough to promote scientific understanding. Whilst pupils undertake practical tasks, the design of these and the discussions that follow from them do not make the most of the scientific understanding there to be gained. This impacts most on higher attaining pupils, whose thinking and understanding is not stretched, for example, by designing their own experiments and how they might present their findings.
73. The variation in quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 means that overall it is no more than satisfactory. Marking of pupils' work rarely provides them with the guidance or challenge they need to improve. Occasionally, teaching does encourage the development of scientific thinking. When this happens pupils are engaged in an active learning process and develop their skills of scientific understanding.
74. The subject's effectiveness has declined overall since the last inspection when measured against national test results at Year 6. However, this decline has been halted. A new co-ordinator team is recently in place. The co-ordinators have made a detailed and accurate analysis of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and have produced a workable plan for improvement. It makes clear that the more learning focused approach to science seen in Years 1 and 2 and in parts of Years 3 to 6 is to be developed systematically. As a result of this, subject leadership is judged to be good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching focuses effectively on developing pupils' skills and results in good achievement in lessons
- A well-planned curriculum enables teachers to develop pupils' skills effectively
- Good subject leadership with a strong focus on training and support has led to good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Very good resources motivate pupils to learn.

Commentary

75. The school has invested effectively in computers and this is paying off, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and attain the expected standards at Year 2 and Year 6. They are very well motivated to learn. The well-resourced computer suite is situated in an open-plan setting on the top floor of the school. Such is the level of interest when pupils are

working that it is sometimes easy to pass by without realising that around 25 to 30 pupils are working there.

76. This motivation, allied to good teaching, focuses pupils' attention on the skills to be developed. It occurs also in Years 1 and 2 where computers are situated in classrooms. Teachers have access to a well-planned curriculum grounded in national guidelines that enables them systematically to help pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers show confidence in helping pupils to learn: the result of a well-planned approach to training and support in the school. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should be achieving and the ability to support them when needed. Support assistants also work effectively in such settings and are knowledgeable about their work. Where pupils have particular special educational needs, ICT is a very effective means of motivation. With good support, such pupils achieve well.
77. Subject leadership is good. Staff are well supported by means of an effective programme through which they continue to develop their skills. The previous inspection pointed out weaknesses in the subject in Years 3 to 6 but the development of teachers' skills and the acquisition and good use of resources mean that good improvement has been made since that time.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The school is developing a well-planned programme to use ICT across the curriculum. This is very evident in the range of uses made of ICT in pupils' work on display and of pupils' understanding of the skills they have used in such tasks. For example, in geography, Year 2 pupils word-processed accounts of their visit to Chester Zoo to a good standard whilst also using a simple database to produce a bar chart of their favourite animals. Year 4 pupils produced reports about their new playground, using a good range of effects. Those in Year 6 worked with great enjoyment to compose a multimedia presentation about nursery rhymes that was tailored well to the needs of an audience of younger pupils. Pupils in Year 5 develop their skills of numeracy through the use of databases. Year 6 pupils research the Internet to enrich their work about the Second World War in history.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to work.
- The study of major world faiths other than Christianity is limited.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils throughout the school to use their language and literacy skills.

Commentary

79. Standards attained in Year 2 and Year 6 match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
80. Teachers' planning shows that an appropriate range of topics has been covered and visits out of school enhance curricular provision satisfactorily. Discussions with pupils show that most enjoy the subject and have a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of Bible stories, of major Christian festivals and of the main events of Jesus' life. However, their knowledge of other major world religions and the impact that following a particular faith has on the way people live is less secure. There is little evidence in pupils' books or around the school of attainment in this

aspect of learning. The school acknowledges this and, as a result, is planning a 'multi cultural week' in the summer term to develop pupils' awareness.

81. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Appropriate questioning and clear explanations about different parts of the Easter story link well to everyday situations and pupils' personal experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils compared the events of Palm Sunday to welcoming an important visitor to the town, while Year 3 and Year 6 pupils linked previous work on kindness and forgiveness to the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus. Most pupils show good attitudes to the subject by listening attentively to stories and behaving well. However, lesson time is not always used well enough as teachers sometimes talk for too long, limiting opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas. Activities to extend pupils' learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6, lack challenge, with an over dependence on worksheets or copied work. This limits opportunities for pupils to use and apply their language, literacy and ICT skills to record their work independently or to research information.
82. The recently-appointed co-ordinator provides purposeful leadership. She has an accurate view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Her action plan correctly identifies the need to develop a more creative approach to teaching and learning in order to improve standards and raise pupils' achievement. More rigorous assessment procedures are also due to be implemented in the summer term. However, teachers' written marking does not clearly identify what pupils have done well or what they need to do to improve their work.
83. As only a few **geography** lessons were observed during the inspection, no overall judgement can be made about provision. However, good teaching enabled pupils to achieve well in lessons seen in Year 2. A very well-planned topic on "animals around the world" captured pupils' interest and eagerness to learn. Teachers used this curiosity skilfully to guide pupils to study maps and pictures, and to think and talk about how different animals can be linked with different climate zones. The quality of learning in these lessons was good because imaginative teaching meant that pupils were active learners.
84. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall and pupils in Year 6 achieve average standards. The quality of provision in these years is too uneven to maintain the rate of progress seen in Year 2, though much work is good. In a good lesson in Year 5, for example, pupils showed a well-developed understanding of the differences between human and physical geography. In some topics, however, the over-use of photocopied worksheets denies opportunities for pupils to develop skills through practical investigation and to record their learning in their own way. Support is not always available when it is most needed and the quality of marking and short-term planning is very inconsistent. Sometimes learning objectives are unclear and lessons focus more on teaching than on learning.
85. Whilst insufficient lessons were observed in **history** to enable a overall judgement to be made on provision, pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop great enthusiasm for history as a result of the very good learning experiences they receive. They achieve well and reach higher than expected standards in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 also achieve well and attain above average standards. This maintains the level of effectiveness reported at the previous inspection. However, achievement in Years 3 and 4 is only satisfactory.
86. Pupils in Year 2 understand how their school is itself a source of historical information. They also explain how they use books to find out about the past, whether it be about the Great Fire of London or their favourite species of dinosaur, and how the work of archaeologists and palaeontologists is similar. This focus on evidence and skills also leads to good achievement in Year 6, where pupils have used a variety of methods and sources of evidence to find out about major events and changes in Britain since 1930. Their work shows good skills, for example in interviewing elderly people to get first-hand information, or in using information from books to recount a first-hand experience of the Blitz.

87. Pupils in Year 1 were inspired by visiting actors, working together with them as 'Edwardian' teachers and school children. A very good lesson maintained this powerful experience, in a classroom rich in Edwardian toys and domestic artefacts. Pupils' work in Year 6 also reflects good planning for an interesting and challenging variety of learning experiences to develop a broad and balanced range of skills and understandings. Good links with other subjects have enhanced this learning. For example, pupils have researched books, documents and the Internet. A range of very good models of Anderson shelters, made for homework, points to an imaginative link with design and technology.

88. In Years 3 and 4, however, work on Ancient Egypt and The Tudors lacks this variety of opportunity and dynamic emphasis on practical investigation. The regular use of undemanding worksheets inhibits active, independent learning and restricts pupils' opportunities to use their skills in literacy and ICT to support their learning. Lessons on Ancient Egyptian writing gave pupils an interesting encoding activity but missed opportunities to discuss the historical significance of the difference between hieroglyphs and alphabetic letters.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, and sometimes very good, teaching effectively promotes pupils' very good attitudes to their work.
- Good emphasis is placed on developing observational skills in all pupils.
- A rich art and design curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for all pupils.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

89. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Achievement is good throughout the school, with a significant number of pupils achieving very well by the end of Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the good support they receive which enables them to be fully included in all activities. Pupils with a particular gift or talent for art have been identified, with suitably challenging work planned to meet their needs.

90. Teaching that is based on secure subject knowledge results in all pupils acquiring good observational skills and using a wide range of media to produce works of art of which they are justly proud. Teachers' clear explanations and good demonstrations combine well with opportunities for pupils to explore their own ideas and responses to a range of stimuli. For example, Year 2 pupils explored paint, tones, textures, form and techniques well as they created individual pictures and a whole class collage based on Henri Rousseau's "Tiger in a Rainforest". Pupils are highly motivated, find art and design lessons interesting and enjoyable, work well collaboratively in groups and become increasingly competent at using a wide range of skills and techniques in their work. Effective planning links art well to other subjects and successfully encourages pupils to use their artistic knowledge and skills to illustrate their work in literacy and history. As pupils progress through the school they learn about the techniques used by a good range of famous artists and represent these well in their work. The art and design curriculum is effectively enriched and enhanced as, for example, pupils work with an artist in residence to create large batik printed banners to represent the four school "houses". The study of aboriginal and African art and visits to local places of interest contribute well to the pupils' understanding of other cultures. The weekly art club provides further curricular enrichment, while making a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

91. The subject is well led by a skilled and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has provided good support and guidance to colleagues less confident in the teaching of art and design. Planning is securely based on national guidance, suitably adapted to the needs of the school and its pupils. Appropriate systems are in place to assess and record pupils' progress, with the information gathered being used satisfactorily. The co-ordinator's action plan shows an accurate view of areas for development. Resources are good, with ICT used appropriately to enhance pupils' artistic knowledge and skills. High quality displays effectively enhance the accommodation, celebrate pupils' achievements and provide a very attractive and stimulating learning environment. A significant contribution to curriculum enrichment is made by a member of staff who has a degree in fine art. She supports the co-ordinator effectively with curriculum provision in Years 3 to 6 and also in the management of a very successful art club.
92. Only three lessons were observed in **design and technology**. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In one lesson seen in Years 1 and 2, pupils achieved very well. Discussion with them showed that they are developing a wide range of techniques and skills in this subject. For example, two higher attaining Year 1 pupils described in depth the models they had designed, giving very good examples of rotational movement and levers. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the challenges set by the teacher, including learning how to design and make a sandwich. The teacher provided very challenging work during the lesson for the different attainment groups. In the two lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, pupils attained average standards. Teaching was satisfactory. However, a lack of challenge and pace to the lessons restricted achievement. Homework is used well to support design and technology. Year 6 pupils made very good models of Anderson shelters at home, demonstrating an ability to work with tools, equipment and materials to make products.
93. In **music**, only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to make judgements about provision. In a lesson for the special educational needs class in Years 3 to 6, pupils received recorder tuition from their teacher. All listened attentively and made good progress. They played in time and in tune, performing with confidence throughout the lesson. In the other music lesson observed, Year 1 pupils worked alongside pupils from the designated class for pupils with special educational needs. During the lesson, most pupils achieved an understanding of musical beat through stimulating group work activities. In the same lesson pupils, listened intently to a range of tunes from musical boxes which the teacher had gathered for the lesson, discussing similarities and differences in sounds. In both lessons, teaching and learning were good.
94. Good singing was heard in assemblies. The choir continue their good tradition of community involvement and recently participated in the 'Hands Across the Ocean Event' at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, the 'Lonsdale Trust Concert' and the 'Child of Achievement Awards Ceremony' in London. The local authority instrumental music team visit to teach small groups of pupils giving them opportunities to develop their skills.
95. Only four lessons were observed in **physical education** so it is not possible to make overall judgements about provision. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieved very well in developing ball control skills during a lesson very well supported by a teaching assistant. Pupils were very keen to succeed and worked very hard, making considerable progress. In a Year 2 dance lesson, pupils achieved satisfactorily and some danced well as butterflies. However, lack of time meant that the class teacher did not have the opportunity to develop links with science.
96. In Year 4, teaching was good in a lesson focused upon throwing and catching. The teacher gave a clear explanation of the necessary skills for this activity and as the lesson progressed demonstrated different ways of throwing the ball. As a result, pupils developed their skills well. In a Year 6 'Dance Jive' lesson, pupils were encouraged to develop their own ideas in small groups. Towards the end of the lesson, all pupils' performed their dance routines for their classmates. These good opportunities were followed by pupils' constructive evaluation of their classmates' performance. At the end of the session the teacher gave pupils details of the next week's lesson in order that they could also plan ahead.

97. The school's good involvement in after-school clubs enriches the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 were seen learning basic passing skills from a qualified visiting hockey coach, assisted by the subject co-ordinator. During the session pupils were seen to be concentrating well and developing skills satisfactorily. The school has good links with a local secondary school that specialises in physical education. This gives the pupils good opportunities to develop different games' skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. Pupils are helped to gain an increasing awareness of their personal development and responsibilities as they progress through the school. Year 6 pupils are encouraged to assume extra responsibility as monitors. For example, a group of pupils organise outdoor play equipment very well. Through the School Council, the school regularly seeks the pupils' views and where possible, makes the changes pupils have asked for. This contributes effectively to pupils' personal development and self-esteem. It also adds to their sense of citizenship as members of a wider community. Pupils debate issues that concern them and give a sense of real involvement in decision-making. Health education is taught in science lessons. The school is currently introducing systems to encourage pupils to discuss their problems, including 'circle time'. The quality of social education through collaborative work varies and is very much tied to the approach to learning that pupils receive. Where learning is seen as exciting, exploratory and active, pupils receive good opportunities to develop social skills through working together in small groups. Where learning is seen as a more passive process, such opportunities are restricted.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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