

INSPECTION REPORT

PHOENIX PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 133702

Headteacher: Mr P. Morrison

Lead inspector: Heather C. Evans

Dates of inspection: 21 - 23 June 2004

Inspection number: 257191

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: | 2-11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 166 |
| School address: | Birchfield Road Liverpool |
| Postcode: | L7 9LY |
| Telephone number: | 0151 228 3831 |
| Fax number: | 0151 475 2705 |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr T Sweeney |
| Date of previous inspection: | New school: no inspection data available |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Phoenix Primary School, with 166 pupils, is similar in size to other primary schools; some children attend part-time in the Nursery or the special educational needs assessment unit. Ages range between 2 and 11. The school is very different in nature from most schools in the local area and from schools nationally, being a combined mainstream primary school and a special educational needs assessment unit. Currently more than half of the pupils are in receipt of free school meals, a much higher percentage than most other schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which are predominantly difficulties with learning or behavioural and social disturbance, is, at 41 per cent, well above what is usually found. Some of these pupils have only partial hearing or are visually impaired and others are in the assessment unit and have multiple, complex and profound special needs. As a result of the particularly inclusive nature of the school, where so many pupils with special educational needs are supported in a mainstream school, the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the average national figures. The school has 26 pupils for whom English is not the mother tongue and the proportion of pupils from ethnic groups is above that in most schools nationally. These pupils are predominantly from the Asian sub-continent and Somalia. The mobility of pupils in and out of the school, other than at the normal time of admission, is considerable. The school is part of a group of schools within an educational action zone. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are well below those found in many schools elsewhere in the city and in schools across the country. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies but assessment indicates that for most it is well below that found in most schools nationally and for some it is very low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| 21374 | Mrs Heather Evans | Lead inspector | Design and technology Information and communication technology Religious education English as an additional language |
| 11437 | Mr Anthony Anderson | Lay inspector | |
| 15236 | Mrs Morag Thorpe | Team inspector | Science Art and design Foundation stage |
| 30559 | Mrs J Taylor | Team inspector | English Geography History Special education needs |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a new school where every achievement is valued and where the overall attainment of pupils is moving towards the expected levels and the quality of education is good. All of the community is working to build self-worth and high personal esteem in this innovative approach to truly inclusive education. The intensive programme of work in English and mathematics is proving to be successful. Pupils' writing is improving as a direct result of the concentration on recording experiences. The carefully targeted teaching is good and, as a result, pupils who previously found learning difficult are doing well. The average and higher-attaining pupils are working well and are attaining the expected standards of which they can be proud. The curriculum has been modified successfully to enable full access for pupils from a range of backgrounds and experiences. Those pupils who attend regularly are eager to demonstrate what they know and can do. Unfortunately, for some, attendance is still erratic. This new school is now well established within the community and the harmonious mix of mainstream and special education is an area for celebration. The concept of this school is challenging but the agreed priorities are being promoted very well. The school is well led and the high ideals are beginning to bear fruit. Funding is complex, being a mix of the formulae for mainstream and special education. Money is managed very well. Overall the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics and science need to be improved.
- There is total commitment to including all possible pupils in every activity.
- The meticulously planned work is matched to each pupil's prior attainment.
- The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The high quality and careful use of assessment enables good curriculum development.
- The good quality of teaching with the support of the teaching assistants promotes and enables good learning.
- The school is alert to the need to complete the work planned to strengthen the curriculum.
- The poor attendance and the high level of unauthorised absence detract from the work of both teachers and pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | All schools | | | Similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | N/a | N/a | E* | E |
| Mathematics | N/a | N/a | E* | D |
| Science | N/a | N/a | E* | E |

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 good in many areas and is improving in academic subjects. Standards that were in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally last year (E* in the above table) are now improved. In the Nursery and the Reception class the pupils make very good gains in all areas of learning. From the well below average starting level many children are now on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the Reception class. This means that pupils are now expected to start their time in Year 1 next term ready for the work of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement on 2003. Across the school pupils' current achievements and standards in lessons are better than those shown in last year's statutory tests. In Years 1 and 2 improved standards now provide a base for further improvement in Years 3 and 4. In 2003 the standards in the statutory tests were very low. Whilst by the end of Year 6 standards are still below average in mathematics and science they are now above expectations in English. Standards in information and communication technology are at the expected level and contribute well to other subjects. Standards of attainment in

other subjects, especially those that do not depend on skills in academic competence, such as those in the performing arts and creative and physical subjects are good. Attainment in religious education exceeds the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.

Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils like school and respect the established values. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are eager to learn. Their behaviour is very good. Pupils' very good understanding of spiritual, moral and social aspects of life is enriched by many opportunities to celebrate with talented visitors to the school, and through sporting and musical activities. This developing school is making a very positive contribution to the community. In a short time staff and pupils have established a well-balanced and harmonious atmosphere that reflects the inclusive ethos of this school. Unfortunately until recently attendance has been poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall the quality of education is **good** and is improving. Teaching and learning are predominantly **good** and the curriculum provision is **satisfactory** and extra-curricular provision is **very good**. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is **very good**. The care and guidance of pupils is **very good**. The quality of teaching is good overall because the staff have a well-established understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of every child. Lessons are interesting and whenever possible they are practically based. The investigations undertaken help pupils to learn profitably and to achieve well. Pupils' respond positively to the challenging work set by teachers. Pupils' work in lessons, where there is skilled support, is good. The provision for subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory and is good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Links between subjects are being developed effectively although this work is not yet complete. The care and guidance for pupils of all ages is very good. The parents and the local community hold this developing school in high esteem.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are good; governors make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the developing school. The headteacher has a strong vision for the future and provides clear direction for the school. Effective systems are being established to support all aspects. The deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team have clearly established responsibilities that are managed well. There is clear direction for the teaching and support staff and effective guidance for the governing body. The decisions made by governors follow the sensible priorities set out in the school improvement plan. Governors are working diligently to ensure that their statutory responsibilities are met. Subject leaders are growing in their leadership role and in most subjects they monitor the work of colleagues in the classroom effectively, offering constructive help and support. They organise and manage the individual targets set for pupils very well. The management of provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good and it is good for those with special educational needs in the attached unit and in classes throughout the school. The needs of pupils learning English as an additional language are supported very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils share very positive views about the school. To them it represents a very positive new start. Parents support the inclusive philosophy and one pupil stated, "this school makes me want to attend, because teachers make it fun to learn".

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- maintain the work to raise standards in English, mathematics and science across the school by rigorously applying the structures that are now beginning to pay dividends;
- complete the plans to extend the work in the least well developed subjects as set out in the agreed action plans linked to the most recently ratified school improvement plan;

- maintain the efforts to improve attendance so that standards can be raised across the school by pupils being in class on time for all teaching and learning sessions.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

In this new school standards in the statutory tests in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were well below the national average and in mathematics they were very low and in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 were similarly very low. Pupils' previous experiences had not prepared them well for formal testing. Across the school standards have improved and in English they are now close to average in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and are above the expected level at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 6 pupils are achieving very well in English. In mathematics and science the standards achieved are still below the expected levels in Years 2 and 6 but from the very low previous level this represents good progress and good achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The improved standards in English across the school during 2004 are worthy of praise.
- Standards in mathematics and science require more equally persistent work.
- The high achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is a very good marker for the future.
- The well above average number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 this year is likely to mean that the overall test results remain at a below average level in the statutory tests.

Commentary

1. In a school of this nature attainment on entry varies with each intake. Attainment on entry to both the Nursery and the Reception class is well below average overall. As this school has recently opened, children in the Reception class have not transferred from one nursery but have had a wide variety of pre-school provision. Everything in the school is newly established, including the curriculum. Children achieve very well in both classes and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. This means that for the group of pupils starting the National Curriculum in Year 1 this autumn, those who do not have special educational needs will have attained all of the expected early learning goals and many are on course to exceed them in mathematics. This offers the teachers in the main school a real chance of planning for the high standards to which they aspire. The fluctuation of attainment levels on entry and the variation in the numbers of pupils, including some with complex and multiple learning difficulties, means that the stringent assessment procedures used are essential. The evidence gathered is used in a sensitive way so that the provision made can be tailored to meet the needs of every individual. Some of the pupils learning English as an additional language are eager to learn but others have also been identified as having special educational needs. The school's systems for assessment and for supporting pupils with limited English are very effective in helping all of these pupils in very individual ways.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading | 12.2 (n/a) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| Writing | 11.0 (n/a) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| Mathematics | 11.8 (n/a) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Very low standards were attained in the statutory tests in 2003 at the end of Years 2 and 6. These were a clear indication to the staff that in order to reach their high aspirations there

needed to be a radical overhaul of organisation of the learning process. They began with the curriculum, the systems for teaching and the processes for assessment and target setting. With the high percentage of pupils with barriers to learning in every class a policy was established with a strong emphasis on developing skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. The teachers revised the approach to all work based on practical experiences aimed at promoting learning across the curriculum. These main elements would be supported by as many as possible high quality experiences that made sense to pupils and gave them something real around which to build their learning. It was essential that every adult was committed to the concept of totally inclusive learning where higher attainers and pupils with complex and multiple special educational needs worked side-by-side with similar but totally individual learning plans based on the same overarching objective. This innovative approach to teaching and learning is proving to be successful for higher attaining pupils as well as for those who previously found learning difficult. A year on it is clear that by the end of 2004 those pupils in Years 2 and 6, that attend regularly, achieve at levels close to their best personal level and fulfil their individual potential.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 21.4 (n/a) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| Mathematics | 22.7 (n/a) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| Science | 23.6 (n/a) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. During lessons in class, standards in science are most frequently at the expected level because all work is planned around investigations. A system of working in small groups enables every pupil to be supported and to be encouraged to think for themselves and work out what is expected and what needs to be done. The process is thorough and learning is always based on real life experiences giving pupils a strong practical grasp of how science works in the environment. This is not always rapid but the learning is real and the written work is of high quality.
4. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations and a few pupils in each group are working at levels above those expected nationally. Hardly any have personal computers at home and everything that pupils know has been learned in school. In all other subjects, including history, geography collected evidence indicates that standards are close to the expected levels at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils' attainments exceed the requirements of the agreed local syllabus in religious education. From the low starting point these good achievements are as a result of so much work being based on pupils' shared experiences. When back in class there is always some written follow-up work that is carefully targeted to what is possible and attainable.
5. Most pupils are making good progress in reading and recent initiatives to promote opportunities for extended writing are working well. In lessons the challenge for pupils of all attainment levels is good. Those capable of working at a higher level are supported well and are encouraged to succeed. In every class the lower-attaining pupils achieve to their own best level because of their carefully stepped targets and the carefully modified work as well as the dedication of the teaching team. Many pupils only do well because of the help provided by the skilled teaching support staff.
6. Many pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, as well as those with special educational needs, most frequently work at the expected levels in class and often in their books, because support is provided and extra time is allowed to enable pupils to complete

tasks. In the statutory National Curriculum tests most of the pupils with special educational needs are unlikely to reach the levels expected for their age. This in turn will impact on the overall scores attained by the school this year. To achieve to their potential, pupils have worked hard and most learn well and make good progress. This is as a result of the industry and commitment of the teachers.

7. In other subjects pupils' developing skills and achievements in reading help to maintain attainment levels and most pupils perform well when undertaking practical work, when increasing numbers achieve at the expected levels. The school is pursuing a programme of work to extend the use of skills learned in writing in English to the different styles of writing required in other subjects. Individual pupils are encouraged to increase their development using independent research and personal study. Overall, across the school pupils' achievement is good.
8. In mathematics pupils are beginning to use their knowledge and understanding of number with greater confidence. Some now have a good understanding of the rules of mathematics and know how to use them to solve problems. The agreed targets in mathematics are achievable and are followed keenly. Tracking personal progress is managed very well and pupils can see how they have improved. During the inspection, the work in books showed how well pupils understood how to use their knowledge of time, space and measurement to support their work in other subjects particularly science and design and technology.
9. Most pupils are confident when using computers for word-processing, to enhance work in English, history and geography. This rapidly expanding work is helping them to select from a bank of skills to plan, organise and review data in science and mathematics. Boys and girls perform equally well in most subjects although some still lack confidence in reading in Years 3 and 4 and the staff have selected additional reading material aimed at capturing the enthusiasm of reluctant readers. In practice, for many boys, once they are competent readers they still prefer to read facts about cars and sport more than they enjoy reading stories. The use of ICT across the curriculum in all classes is being developed by the use of laptop computers in classrooms.
10. The limited time during the inspection means that there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement for provision and standards for every other subject. Discussions with pupils and subject leaders, together with sampling work, reviewing teachers' files and assessment records and other available evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is at least in line with the expected levels. Provision across the curriculum is at least satisfactory and is frequently enhanced by rich extra-curricular provision. In design and technology, examples of completed work indicate that links with science, mathematics and geography are used well in evaluating and refining work.
11. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are in the assessment Reception achieve well. Progress is measured as part of the school assessment procedures for all pupils as well as against the targets set in pupils' very detailed Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The specialist knowledge of the headteacher as special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has made a significant contribution to the high quality and use of the IEPs. Targets are stated very clearly and are measurable and attainable. In all cases they are specific and appropriate for the needs of the pupils. All staff recognise the value of the IEPs and regard them as essential working documents to inform their planning. The set targets form the basis for their frequent and meticulous assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs.
12. Those pupils who receive specialist tuition in the assessment Nursery have very specific targets and their work is very closely matched to their age and ability in the acquisition of communication and personal and social development skills. As a result they achieve very well. Their IEPs are reviewed regularly. Parents are invited and encouraged to participate. Teachers adapt work very well to match the very wide needs of pupils of all levels of prior

attainment. All teachers liaise with the learning support staff to plan how best to support pupils with learning, and with emotional and physical difficulties.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and overall they achieve well. Behaviour is very good and pupils demonstrate very good relationships with one another and with adults. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance, however, is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- Pupils' attendance has been poor and their punctuality unsatisfactory, but these issues are starting to improve through the efforts of the school.
- Once in school pupils demonstrate a great desire to learn.
- Teachers set high expectations for the conduct of all pupils.
- The atmosphere inside the school is free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment.
- All pupils are valued highly and show the sensitive care for others that they experience themselves.
- The provision for and outcomes of work in spiritual moral, social and cultural development are very good.

Commentary

13. The children in the Foundation Stage show very good attitudes to work. They enjoy school, are eager to learn, and behave well in all lessons. All staff ensure that all children have very good opportunities to share in all activities and benefit from the learning opportunities planned. This is continued across the school; pupils in all year groups are pleased to take part in the activities provided and show a good interest and enthusiasm in the school life. Relationships with teachers and other adults are very good and pupils are very willing to show enterprise and to take responsibility. Respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is obvious across all classes. Pupils work hard to achieve the high expectations that the school has for their conduct.
14. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They interact very well with each other and show great respect for the adults who help them to learn. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement, and pupils respond very well. Teachers use praise sensitively to reward effort, raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem and, as a result, pupils learn and achieve well.
15. The attitudes, values and personal qualities of pupils with special educational needs are developed very well. There are many opportunities for social and personal development, for example during registration, when songs are sung to greet individual pupils in the Nursery assessment unit. Opportunities are created for pupils to work and play with pupils from Year 6. This forms part of the personal and social development of these pupils and is indicative of the very high standard of care they receive. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties receive good support so that they are aware of the high standards expected of them and they usually respond positively.
16. The work to maintain and promote racial harmony is managed so well that it seems to be effortless. Pupils have a very good awareness of their own cultural traditions and those of others. Pupils and parents interviewed during the inspection week feel confident that any instances of racial harassment or other forms of bullying will be dealt with very effectively by the school. Pupils have a very strong awareness of the principles that distinguish right from wrong and show a healthy respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. The ethos of the school ensures that pupils' spiritual awareness, self-knowledge and self-worth are developed very well. There are regular times for prayer, worship and reflection both in classes and with larger groups meeting together. During lessons for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and through the very many opportunities provided for school visits, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are enhanced. Many opportunities exist for

pupils to experience living things, for example through visits to an environmental centre. Pupils are regular visitors to local churches and other places of worship. Experiences such as travelling by bus and train are organised to extend pupils' understanding of the way people travel to work and to the shops. They also take part in a number of sporting, drama and musical events. Cultural development is promoted well through music, art and poetry.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year was 89.5%

Pupils' overall attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory for a significant minority. The level of unauthorised absence is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A small but significant number of parents do not support the school in its drive towards good attendance levels.
- Over 45 pupils (36%) of statutory school age have attendance levels below 90%.
- The school has very good systems in place for monitoring and promoting good attendance.

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data | 8.7 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.8 |
| National data | 0.4 |

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

17. The overall attendance at the school is poor and was well below the national average in the last reporting year. The incidence of unauthorised absence was well above the national average. Attendance has improved this year but there is still evidence of some pupils habitually arriving late and a minority of parents do not support the school in helping to ensure that their children attend regularly and promptly. The school is very proactive in following up all unexplained absences and it works extremely closely with parents and external agencies to improve attendance levels. This work is beginning to produce pleasing results. Some children in the SEN assessment unit have chronic illnesses and their unavoidable absence is reflected in the attendance figures.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions since the opening of Phoenix School.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education is good because in this developing school the quality of teaching and learning are good and the opportunities provided to enhance the curriculum are relevant to the needs of the pupils and are exciting and stimulating. The school understands that now all of these elements are securely established is a time to press on for higher levels of attainment. Curricular provision is at least satisfactory and is being extended in a structured way. Across the school teachers provide a rich and interesting range of opportunities for reinforcing work learned in the classroom.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and in the Foundation Stage very good. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is very good overall and it is excellent in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach and have very good relationships with the pupils.
- Teachers have increasingly high expectations for pupils and challenge pupils' thinking.
- The pace of lessons is brisk and good use is made of time.
- The planning is thorough, and well organised; teachers select from a good range of methods.
- The rate of learning is predominantly good.
- The strategies for long-term assessment are very good and are working very well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1 (3%) | 9 (28 %) | 19 (60%) | 3 (9%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

18. The quality of teaching is good overall and in the Foundation Stage it is very good. Teachers' work in the Foundation Stage and in lessons for English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology and in work with pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. The teaching for those pupils learning English as an additional language is structured and successful. As a result, pupils learn well and make clear and measurable gains in their knowledge and understanding of the programmes of work that they study.
19. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall and at times it is excellent. The very detailed assessment procedures enable all staff to plan lessons that challenge children very well and enable them to make very good progress. The teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants provide very strong support, work very well together and have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. Very carefully prepared activities and use of resources maintain children's interest at very high levels; they show enthusiasm and excitement when learning. Daily routines are very well established. Staff provide exemplary role models and the excellent monitoring of all aspects of children's learning and personal and social development ensures that those children who need additional support are identified early and achieve as well as others in the class.
20. In all lessons throughout the school teachers' knowledge of the subjects taught is secure and the objectives set are clearly explained to pupils. Whenever possible teachers link their expectations to earlier work or to practical experiences that pupils remember. Lessons are well organised and teachers' planning is good. The methods chosen and the available resources are always suitable. Teachers are at pains to engage pupils' interest at the start of lessons; work is interesting and the pace of learning is brisk. As a result of the very positive relationships, there is a shared sense of joy in learning as well as delight in achievement.
21. Subject leaders offer good support for colleagues when preparing lessons and in the procedures for assessing pupils' progress; attainment and achievement are clear and manageable. Teachers follow the agreed marking policy carefully as an important strand of the shared assessment procedures. In the best examples teachers share a dialogue with pupils, praising effort and improvement and pointing out where thought and effort is still needed.
22. Teachers make good use of the information gathered on a day-to-day basis to refine work for the next lesson. As a result, work is invariably well matched to the prior attainment of the

pupils. Since the inception of this new school the use of assessment to promote work matched to pupils' earlier learning, setting achievable challenges, has been seen as a vital indicator of progress. The process has already proved to be very successful in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and in ICT. Teachers plan to extend this work into the rest of the subjects as the next step in the process of raising standards whilst maintaining the now accepted pattern of very good behaviour and positive attitudes to work.

23. The systems in place for longer-term assessment are very strong and they provide a clear focus for the analysis of strengths and weaknesses and for setting relevant, measurable targets for improvement. Like everything else in the school these strategies are new and have been agreed by all of the staff. As a result, their use is totally consistent and collected data provides a comprehensive evaluation of what has been learned. Whilst working to establish and maintain a very positive atmosphere for learning, the assessment process has been very successful, in providing the clues for where to move to next. The monitoring of planned work and colleagues' performance in the classroom with the support of the headteacher and members of the senior management team has been vital to the success of this work. All adults are very alert to what pupils know and understand and are beginning to devise ways to enable pupils to use what they can do in other subjects to extend learning. The staff are clear what needs to be done next and work to increase the already good teaching that is now happening in most lessons as the next step in the process.
24. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers use pupils' IEPs very well to incorporate agreed targets into lesson plans. Identified pupils are fully included in all classroom activities although some require additional support to experience success. Teachers ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged whatever their level of prior attainment. The role of the support assistant is carefully planned. These staff members make very good contributions to the teaching team. Assessment and tracking procedures of pupils with special educational needs are very good and are used meticulously to monitor progress and achievement. The results of assessment are used very well to plan lessons so that the needs of these pupils can be addressed. This includes very close monitoring in the assessment Nursery of any emotional, behavioural and physical events that may impact on the pupils' learning and personal development.
25. There are strong links with the local authority special educational needs support service. The advice provided is particularly helpful for pupils with visual and hearing impairment. The use of the trained support staff in most lessons is vital to the work to maintain the improving rate of learning. Their skilled intervention when pupils experience any difficulties enables lessons to move at a brisk pace where everyone builds well on the sense of success. The support, that enables pupils who have barriers to learning to achieve alongside their peers in lessons, is not available to them in tests. This means that test results overall might well suggest a less good performance than is seen in pupils' work in their books and in lessons.
26. The very well developed partnership between the teachers and the teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to the very positive ethos of the school and to the very effective working atmosphere in all classes. Homework is set at suitable levels each week. During the inspection the review of marked homework indicated that it was proving to be a positive aid to learning.

The curriculum

Overall the quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and in the core subjects of English and mathematics it is very good. For science and information and communication technology curricular provision is good. The headteacher and staff have made a very good start to providing the pupils with worthwhile learning opportunities, successfully meeting their learning needs and interests. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources combine well together to provide good support to the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very effective.
- Most subjects have a practical scheme of work based on the latest national guidance.
- This is an inclusive school that caters very well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school stimulate pupils' interest.
- The accommodation is good.

Commentary

27. The curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and provides a very secure structure for working towards the early learning goals. The National Curriculum is fully in place in Years 1 to 6 and all pupils receive a broad education. In the new school the staff's first priority was to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are now firmly in place. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment are now provided with an extensive range of learning opportunities to develop their skills in these subjects. The curriculum is constantly checked and improved where necessary. The subject leaders analyse the results of statutory and optional tests alongside the teachers' evaluations to analyse any areas of weakness. This system has not yet been extended to all subjects but the school's excellent plans for the future indicate that sensible strategies have been established to meet priorities. Curriculum development has been managed very well and all subject leaders are now providing good leadership, though several have only recently been assigned to their subjects. The school has begun to modify the national guidance for each subject in turn to fit the unique character of the school.
28. Phoenix Primary School is an inclusive school. The teaching programmes are carefully planned to cater for the needs of all pupils. Teachers provide extension work and additional support as needed. All pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in school activities. Each pupil with special educational needs has a personal learning plan that identifies a set of challenging targets and lists the available support needed to achieve them. Good use is made of links with specialist external agencies to help with assessing needs, giving guidance to teachers or supporting pupils directly. Teachers review each pupil's progress against their targets regularly and revise the plans accordingly. This is why pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Most of the required help is provided very successfully in class. For some pupils, however, especially those with emotional or social needs, the school organises a good range of extra support sessions with specialists such as the learning mentor, the music therapist or short, specific sessions for behaviour management. These help the targeted pupils to deal with their difficulties and to cope with school. This specialist work also ensures that other pupils are able to continue their education without disruption. Pupils learning English as an additional language are given good support based on their individual assessment profile.
29. All pupils have the same opportunities to take part in every aspect of school life. Teachers value all pupils equally as individuals and work hard to make sure they get the best value from their time at the school. Curriculum organisation is complex because many classes contain mixed age groups, but the systems work well and ensure that most pupils make good progress. Often there is good innovation. For example, on some afternoons the three classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6 work in smaller groups for science and this helps to increase the opportunities for investigation and helps them to make good progress.
30. During the inspection several classes took part in visits to places of interest such as the Liverpool City Environmental Centre. Pupils enjoyed these opportunities and returned to school full of enthusiasm to build on their exciting experiences. The school choir enjoyed a visit from a professional musician who helped them prepare to take part in a musical production at the Catholic Cathedral in Liverpool.
31. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. During the past year these have included badminton, yoga, music, dance, basketball and a computer club. Pupils look forward to these

opportunities and they are well supported. The school relishes the prospect of being able to extend these activities when the new park, currently being developed next to the school, is completed in a few weeks' time.

32. The school puts a special emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and health education and enhancing their awareness of citizenship. Circle time is used very effectively to enable pupils to express their views or discuss issues that concern them. In one circle time lesson, taught well by the school's mentor, pupils began with relaxation exercises designed to reduce stress. Using a variety of strategies including role-play and discussion, pupils explored the importance of being very careful about what they said about each other. Sessions such as this help support the school's very good ethos. There are suitable opportunities for learning about sex education and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug abuse. The school takes part in a healthy eating project and fruit is available for pupils. Swimming instruction is available for all pupils in Years 3 to 6. This extended curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop positive attitudes and has a significant impact on behaviour, relationships and enhances the quality of learning.
33. The school has a dedicated and enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff who work well together. All adults are well deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils' learning needs. Overall the quality of the accommodation for teaching the curriculum is good although, for a newly designed school, there is a shortage of storage space. At present there is only one interactive white board to assist teachers in using ICT throughout the curriculum. Pupils' work is very well displayed throughout the building. This creates a pleasant and stimulating environment. The caretaker and his team ensure a high level of cleanliness. The resources in all subjects are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for child protection and welfare are very good as are those for supporting and guiding pupils through monitoring.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective procedures for child protection are in place.
- Staff are trained in child protection systems and procedures.
- The teaching and support staff know their pupils very well.
- Medical records and procedures are very well managed and maintained.
- Well-organised risk assessments take place in advance of visits out of school.
- Regular and very well planned fire drills take place and are recorded.
- Very good monitoring systems are used well to promote pupils well-being.
- The provision and management of pupils' personal, social and emotional development (PSHE) is superb.
- The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are good.

Commentary

34. The systems and procedures for Child Protection are very secure and are known by all staff. There has been relevant training for all personnel. The staff are well supported by a range of external agencies. This enables a very high degree of welfare support and guidance to individuals and groups. The school's learning mentor provides a very high level of additional support to some pupils and excellent use is made of external services. The school employs a wide range of proactive strategies to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence. For example, a number of pupils have undertaken a month long course at the nearby St Hugh's Centre and others have been rewarded with an 'away day' visit to the Southport Nature Reserve.

35. The learning mentor who leads all of the lessons in PSHCE and circle time provides excellent, very focussed, pastoral assessment for all pupils. The information gathered is analysed and monitored very carefully and, in some cases, daily and weekly targets are provided for individuals with a view to improving and developing aspects of their day-to-day life at school. In the classroom, all adults are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited by pupils and they then take appropriate remedial action. Regular fire drills are carried out and teachers check that all new pupils to the school are made aware of the correct routes to take in the case of fire. This is a very effective and well-recorded provision. Pupils' health and safety are a top priority. Individual medical records, including food allergies are recorded carefully. The school's systems of medical administration and record keeping are excellent. There are regular inspections of the site and the school is very alert when considering possible risks on visits to places away from school.
36. A school council is planned for the coming year. This is to increase pupils' opportunities to have a more formal voice in how their school is run and managed. Pupils have already been surveyed about what they think needs to be reviewed or changed. Those pupils interviewed during the inspection expressed the view that they already had good involvement in many of the day-to-day issues in the school. This included the design of the newly developed play area. This attractive facility will ultimately be shared with the local community. Children said that they felt valued and very secure at the school. Their personal development is enhanced through the setting of well-publicised individual achievement targets. The achievement of targets is always seen as a cause for shared celebration and often results in tangible rewards. The induction and transfer systems for pupils at both ends of the school and between key stages are of a high standard.
37. The very effective provision of welfare, guidance and health and safety strategies for pupils has already had very significant impact on the planned progress towards improving standards and achievement. It is a major strength of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are good. The school's links with the local community are very good and with other schools they are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents feel that their children like school.
- The teaching is considered to be good.
- Most parents feel that their children are making good progress.
- The school's links with the community support the curriculum very well.
- Links and partnerships with other schools and colleges are good.
- A minority of parents is not supportive of the school, particularly in terms of attendance, punctuality and unauthorised absence.

Commentary

38. There was very good support for the school from those parents who returned questionnaires and those who attended the parents' meeting. Parents believe that their children are expected to work hard and these strengths were in evidence throughout the inspection. Parents receive very good information about the intended curriculum planned for each half-term and each week. Reading diaries provide very good systems of communication about children's attainment and progress. An excellent range of additional information is given at the end of each week. The detailed review of the week's activities, how children worked and progressed also contains a range of suggested activities to help parents to extend their children's learning at home.

39. Parents state their belief that teaching is good. They know that with their children they can seek help or advice on a whole range of school and community issues on a daily basis if required. They have positive views about the leadership and management of the school. A few parents were concerned about pupils' behaviour but during the inspection most pupils demonstrated consistently good attitudes and behaviour both in school and in the playground. The pupil questionnaire presented a very positive picture of the school.
40. Through the prospectus parents are given good information about the school. The annual report to parents by the governing body is of a good standard. Newsletters are well-designed, easy to read and informative. They offer timely reminders to parents about important events. The annual academic reports to parents are well designed and attractively presented. Each section ends with an individual target for each pupil's development. Two formal parents' evenings are held each year as well as an open day in the Nursery and in the assessment unit. Few parents wait for these events if they need to see either a teacher or the headteacher. On these formal occasions parents have the opportunity to look around and ask questions. These consultation events are usually well attended by parents. Those who are actively involved in annual statement reviews and progress meetings attend more frequently. A few parents are actively involved in helping with a number of activities. Others offer more occasional support, accompanying pupils on visits or with extra-curricular clubs. Parents enjoy attending school concerts, celebrations and sports days and support these events well.
41. Very good use is made of the local community and environment to enhance pupils' curricular access. There is also good additional support for pupils and parents through events such as workshops linked to subjects. The well-attended breakfast club for pupils helps to give a good start for many each day. The school also has good links with a local supermarket and children have many outings arranged for them to access additional areas of the curriculum. These include a recent visit to Hilbre Island for environmental studies and to Croxteth Hall for a Victorian day. The school has good links with other local schools. For example, during an assembly led by pupils in Key Stage 2, some staff and a pupil from the Broad Green High School, together with two pupils from Year 6, made a PowerPoint presentation of their recent project using ICT. The school has developed strong and purposeful links with partner primary schools and with the secondary schools to which pupils will transfer at the end of Year 6. These positive links with parents, the community and other schools provide a strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Governance is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior staff have a very strong commitment to inclusion.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- The strategic planning is highly appropriate and reflects the school's priorities.
- There is rigorous monitoring of performance data and taking action.
- The school makes a very strong contribution to initial teacher training.

Commentary

42. The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher has a sincere commitment to the vision of a totally integrated school and to the ethos of social and educational inclusion. He has cemented the school's growing reputation within the community and teachers' and pupils' positive attitudes to the school. Pupils of all abilities and cultures enjoy school and the headteacher and staff have successfully initiated an imaginative system of shared of which parents are proud. The headteacher has developed good partnerships with the deputy headteacher. This teamwork ensures that their vision is reflected in practice.

43. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good with some excellent features and ensure that there is very good continuity between the Nursery and the Reception classes. The effectiveness is evident in the ways in which the planned provision was maintained during the inspection even though a temporary teacher led the Nursery class. This reflects the very high quality and clarity of vision and sense of purpose and very high aspirations of all staff. The Foundation Stage leader has been very successful in inspiring and motivating all staff and pupils. She has built on the very good teaching skills and informed support given by nursery nurses and teaching assistants. The team provides a highly inclusive and finely tuned Foundation Stage that is reflected in all elements of provision for all children.
44. The subject leaders are developing their roles well. They monitoring teachers' planning and evaluate their performance in the classrooms. The identified curricular priorities listed in the school development plan are highly appropriate for this newly formed school. At present the subject leaders for the foundation subjects have not all had sufficient opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning in all classes but this work is planned.
45. The school is well managed. The headteacher and senior management team share a clear vision for the direction of the school. They have established a positive structure for innovation, monitoring and evaluation. The subject leaders have been successful in curricular planning and ensuring that learning resources meet needs. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that all pupils benefit from the educational opportunities that the school provides. He has very successfully set in place provision to develop the roles and professionalism of the teaching assistants; as a result of this they make extremely valuable contributions to teaching, pupils' personal skills and learning.
46. The governance of this recently developed school is satisfactory overall and governors are successful in ensuring that statutory requirements, including those regarding inclusion, are met. At this stage in the school's development, although governing body members are attending regular training sessions, the governing body has had insufficient experience to fully develop the role of critical friend towards the senior management team, although it supports it well. The governors have already set performance management targets for the headteacher. The headteacher uses the professional and educational guidance provided by the small core of experienced governors very effectively and this is evident in the improved standards in English and in achievement overall.
47. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed very well by the headteacher who currently acts as SENCO. All adults share the dedication and vision to establish a truly inclusive school. The management of the assessment unit, that moved into the new building just weeks before the inspection is still to being developed. The school benefits from a dedicated team of support assistants who provide very skilled and necessary assistance. All of the recommendations of the revised Code of Practice are fully implemented and there is full compliance with the Disability Act of 2001.
48. The school secretary provides a welcoming point of contact and is very efficient. The day-to-day financial management of the school is good. The finance officer provides very accurate budgetary information that can be used to guide the governors, headteacher and senior management team in making prudent financial decisions.

Financial information for the year September 2002 to March 2003 (part of academic year)

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------------------|------------|
| Total income | 629727 | Balance from previous year | No balance |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Total expenditure | 538484 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3451 |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Balance carried forward to the next academic year | 91243 |
|---|-------|

49. The finance officer manages the budget extremely well and balances each cost centre very systematically, keeping a meticulous record of all income and expenditure. At present the systems established in links with the local education authority, at the inception of the school, drawing on two different formulae, lack rigour in financial accountability. The headteacher and senior management team fully recognise the importance of carefully monitored accounting systems and ensuring that no adult spends in excess of the agreed limits. Resources allocated for specific purposes are used appropriately and pupils achieve well compared to their standards at the beginning of the year. The allocation shown above contained some allocation of money, intended to establish parts of the new school that will not be required in subsequent years.
50. From time to time a deficit has been shown in the accounting procedures caused by an imbalance between the funding for mainstream and special educational needs pupils. As money always follows the placement of pupils the school had not always been fully reimbursed for the number of pupils on roll with exceptional special educational needs. Evidence provided by the authority indicates that this problem has been resolved, at least in the short-term. In this new school, the headteacher and staff are constrained by a tight budget until a full picture of the needs of this innovative approach to learning can be evaluated fully. Financial adjustments are made retrospectively for those pupils with special educational needs who join the school from other places after the budget allocation has been determined. It is unlikely therefore that a complete evaluation for a full academic year will be possible for some months. It is clear that this venture is more costly than traditional mainstream schooling but that it also costs less per pupil than would special school provision. To justify the experiential and totally inclusive ideal it is vital that the benefits of the spending are reflected in enhanced attainment levels for all pupils. The Local Education Authority has formally indicated that they recognise the benefits and the difficulties and have stated that legitimate costs over and above the first estimates will be reimbursed. That there is proper allowance made for the full cost of each pupil with special educational needs in the mainstream classes is essential if the intended high quality results are to be realised without constant financial worries for the staff and governors when planning the budget each year. The local education authority has called this endeavour 'a flagship project' and, now that the journey has begun, adequate finance, monitoring and support will be essential.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good with some excellent features**. They are very well prepared for transfer to Year 1. There is one Nursery class and one Reception class and there is provision for children in the Nursery class to have full-time education. (It should be noted that the special educational assessment nursery and reception classes are reported on in Part B.) Although there is a wide range of ability, the majority of children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with attainment that is well below the average of most children nationally. As this is a new school the children in the Reception class have had a wide range of pre-school experiences none of which have been at this school; there are therefore no comparisons with previous schools or progress between the attainment on entry to the Nursery or the Reception class. Children achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and curricular planning. Staff ensure that the precise learning needs of all children are identified early through excellent assessment systems and very effective links with families. All children, including higher-attaining children, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve equally well. The student in the Nursery is very well supported in all aspects of his professional development.

One outstanding feature of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is the planning of the literacy topic about a bear. This gives children purpose and abundant enjoyment in their learning. It incorporates many areas of learning and provides varied and rich opportunities for research and communication within the Foundation Stage. The rest of the school, parents and the author of the book have all been involved. All children are very well motivated and their learning is focussed yet fun.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very well planned activities and resources increase children's independence and their ability to work in groups.
- Very good teamwork ensures very strong guidance for those children who need additional support.
- There is very good progression in the range of activities between the Nursery and Reception classes and within these classes.
- Teachers plan an exceptionally enriching range of special events and these contribute to children's very good understanding of Christianity and of the cultures, faiths and customs of people in multi-faith Britain.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly successful in maintaining very supportive relationships and developing the confidence and self-worth of all children.

Commentary

51. Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with an extremely wide range of personal attributes and levels of confidence. All staff work as a very effective team and children are introduced sensitively but thoroughly to very good social conduct including classroom routines. All staff have a very good knowledge of the needs of young children. They take time to talk to them and use praise very effectively to raise children's self-esteem. They give sensitive reminders in order to develop high standards of behaviour. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Teachers and teaching assistants in both classes make very good contributions to all aspects of children's development in this area. In the Reception class children build on their previous knowledge of class routines and take on more responsibility for

their own learning. They adapt very well to working both as a class and in small groups and enjoy shared activities, especially planning the child-initiated activities and having the responsibility to manage their own time for part of some lessons. This makes an excellent contribution to all aspects of their personal development including personal responsibility and the development of the ability to take turns and share equipment. This is an excellent aspect of the provision as children of all abilities develop socially as well as academically. During these activities all adults ensure that children are purposefully occupied. They use these opportunities for rigorous monitoring of attainment, achievement, attitudes and behaviour.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good with some excellent features and is very carefully focussed towards developing children's language skills in all activities.
- The teaching of reading is excellent.
- The curricular planning, assessment systems and use of assessments to guide planning are excellent.
- Very good organisation of resources and planned activities ensures that children use correct vocabulary.
- The teachers of children in both classes make very good efforts to inform and involve parents in their children's learning.
- The National Literacy Strategy has been very well adapted to meet the needs of children in the Reception class.

Commentary

52. In the Nursery children settle quietly and listen attentively to stories and instructions for each activity. They quickly progress from making few responses to answering in short phrases and sentences. Most children in the Reception class are confident speakers, listen intently and are very enthusiastic learners.
53. In the Reception class children achieve very well and the majority are well placed to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning. Higher-attaining and most average attaining children read fluently and accurately with exceptionally good understanding, as the books chosen are well-matched to their abilities and interests. They use reasoning skills very well and retell stories in the correct sequence. The majority read familiar and unseen texts equally well. The lower-attaining children read familiar texts well and benefit from repetition of vocabulary and picture clues. During the inspection children read a wide range of books, which enhanced their understanding of sequence in stories and the range of information gained from reference books. Children enjoy books and speak with interest and understanding about their favourite books. Their reading skills and enjoyment of reading are very well promoted in each class.
54. Very good relationships give children the confidence to speak and all adults listen intently and respond to their comments. In the Reception class the teacher has developed a very rigorous and tightly structured plan for the teaching of sounds with the emphasis on children's ability to say the sounds, recognise them in print and practise them in writing. Children are encouraged to hold pencils with the correct grip. The teaching of handwriting in the Reception class is exceptionally good and well structured. The method of teaching handwriting as a class activity separate from other literacy activities contributes to children developing very good skills in handwriting. They also have frequent opportunities for practising letter formation and patterns and are positively encouraged to use the many writing areas in the classroom. ICT is very well planned in order to develop children's literacy skills. Standards show very high levels of

improvement compared to their attainment on entry to the class and the short time they have been in school.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Reception class are well placed to exceed the early learning goals.
- Teaching, learning and achievement in both classes are very good.
- Teachers plan an exciting range of structured activities to ensure that children understand number and apply their skills to other areas of learning.
- Children have very positive attitudes and apply mathematical skills with confidence.

Commentary

55. Standards are high and the majority of children are well placed to exceed the expected levels by the end of the year; higher and average attaining children already exceed them and are working within the National Curriculum. Children's achievement is very good in this area of learning because of very good teaching and excellent assessment in both classes. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and challenge the children throughout each lesson. Children's knowledge and understanding are very good in all aspects of number, shape and space and problem solving. Most children in the Reception class count to 100 and higher attaining children are confident in working with numbers to 50 and order numbers accurately.
56. Teachers in both classes have very high expectations and successfully develop children's confidence and make learning exciting and relevant to them. Children apply mathematics to most areas of learning; they are encouraged to look for patterns and shape in art and knowledge and understanding of the world. ICT is very successfully incorporated into this area of learning to develop children's understanding of number and the properties of some two-dimensional shapes. Most children in the Nursery count to 10 and higher-attaining children count to 20. Teachers encourage children to assess their own work and discuss their learning in a very mature way. Very effective class activities at the end of the lessons give children opportunities to demonstrate their new learning and also consolidate mathematical skills. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very well adapted to meet the needs of all children in the Reception class.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.
- Teachers plan a very enriching range of activities that ensures very good progression throughout each year.
- Children are encouraged to use their initiative and observational skills.
- Children have very good opportunities for using technical equipment.
- The Foundation Stage leader plans an extremely enriching range of visits and visitors, which enhances children's learning.

Commentary

57. Throughout each day children are involved in many activities and their learning is very well developed by the investigative approach to learning about the environment and themselves. Work on display and curricular planning show that children have very good opportunities for learning across all aspects. In the Nursery, children have many opportunities for making models using large and small construction kits, matching shapes and using a wide range of

materials. Children in the Reception class planted seeds and understand the conditions needed for growth. They also compared and contrasted a wide range of materials according to texture, appearance and use.

58. From the very imaginative planning and discussions with children it is evident that achievement is very high and most children are well placed to reach the early learning goals. Higher-attaining children already exceed the expected goals for this area of learning. In the short time since they have been in school they have become very confident, articulate and interested learners. During the inspection children in both classes had very good opportunities for using a wide range of equipment including computers. During an exemplary activity in the Reception class children named a wide range of technical equipment used at home and at school. They classified the equipment according its purpose and whether or not it used mains electricity or batteries. Children have very good opportunities for learning about the local area and have a good understanding of change over time. A very wide range of visits and visitors enhances this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.
- All staff make very effective use of the available accommodation including the hall.
- The spacious outdoor accommodation is very effectively used and children in the Reception class have immediate access to it.
- At present the children in the Nursery do not have immediate access to the outdoor accommodation but there are plans to improve this.

Commentary

59. During the inspection children in the Nursery class demonstrated excellent levels of achievement in their ability to aim at targets as they threw rings over cones and beanbags into hoops. Children have a very good understanding of the contribution of physical activities to a healthy lifestyle and understand the value and effect of warming up and cooling down activities. Reception class children moved with very good sense of direction and adapted movements to more challenging demands. Children in both classes respond very well to the creative, physical and intellectual challenges planned by the teachers. All children are very well included in all activities as higher-attaining children have extra challenges and those with special educational needs benefit from additional support. These lessons contribute very well to children's personal and social development.
60. Children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes, scissors and pencils with good levels of dexterity and accuracy. Most children in the Reception class hold pencils correctly and are taught handwriting skills very successfully. Teachers have very high expectations of all children. The lower-attaining children including those with special educational needs benefit from very good support and encouragement and achieve as well as others in the class. The indications are that all of the children will attain the expected Early Learning Goals before they enter Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good planning related to children's abilities and interests and very good challenges contribute to the very high levels of achievement in all aspects of this area of learning.

- Children use a very wide range of media and develop confidence and a wide range of skills in the use of colour, texture and shape.
- Children have many opportunities for role-play and music.

Commentary

61. As a result of very good curricular and resource planning, children develop confidence in using an increasingly wide range of resources. Teachers plan a very good balance of new skills and encouraging children to incorporate previously learned skills into their creations. They use a wide variety of materials to create pictures; sculptures and models with a good feel for texture and shape. Children develop speaking and listening skills very well as they discuss the materials used and compare designs.
62. They use paint programs in ICT to generate a wide range of pictures. During the informal music activities children sang enthusiastically and with accurate pitch, good articulation and a very good awareness of rhythm and dynamics. No activities involving instrumental music were observed, although planning shows very good provision for this aspect of learning. Children used the role-play areas imaginatively and frequently use the writing areas creatively.
63. From the lessons observed, displays and discussions with children, most of them are well placed to reach the expected levels in this area. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good overall and excellent in the artistic elements. Planning shows that over the year children have a very wide range of creative opportunities. They are encouraged to experiment when mixing paint and using modelling materials. A particular strength is their very good awareness of shape and texture in art. All staff skilfully extend children's language and encourage their imaginative and collaborative activities. They have a very clear understanding of the skills to be learned from each activity. The very good teaching of the musical aspects successfully contributes to very high levels of achievement.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good assessment systems that are used well to set realistic targets.
- Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good, enabling pupils to attain at their highest level.
- Achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
- There is good leadership and management of the subject.
- Learning support assistants are deployed well.
- All pupils behave very well and have a very good attitude to learning.

Commentary

64. It is not possible to make direct comparison between this and previous inspections because this is a newly formed school. The standard of work seen indicates that attainment levels in Year 2 are in line with the national average in reading, writing, speaking and listening. In Year 6 attainment overall is above the national average. This represents very good improvement in attainment and achievement since the results in the national tests in 2003.
65. The quality of teaching across the school is good with some very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and again in some lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The very good input of teachers and time invested by the well-trained support staff has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. Lessons are very well planned and take into account the needs of more able

pupils and those with special educational needs. They take account of each pupil's targets so that the particular needs of each pupil are met within the framework of the lesson. The predominantly very good teaching, combined with the pupils' very good attitudes and willingness to learn, ensures that achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs is very good. Marking is consistent and informative. It is used well to guide pupils and help them to succeed. Assessment is used very well to plan for future development. Learning is enhanced by dedicated, targeted support offered by the skilful teaching assistants.

66. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are attaining standards in speaking and listening and in reading and writing that are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Year 2. The pupils in Year 1 demonstrate very good skills in communication, language and literacy. They focus on how to write imaginatively in sentences and how to spell words beginning with 'cr'. They progress from spelling words such as 'crick, crack.' to be able to spell 'crocodile' by the end of the lesson. They demonstrate good listening skills when responding to the teacher's questions. Pupils are attentive and eagerly participate in discussions, as observed in lessons in Years 5 and 6 when they analyse the characters in 'The Suitcase Kid' by Jacqueline Wilson, and explore the problems some children face within families. The pupils' discussion was very mature and the subject made a strong contribution to personal, social and moral education.
67. Reading is promoted strongly in the school. Pupils demonstrate a keen interest in books. As a result, the enthusiasm for most pupils to read begins early. Pupils in Year 2 have great enthusiasm and interest in the writing of Roald Dahl. They are able to tell the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They know how to find information by using the contents, glossary and index. They understand how to form plurals of words that end in 'y'. By Year 6 most pupils read fluently and with good expression that reflects the meaning of the text. There are very few pupils who experience reading problems and need to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, but some less able younger pupils still find this a more difficult task. They persevere very well often using the context of the sentence to provide the clue, or they may sound out unfamiliar words.
68. The standards seen in writing across all age groups show that the actions initiated by the teachers to improve the quality of writing across all subjects is successful. Pupils are able to appreciate 'writer's tricks' for example the use of rhythmic repetition and alliteration in writing. The standard of factual and imaginative writing and the presentation of work in all classes is good and sometimes very good. By Year 6 pupils write in a neat cursive style of which they are proud. Pupils respond positively to the very good teaching and they work hard. A wide and interesting range of well-organised strategies is used to good effect to support pupils' learning.
69. Some pupils require additional support, particularly those with specific learning difficulties, those with problems associated with speech and communication and those with behavioural and emotional problems. This help is often given through tasks being adapted to match closely pupils' needs and abilities, thus allowing them the opportunity to succeed and make progress. Support assistants provide very good additional teaching and guidance to complement the work of the teacher. The targets stated in Individual Education Plans are the focus for additional support. These are shared with parents. Similarly those pupils who achieve very well are provided with additional or different tasks that challenge them and enable them to achieve higher levels.
70. The subject is led and managed well. Results of tests are analysed carefully and challenging targets are planned very well for the next stage of pupils' learning. The systematic monitoring of planning and assessment is very well organised and has been very effective in raising standards to their present levels. The subject leader is enthusiastic and is committed to developing the subject further. There is close liaison with all members of staff and strong links with the EAZ Literacy consultant, which enables the subject leader to be very well aware of

developments in the subject. All staff endeavour to create a stimulating environment through displays of books and pupils' work to encourage and stimulate learning.

71. Library provision is not yet fully developed. There is no specific area designated solely for the library, and books are displayed in the ICT suite, in classrooms and sometimes in adjacent corridors. Each classroom has access to a stock of books including structured reading programmes for pupils who are beginning to read. There is a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books, which are recent publications and in good condition. There are a number of bilingual books in a range of languages including Chinese, Czech, Panjabi and Somalian. All pupils are encouraged to take their reading books home regularly but the system of communication through a home-school reading diary is not a consistent feature in all classes.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. Throughout the school the pupils' literacy and language skills are constantly being very well applied and improved in other subjects. Examples include an evaluation of a design and technology project about how to improve the function of a cam. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Overall the promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the age of seven and eleven are rising steadily.
- Both teaching and learning are good.
- There is good implementation of the national numeracy strategy, especially in oral and mental sessions.
- The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- Assessment data is used effectively to provide pupils with individual targets or to track their progress.
- ICT is not yet used consistently in mathematics lessons.

Commentary

73. From evidence seen during the inspection standards in mathematics are beginning to rise, although overall they are still below those expected nationally by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Inspection evidence suggests however that this year more pupils are on course to attain the expected Level 2 by the end of Year 2 and Level 4 by the end of Year 6. These results can be explained by the very low attainment of children when they enter the school, the number of pupils who have English as an additional language as well as the well above average number of pupils with special educational needs in most classes.
74. All pupils achieve well across the school, due in part to the good quality of teaching, planning and the use made of assessment. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on helping pupils to learn how to make practical use of their knowledge of number. Pupils' work in their books shows that they are making good progress and cover a wide range of work during the year. The majority of pupils take pride in their work and it is neatly presented. The work of the lower-attaining pupils is good, showing the impact of good support and well-matched tasks. Higher-attaining pupils are always suitably challenged and most are reaching their targets.
75. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 enjoy their mathematics, especially their mental activities at the start of the lesson. For example, pupils in the Year 4/5 class used their class shop, which stimulated interest as they calculated the cost of articles in their shop sale. This helped them to

understand percentages as they calculated how much they could save with reductions of 50%, 25% and 10%. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class were observed solving problems by extracting and interpreting data in simple pie charts using fractions and percentages. The school has identified problem solving as an area for improvement and these were good examples of the progress being made, though some pupils still find the work quite difficult.

76. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good with some examples of very good teaching observed during the inspection. Teachers are enthusiastic, introducing lessons with quick-fire mental exercises. Most pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. Questioning is used effectively to extend or reinforce pupils' knowledge. As a result of the very good relationships between staff and pupils most are confident to respond to questions and explain how they found their answers. They are quite happy to write their methods on the small white boards that allow every pupil in the class to be included in the activity. Teachers plan well, using the National Numeracy Strategy to help them. Work is planned to match the needs of all pupils and appropriate challenges are provided for all levels of prior attainment. Extension exercises are always provided for higher-attaining pupils. At the present time the use of computers in mathematics lacks structure in many classes. This is partly because of the theft of the first set of laptop computers and also the fact that the new suite had only been completed and brought into use a few weeks before the inspection.
77. The good support provided by the teaching assistants benefits not only those with special educational needs but also other groups of learners. Teachers ensure that support assistants are fully aware of the lesson objectives and know how to support their groups. All teachers share lesson objectives with the class at the beginning of lessons and return to them at the end to assess the progress made. The use of positive and helpful marking is good throughout the school.
78. The subject is well led by an experienced and dedicated co-ordinator. Some new ideas about the teaching of mathematics have already been implemented but there has been insufficient time to make any significant impact on standards. Assessment is used very well to identify areas of weakness and to set individual targets for pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

79. The use of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, coordinates are used in geography and timelines in history. Data-handling is used to record information about science experiments.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupil's achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they are included in all activities.
- Science makes a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle and many aspects of personal and social education.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below the national average.

Commentary

80. Although standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are below the national average, overall this represents a high level of improvement compared to the results shown for pupils in the previous year. As this is a new school, pupils have been transferred from other schools. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well and those who are able to achieve higher standards are

supported well and enabled to reach them. The school's strong commitment to inclusion is reflected in the lessons observed and the analysis of work of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Standards are improving because class teachers concentrate on pupils becoming scientists and conducting investigations and experiments. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve well as work is always well matched to their earlier experiences.

81. By the end of Year 6 most pupils understand the purposes of the major organs of the body, skeletons and muscles. They know the main parts of flowering plants and the relationships between plants and animals in different habitats. During the inspection pupils investigated the effect of stirring on the rate of dissolving soluble substances. They classified solids as soluble and insoluble and applied their knowledge to a wide range of investigations. The higher-attaining pupils succeeded with more challenging investigations.
82. From the lessons observed and the analysis of work, pupils in Years 1 and 2, especially higher-attaining pupils, are not always given work that is consistently challenging. In these classes pupils have insufficient opportunity for independent work especially devising their own investigations. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils in the class because they are well supported by teaching assistants.
83. There are many contributory factors to the high levels of achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning are good overall, and planning is guided by rigorous assessments. In the lessons observed pupils were involved in challenging investigations when they predicted, tested and recorded their observations concerning solubility. In Years 3 and 4 pupils were involved in practical work which enhanced their understanding of the foods which form part of a healthy diet. All teachers established good relationships with pupils, gave praise for high quality work, and lessons proceeded at a brisk pace. Throughout the school teachers ensure that pupils learn and use accurate scientific vocabulary and give them many opportunities for extending their numeracy skills and ICT skills whenever possible.
84. The leadership and management of the subject by the subject leader is good overall. She has monitored the overall planning and has identified some areas for improvement. She supports the teachers well and ensures the planned curriculum is taught and that the necessary resources are available. The school has adopted a national scheme of work and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The identification of the levels to be attained by pupils are clearly identified for each group in Years 3 to 6 but as yet this process is less secure for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-informed leadership is now having a positive impact on improving the quality of provision.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards are now at the expected levels and for some more confident pupils they are above expectations.
- Teaching is good overall.

Commentary

85. Soon after the school opened a complete set of laptops was stolen and this slowed progress in the subject. Pupils across the school now attain at the expected levels and in many classes a number of pupils achieve at the level above that expected for their age. There is now a small but well-equipped computer suite, although the number of desktop computers linked to the Internet is low for the size of school. These are supported by good quality laptops that enable ICT to be a part of any lesson in any classroom. A considerable amount of new equipment has been stolen and the school is waiting for the agreement of the insurance claim to replace

what was taken. All of the teachers and support staff have undertaken training and the scheme of work ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are taught.

86. By the end of Year 2 pupils understand the various forms of communication such as CD-ROMs, tape recorders, text and photographs. They use the computer for word processing. They use the mouse confidently and are skilled in demonstrating how to find their way around the keyboard and to how to use the icons. Pupils in Year 6 are confident and competent users of computers. As very few have access to personal computers at home this level of attainment in a short time is a notable success for teachers and pupils. They know the usefulness of ICT in their work and in the outside world. For example, pupils readily collect and organise data and present it on spreadsheets and graphs. They use available secure search engines readily to access websites on the Internet. Their skills in the use of systems using speech and interactive presentations as well as control technology are being developed gradually. In this part of the curriculum the school is very well supported by staff and pupils from the linked secondary school. The school has good access to an interesting and up-to-date range of relevant software.
87. Teaching is good overall and is supported very effectively by the skilled classroom assistants. This is having a positive effect on raising standards. All teachers have good subject knowledge and explain the purpose of all work to pupils very well. Lessons are planned well and the learning objectives are made very clear. Emphasis is placed on the development of relevant technical vocabulary and in some subjects the skills learned in ICT are used to support work in other subjects. Teachers undertake their formal instruction of pupils in the classroom so that the time using computers is maximised. This results in pupils concentrating well in the computer suite so promoting a good rate of practice and learning. In all lessons, the pace is brisk and all of the activities used are set out in achievable stages. Skilful questioning involves pupils fully in their own learning. Support is well targeted at those who need it most. Positive attitudes and very good behaviour are important factors in pupils' achievement in lessons.
88. The subject leader is skilled and imaginative and has developed good strategies to promote and evaluate skills and attainment levels. The comprehensive whole-school audit has established a process that enables teachers to plot the best ways to use and extend each pupil's existing skill base. This results in teachers having a good understanding of what pupils do well and where they require additional support. Very good assessment systems are used to chart pupils' work and progress and to enable teachers to provide relevant follow-up work. The resources meet the school's essential needs but to lift the work to the next level additional computers are required so that more work to support pupils' personal and independent investigation and enquiry in other subjects can be carried out.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

89. The use of ICT across the curriculum is being developed slowly. Teachers' planning for other subjects regularly identifies opportunities for its use. In ICT lessons teachers and pupils often pursue research for other subjects as the means to develop computer skills. The use of laptop machines in classrooms is beginning to be useful in mathematics but as yet there is no consistent pattern. Literacy skills are improved by the pupils' developing skills using word processing and programs designed to improve their skills in reading and spelling. Pupils have begun to use software programs and the Internet for personal research in other subjects such as history, geography, and art and design.

HUMANITIES

Judgements in these subjects are supported by evidence from discussions with pupils and teachers together with scrutiny and analysis of pupils' work in books and in work displayed around the school. One geography lesson was observed. There is sufficient time allocated for these subjects. In this

newly-established school there is no information about standards at the time of a previous inspection and during this inspection work in the humanities was not a main focus.

History

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' have very good attitudes and behaviour towards learning reflected in the high standard of presentation.
- Marking is consistently good and is used well to match work to the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum.

Commentary

90. Achievement is satisfactory and levels of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 meet expectations. In Year 2, pupils study the work and life of Florence Nightingale and in Years 3 and 4 they learn about life during the time of the Second World War. This includes reflective writing based on the personal story of Anne Frank as told in her diary. They also learn about Viking settlements. In Years 5 and 6 they study the Ancient Greek civilisation as well as life in Britain following 1948. Teachers and pupils are developing links with other areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy, when older pupils debate which historical accounts are fact or fiction. Drama and role-play are used well to illustrate historical events. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject are good.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to enable all pupils to have firsthand experience of the subject.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology for research and recording.

Commentary

91. Evidence gained through one lesson observation, discussion with pupils, teachers and scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and displays indicate that they are achieving standards expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Planning and assessment shown in teachers' files and in pupils' completed work show that they are following a suitable curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 are able to compare and contrast the seaside at New Brighton with living in the city of Liverpool. In Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils further their knowledge of environmental issues, including land use and the re-cycling of materials to protect the environment. They understand basic map-reading including grid references and coordinates. In Year 6 pupils study the location and customs in a number of European countries. North Wales is studied in greater detail and, as part of this topic, pupils undertake a field trip to Llandudno for a day. There is good evidence of links made with history through the study of Ancient Greece. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There are developing links with other areas of the curriculum, particularly the teaching and practice of writing skills.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and promote a strong interest in the faiths and traditions of others.
- The school is alert to the opportunities to learn from experts in their own faith and to use the skills available to increase the pupils' knowledge.
- Pupils have a limited range of opportunities to visit places of worship other than from the Christian tradition.

Commentary

92. Religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement and attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 are good from the low starting position. Pupils learn about the Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Sikh faiths and have visited a number of churches and places of worship including both Liverpool cathedrals. In their study of other traditions they have learned about mosques, temples and the Sikh Gurdwara and the use made of places of worship in religions and cultural traditions. Across the school pupils have good understanding about the traditions, customs and dress of many different cultures. They speak of visits and the impressions of grandeur and prayerfulness in different places. Pupils know stories from both the Old and New Testaments and from some of the sacred books of the traditions studied.
93. Few lessons were observed and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching. In the lessons observed, however, teaching was never less than good. Teachers' files indicate that lessons are well planned. Teachers discuss with pupils why they should give respect to the beliefs and sacred objects from other traditions. When using stories from different traditions teachers pay high regard to their spiritual content. They help pupils to draw out the similarities between Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism with regard to the teachings of the prophets of each belief. Lessons are short and frequent. They have a good pace and teachers have high expectations that work in the subject will contribute to pupils' personal as well as academic development.
94. The co-ordinator manages the subject very efficiently. Steps have been taken to ensure that with the exception of those withdrawn from the subject by their parents, all pupils are taught the agreed areas of the syllabus. Assessment opportunities are effective and practical. Religious education makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

95. It was only possible to observe a few lessons in art and design, music, and physical education so in these subjects overall judgements about provision and teaching have not been made. During the inspection there were a number of discussions with subject leaders about their work; inspectors scrutinised teachers' planning and assessment files as well as talking with pupils and analysing the content and quality of pupils' completed work.
96. Too few lessons were observed in **art and design** to make firm judgements about the overall provision for the subject. From the analysis of displays and discussions with pupils the available evidence indicates that pupils have good opportunities for using a wide variety of techniques and materials. They study art from a range of artists and cultures. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 produced patterns in the style of Mondrian, some using paint and others using ICT. The pencil sketches of natural sculptures show good awareness of texture and perspective.

97. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 designed surreal pictures based on their study of the work of Magritte. Other high quality work on display included paintings of sunflowers in the style of Monet and designs in the style of Paul Klee and Kandinsky. The school has adopted a national scheme of work and the work displayed shows good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a commitment to usefulness and serviceable quality of the products made.
- The design element is followed through to the testing and evaluation stage and is developed to good effect.
- There is good, shared understanding about the nature and purpose of work undertaken.
- The interest of pupils of all ages is clear to see.

Commentary

98. The small number of lessons observed, together with the selection of completed work, indicate that standards attained are in line with the national expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. This is because teachers plan carefully with the guidance and support of the subject leader. Work is linked to a purpose, and practical ideas are carried through well. The items are designed to meet a need and are then used either to support other work or in school productions. The objects made have to be functional and durable. During the process of design and making ideas are shared and evaluated. Those that prove to be unsuitable are modified until they are of an acceptable standard. In this way pupils learn that careless work is not acceptable. The work seen showed clear links with history and art and design.
99. Work making containers to hold money and creating decorative picture frames has been enjoyed by pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a wide range of construction kits and recyclable materials to create and make a range of models either to support work in other subjects or just for fun. In the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6 making working models using cams was exciting and complex. It was not easy but pupils persevered very well and were rightly proud of their achievements. Using ICT to organise and use control systems is very new but is beginning to be useful and enjoyable.
100. The quality of the teaching seen in the few available lessons was good. Designs in sketchbooks are marked and annotated well and the quality of completed work on display indicates that all teachers work towards agreed high standards. The resources provided for pupils are good. In food technology, when pupils design healthy meals, whilst the teacher offered advice and suggestions it was pupils' own research and ideas that led the work to a successful end. Pupils are keen to explain how they developed their earliest ideas through to completion. The monitoring of planning and completed work is good and opportunities to monitor work in progress in classrooms are developing slowly.
101. There was insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of provision or achievement in **music** but in the one music lesson observed in the Year 1 class, pupils were very enthusiastic, clapping the beat to a variety of songs that they knew well. Pupils were also observed when rehearsing in the singing club. They were preparing for a performance in Liverpool's Catholic cathedral later this term. They all worked hard to fit the words of the new songs to the tunes and made good progress during the session. The school benefits from substantial help from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and other specialist musicians.

102. The subject leader has only recently taken charge of the subject. She is a skilled musician and is very enthusiastic with many ideas to further develop the subject in the near future. The planned programme of teaching is based on national guidance and support is available for those teachers who are not music specialists.
103. In **physical education**, one lesson was observed, in swimming, for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils behaved very well during the long journey to the swimming pool. Once in the pool they all worked extremely hard, following the instructions of the teacher and several support staff. They enjoyed the experience and delighted in their achievements. Good progress was made during the lesson as all pupils excitedly tried to follow the instructions either to improve their style in a variety of strokes or, for a few, take their first strokes in swimming. The school is very keen to support swimming. Teachers arrange for all pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 to have one term's instruction annually. The majority of pupils in the present Year 6 are now able to achieve the nationally expected distance. The headteacher has taken responsibility for physical education. This subject is being developed well in this new school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

104. The few lessons observed indicate that this aspect of the work of the school is seen to be important. Most lessons are led by the skilled learning mentor who observes pupils carefully and plans when additional support might be needed. Pupils' attitudes, achievements and self-worth are valued highly and are promoted very well. The good quality of teaching, and the visits to places of educational interest and visitors to the school, contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding of how important elements of the community and society work. Circle time is used to give pupils opportunities for voicing their opinions and concerns. During collective worship the atmosphere created supports the concept of the school family. The ethos then is very caring and supportive. The headteacher and staff listen to pupils and respond to their opinions. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of how a fair and equal society works. All aspects of a healthy lifestyle are covered in the curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | n/a |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 6 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |
|---------------------------------|---|

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