

INSPECTION REPORT

**SANKEY VALLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 133676

Headteacher: Mrs V Formby

Lead inspector: Mr D Byrne

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 257408

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery class, infant and Juniors
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 143

School address: Dorchester Road
Great Sankey
Warrington

Postcode: WA5 IXE

Telephone number: 01925 659307

Fax number: 01925 231637

Appropriate authority: Local education authority

Name of chair of governors: Mrs B Richards

Date of previous inspection: This is a new school and has not had a previous inspection

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This new school was established in 2002 as a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school educating pupils aged from 3 to 11 years. Around a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The immediate vicinity of the school includes areas of high social deprivation. The majority of children start school with standards that are below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (29%) is above average and there are three pupils with statements of educational need. A higher than average percentage of pupils attending the school are in public care. The vast majority of pupils are of white British ethnic background with less than 4% who are not. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (2%) is very low. The number of pupils starting and leaving school at times other than the normal admission or departure dates is high. The school is in receipt of a small schools grant and has gained the Silver Eco Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28076	Mr D Byrne	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education
11437	Mr A Andrews	Lay inspector	
32135	Ms S James	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Music
22955	Mrs D Cliff	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Personal, social and health education and citizenship Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many strengths. Under the very good leadership of the head teacher, all staff work effectively as a team to create a very good ethos within which all pupils feel secure and valued. Pupils are very well managed and develop good attitudes to school and a willingness to learn. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well in English, mathematics and science and reach standards that are in line with the national average. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding teaching in the nursery class, and very good teaching in Year 6. The school does well in supporting a significant number of pupils with special educational needs and ensuring that they are involved in all aspects of education. **The school gives good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It is very well led and effectively managed so that pupils benefit from a very good ethos.
- Pupils make good progress and given the low level of attainment when they start school, achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some excellent features in the Nursery class and good and very good features in Year 2 and Year 6 but there are some weaknesses in Year 4/ Year 5.
- Pupils respond well to the very good management of staff by behaving well, enjoying learning and forming good relationships with others but they could be more independent in their learning.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and ensures that all pupils are fully included in all that the school does.
- Pupils benefit from very good links with parents and the local community and excellent links with a local secondary school.
- Very good use is made of educational visits to increase the meaning of lessons.

It is not possible to judge the improvements in the school since the last inspection because this is the school's first inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve well overall and reach standards that are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science and standards that exceed national expectations in art and design and design and technology. This is a newly established school and, because of this, there is no reliable information that compares the standards in the school with other schools nationally or with similar types of school. Inspection evidence is that the overall level of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is currently in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science with strengths in attainment in art and design and design and technology. Pupils are making very good progress in information and communication technology and whilst there is still more to be done, pupils are working at nationally expected levels and developing confidence in using computers. In 2003, over half of pupils in Year 6 and a third in Year 2 had special educational needs and this results in standards in that year being well below the national expectations. Children start school in the Nursery class with standards that are below expectations especially in their communication, language and literacy, in their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress overall but by the time they start Year 1, the majority of children have still not reached the standard expected of their age in each of these areas. Children in the Reception class reach the

expected standards in the other aspects of their development, that is in their physical and creative development and their personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils throughout the school could do better in applying their knowledge to new and challenging situations, for example, when carrying out research in history, or performing investigations in science. Whilst pupils do well overall in their literacy and numeracy, too few chances are given to encourage pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to other subjects. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set for them and this reflects the good quality of support the school provides.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They do very well in their moral and social development and well in their spiritual development. Cultural development is good in terms of pupils' awareness of local and regional culture but not very well developed in terms of pupils' understanding of world cultures. **Pupils form very good relationships with others, develop good attitudes and behave well.** Attendance is in line with the national average and pupils are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides pupils with a good quality of education. Under the strong leadership of the head teacher, the teaching and support staff create a very good ethos that enables all pupils, many of whom have special educational needs, to work well and make good progress. **The standard of teaching is good overall** with some exceptional teaching in the Nursery class. With the exception of Year 4/ Year 5, lessons are well managed, organised and planned so that the needs of all pupils are met. Good use of resources and outside visits add to lessons and result in most pupils showing good levels of enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to learn.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with very good strengths in the way educational visits are used to extend learning. **All procedures for maintaining pupils' health and welfare are very good.** **Partnerships with parents and the community are very good** and **excellent links with Penketh High School** make a very significant contribution to the pupils' education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and effectively managed and governed. The head teacher has inspirational qualities and constantly endeavours to improve what the school does. Good attention is given to raising academic standards as well as developing pupils' personal qualities. The school is well managed through an effective senior management team which ensures that the school constantly evaluates what it does well and where it could improve. The governing body is effective in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and keeping an eye on finances and the impact of spending on the pupils' education.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with what the school does. Pupils enjoy school and think it is good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To further develop pupils' independent learning skills.
- To continue to develop the application of literacy and numeracy skills across all subject areas.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement across the school is good. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals, but despite this, the majority of children do not reach standards that are in line with the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. However they do attain the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and in their creative and physical development. In Year 1 to Year 6, pupils make good progress overall and achieve well in English, mathematics and science by reaching standards that are in line with the national expectations for their age by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.
- The majority of pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
- Pupils are not as independent as they could be in applying their knowledge and understanding to solve a range of everyday problems using skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils are making good progress in developing a suitable wide range of skills in information and communication technology.
- The standards achieved in art and design are well above national expectations and in design and technology they are above national expectations.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is excellent in the Nursery class and good in the Reception class. New entrants to the Nursery class settle very happily, quickly adjust to Nursery class routines and display a very positive attitude to new experiences. Children in the Reception class persist for a good length of time in activities they have chosen themselves but a significant number of them lose concentration during longer whole class sessions. In communication, language and literacy Nursery class children make very good progress in their communication skills because of the sensitive intervention of the teacher and support staff in their activities. Children in the Reception class have a positive attitude to books and enjoy listening to stories and they are beginning to recognise individual letters and know their sounds. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on progress or standards in mathematical development in the Nursery class but in the Reception class pupils make good progress. Despite this, the majority do not reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. Children make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world but still do not catch up enough by the end of the Reception class to attain the Early Learning Goals. In the areas of physical and creative development children

achieve well by reaching standards that are in line with the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

Key Stage 1

2. This is a new school and there is no data that compares the school's performance with others nationally or with schools in a similar context. Inspection evidence is that pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science. In English pupils do better in reading than writing although the school is taking effective steps to narrow the gap by improving opportunities for writing across the school. In mathematics, whilst the majority are achieving well especially given the low level of attainment when they start school in the Reception class, the number of pupils reaching standards that exceed national expectations for their age is below average. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of science appropriate for their age but their skills in performing investigations are satisfactory. Achievement in art and design is high with pupils working at a level that is well above what is normally expected for their age. Pupils also do well in design and technology and develop a good understanding of the design process by the end of Key Stage 1. There is no evidence of a difference in the performance of boys or girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans as a result of good support and guidance by teaching and support staff.

Key Stage 2

3. This is a new school and there is no data that compares the school's performance with others nationally or with schools in a similar context. Pupils make good progress overall in Year 3 to Year 6 although it dips in Year 4 and Year 5 where there are weaknesses in the way in which lessons are managed and organised. Inspection evidence is that by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. The school recognises that there is still more to be done to raise standards further in aspects of writing and the use of reading for research purposes, but overall pupils do as well as they can in English. In mathematics, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of numeracy and most achieve satisfactory standards with a small number exceeding the national expectations for their age. The emphasis on achieving well in numeracy now needs to be consolidated and more emphasis given to improving pupils' mathematical problem solving skills and in this area higher attaining pupils in particular could do better. In science, the independent skills of pupils are satisfactory but there are inconsistencies in the way that scientific investigations are taught. In terms of science content, however, pupils achieve well and develop a suitably wide knowledge of key scientific vocabulary and use it appropriately to explain a range of basic scientific ideas and phenomena.
4. Although pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and make good progress from a low level when they start school, not enough opportunities are planned for the skills of numeracy and literacy to be developed alongside other subjects. This reduces the ability of pupils to apply their basic skills to new and varied situations.
5. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology and achieve standards that are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Visiting staff from the Penketh High School make a valuable contribution to the

standards and progress of pupils and this is a key factor behind the good achievement and progress of many pupils. Computers are used to support learning in most subjects within the restrictions of limited access to the information and communication technology suite.

6. In art and design, high standards are achieved, with a particular strength in using techniques of painting, printing and drawing to explore the works of well-known Western artists. three dimensional work is performed to a satisfactory level in for example, using clay, but overall standards in this element of art and design could be higher. In design and technology, the decision to block time from the curriculum to teach design and technology is beneficial because it enables pupils and staff to keep a clear focus on making sure a design and technology task is completed from beginning to end. Pupils develop a good understanding of the design process in a variety of contexts and develop a good knowledge and understanding of how to use materials such as card, textiles, food and resistant materials such as wood and plastic. Excellent links with Penketh High School, offer older pupils in the school the chance to use advanced resources such as vacuum forming equipment to realise their own designs of a vehicle.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their cultural development is satisfactory, their spiritual development is good and their moral and social development is very good, making these aspects of their personal development good overall. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils behave well, develop good attitudes to learning and form very good relationships with others.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's strong, caring ethos is successful in developing positive attitudes, self-esteem and behaviour in the vast majority of pupils.
- Most pupils form constructive relationships with one another and with members of staff.
- The school takes highly effective and efficient action to reduce absence and promote punctuality.
- Pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions is developed well but they are less aware of the customs and traditions of other cultures.
- Most parents are supportive of the school and ensure that their children are on time.
- A very small minority of pupils have poor attendance records but the school is very proactive in providing help and advice to parents and children with a view to improving attendance records.

Commentary

7. Excellent provision for personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery class means that pupils begin to develop very positive attitudes and values at a very young age. In Year 1 to Year 6 many opportunities are provided for personal development and teachers make clear their expectations for high standards of behaviour and personal conduct. These opportunities, together with effective management strategies, mean that the vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and during lunch and playtimes. Most pupils are interested in their work and are keen to achieve as well as they can, but there is a minority of pupils in Year 4/ Year 5 who display negative attitudes to learning in response to weaknesses in the organisation and management of some lessons. Incidents of bullying or harassment are very rare and promptly dealt with if they occur. Pupils are free from bullying, racism and other

forms of harassment so that they work in a happy and secure environment. Well-planned assemblies are positive social occasions and make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

8. The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory and is just above the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is relatively low and is just below the national average. There is very little evidence of pupil lateness and the majority of pupils come to school and lessons on time. School registers are correctly marked.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)				
Authorised absence			Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.0%		School data :	0.4%
National data:	5.4%		National data:	0.5%
The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.				

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
135	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good overall**

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with outstanding teaching in the nursery class and strengths in Year 2 and Year 6 but some weaknesses in Year 4 and Year 5. Effective practices are in place for assessing and recording pupils' learning and achievements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is outstanding in the Nursery class and good overall in the Reception class.
- Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics and science with some unsatisfactory teaching in Year4/ Year 5 due to weaknesses in the management and organisation of pupils.

- Teachers have a secure knowledge of each subject of the National Curriculum but are less secure about how to develop pupils' skills of numeracy and literacy alongside other subjects
- Teachers work very well with teaching assistants to promote very good relationships with pupils and to develop pupils' self confidence and raise their self esteem.
- Pupils generally work hard in lessons and do their best.
- Pupils make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and in working with others, but progress in working independently is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good but the level of detail in these pupils' individual education plans is at times too brief.
- The progress of individual pupils in the core subjects is carefully tracked, which enables the school to plan effectively for intervention although the needs of higher attaining pupils are not always planned for.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in non-core subjects is assessed effectively and the information used to inform planning.
- Targets for improvement in the core subjects are negotiated with pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6, in particular, know what they need to do to improve.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the way it is used to improve what pupils do.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	13 (30%)	16 (36%)	12 (28%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	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.

9. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is good overall and this is a major factor in the good achievement of pupils. The head teacher has created a strong team spirit amongst staff and this contributes to staff working hard, with good levels of commitment to developing the pupils' personal and academic development. Teachers manage the challenging behaviour of a significant number of pupils very well and together with teaching assistants, they successfully create a safe and secure place for pupils to learn. Particularly good support is given to pupils in Public Care and to pupils with special educational needs. They are taught well and benefit from very good support from a high quality Learning Support Assistant. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are effectively catered for and they are fully integrated into school life. Assessment is used well by teachers to track the achievement of all pupils in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory systems of assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are in place in other subjects. All staff use assessment information to identify the needs of pupils so that work is provided that meets the pupils' needs with the exception at times of higher attainers.
10. Outstanding teaching in the Nursery class provides children with an excellent start to their education. A very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum coupled with very good skills of planning and managing a wide range of activities ensure that the children receive a wide range of very stimulating and exciting activities. As a result children enjoy school, settle in quickly and make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Good teaching in the Reception class maintains the good progress especially in communication, language and literacy,

mathematical development and children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

11. In Year 1 to Year 6, the majority of pupils respond well to the mostly good quality of teaching by working hard in lessons and trying their best. At times in Year 4/Year 5, a significant number of pupils react negatively to weaknesses in the management and organisation of some lessons and do not do as well as they can. Particularly good teaching occurs in Year 2 and very good teaching in Year 6. In both cases, lessons are carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils whilst also providing challenging work for higher attaining pupils. A very good feature of teaching observed particularly in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6, is the use of challenging questions and the encouragement of pupils to explain their ideas and discuss their intentions and ways of working. During lessons, pupils show mostly good levels of attention and they collaborate well with each other when working with others. Homework is used well to support learning at home but the quality and impact of marking varies from class to class and could be better overall.
12. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum. The basics of each subject are taught well but teachers are less secure in developing pupils' skills of independent learning and in this area of learning pupils could do better. In science and in information and communication technology, good teaching contributes to pupils making good progress and achieving well to reach standards that meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. Excellent links with Penketh High School make a very significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in science and information and communication technology. Science lessons in Year 6 are regularly led by a very enthusiastic high school teacher who motivates and inspire pupils to learn. In information and communication technology high school support staff work alongside pupils during activities in the information and communication technology suite.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship. It caters well for the needs of all the pupils and is planned to ensure progress in their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the curriculum is generally well planned so that all pupils benefit from what the school provides.
- Good provision is made for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language.
- Effective use is made of a range of additional activities, particularly residential visits and involvement in arts activities to support the curriculum.
- Very good links with the local high school effectively enrich the curriculum and contribute to pupils' achievement.
- Planning to challenge higher attaining pupils and to enable pupils to become independent learners is inconsistent.
- The systematic use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is not explicitly planned.
- Planning does not identify opportunities to explore the cultural traditions of others.

- The accommodation is good. It enables the efficient delivery of the full curriculum.
13. The senior management team maintain a good overview of the curriculum and the quality of provision is carefully monitored and evaluated so that improvements can be instigated where necessary. Regular reviews between the head teacher and subject coordinators help to maintain and develop an open evaluation of the provision provided by the school. Curriculum developments and changes are strategically planned using the school development plan.
 14. The children in the Foundation Stage have access to a rich, broad and balanced curriculum. A very good range of stimulating activities is planned that ensures good coverage of all the areas of learning. As a result the children make good progress in their learning. In Year 1 to Year 6, appropriate time is allocated to cover all subjects within the National Curriculum. The curriculum takes account of national guidelines and, as a result, schemes of work provide clear guidance for teachers' planning in all subjects. The school makes sure that all schemes are regularly reviewed and adapted. The decision has been taken to designate extra time for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in order to raise standards. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used effectively to support this. However, opportunities to teach and develop them through other subjects are not clearly identified in planning. The school makes good provision for the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs as required. Where necessary, aspects of the curriculum are also changed to enable pupils with English as an additional language to fully participate in learning.
 15. The school does a great deal to provide pupils with experiences that enrich and extend the basic curriculum and make learning more stimulating. A good range of residential visits help pupils from Years 1 to Year 6 learn by experiencing activities that develop their knowledge and understanding of history, geography and outdoor physical education whilst also developing their personal and social skills. There are many exciting initiatives taken in the expressive arts that enable pupils to participate in a variety of major musical productions in the area. Planning is not used consistently to identify opportunities to promote multi-cultural awareness.
 16. The personal, social and health education programme for pupils is good. It includes a suitable emphasis on healthy life styles, sex education and the dangers of drugs misuse. Class discussions enable pupils to express their opinions and explore feelings in a secure and supportive atmosphere
 17. There are excellent links with the local high school to which most older pupils transfer. The whole school benefits from many links in which staff from the high school work with pupils of all ages. The school accommodation is of a good standard and is well used by staff to create a warm and caring environment in which pupils can learn. Resources meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for child protection, pupils' welfare and health and safety are very good as are those for supporting and guiding pupils through monitoring. The procedures for the involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher and all staff have good knowledge of all pupils.
- Child Protection procedures are in place and effective.

- Relevant staff are trained in child protection systems and procedures.
- Medical and accident records are well maintained and regular fire drills are undertaken.
- Risk assessments take place in advance of school trips.
- The school provides a high level of support and guidance as pupils' progress through the school.
- The involvement of pupils in seeking and acting on their advice is, as yet, underdeveloped.

Commentary

18. The high quality of child protection and welfare has a positive impact on learning. The head teacher makes sure she knows each pupil well and liaises very well with outside agencies such as the Warrington Educational Support Team and the Behavioural Support Team to ensure that best possible strategies are used in school to benefit the pupils.
19. Effective child protection systems and procedures are in place and the reporting person is known to all staff in the school. Relevant staff training in child protection matters has also taken place. The school teaching and support staff provide a high degree of welfare support to individual pupils as exemplified by the good provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. The school's staff, children and parents are themselves very well supported by a wide range of external agencies. For example, a family learning tutor runs a number of practical training courses for parents in the nearby Hood Manor Methodist Church. Parents who have attended these courses speak very highly of the benefits gained and they feel that the training received has added significantly to the support and guidance they are able to provide for their own children at home. This is very good school provision and it significantly enhances the overall care and welfare of several pupils at the school.
20. The pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored, both formally and informally, by the school and steps are taken to identify any individual problems with a range of strategies which may include the preparation of Individual Education Plans for some pupils. School tracking systems are also used well in most classrooms to pick up on areas for development highlighted in annual reports to parents and to transfer these to individual pupil's exercise books.
21. The school operates a very good first aid system for minor accidents and appropriate records are maintained. Regular fire drills are carried out and the school also maintains a record log of these. A further log is maintained of pupils' medical records including food allergies, which are copied to relevant kitchen staff. The school also carries out occasional Health & Safety audits of the site and is very proactive when considering possible risks on external trips out of school.
22. The school acknowledges pupils' achievement through the praise given to them in the classroom and, more formally, in regular sharing and class presentation assemblies to which parents are usually invited. This practice is clearly a much valued and effective area of the school's promotion of pupils' personal development and self-esteem. The provision for involving pupils in the running of the school is satisfactory although formal systems such as a school council are not established.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' views of the school are very good, as are the school's links with parents. The school's links with the local community are very good and links with other schools are excellent. The school's links with parents and the community provide a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and are a major strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents like the school.
- Parents feel that the school is well led and managed.
- The teaching is felt to be good.
- Parents feel that they can approach the school with any problems.
- Most parents feel that the school works closely with them.
- The school utilises the community very well to support the curriculum.
- The school's partnership with other schools is excellent.
- Pupil targets for development are included in the pupils' annual reports.

Commentary

23. **The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives.** Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. Parents also feel that the teachers are good and that the school is well managed. **Communication with parents is good.** Annual academic reports to parents are of a good standard and the listed targets for pupils' further development are passed forward to the next year group and, in most cases, are followed up during the next academic year. Informative school newsletters are frequently sent out to parents and the head teacher is regularly to be seen in the school playground at both the start and end of the school day in case parents wish to have a quiet word. Occasional workshops and training courses for parents are held in the local Methodist Church. Parents who have attended these courses are very pleased with the assistance they have received in helping their children at home. This is a very effective provision. The Friends of Sankey Valley St James is an active association and is very supportive of the school and provides a further effective link. Parental attendance at school concerts, celebrations and sports days is very good.
24. **The school has very good links with the community.** The links with other schools and partner institutions is excellent. There is no better example than Penketh High School where pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 have carried out science experiments and undertaken vacuum forming. A further aspect of this excellent provision is in relation to the study of drama and dance and children's written records refer to a study of Egyptian music and of dancing like a snake or a camel. Some of the teachers from this school are also regular visitors to Sankey Valley where they provide support and enhancement to the information and communication technology curriculum. The school makes good use of the local environment to enhance pupils' learning. Planned visits include trips to Beeston Outdoor Education Centre in the countryside to study the environment and also to Llandudno Resource Centre for Year 5/ Year 6 pupils. There is a satisfactory range of after school activities available to children to further enhance their access to the curriculum. The school also has very good links with the local fire brigade which visits once each year to provide a range of health and safety advice to children.

25. The induction arrangements for new children into the school (particularly the nursery class) are very good and parents are kept well informed about new systems and procedures. The school provides a termly diary of events to enable parents to plan well ahead for parents' meetings, residential visits, special assemblies and social events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. It is very well led by the head teacher and an effective senior management team and governing body.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The educational direction of the school is very clear and its aims place emphasis upon raising standards and furthering pupil achievement.
 - The headteacher provides very good leadership and is having a considerable influence on school improvement.
 - The inclusion and access to the life of the school of all pupils is a strength.
 - The governors make a good contribution to the direction and management of the school.
 - The senior management team and subject leaders is well established and contributes to the school's management.
 - The role of subject co-ordinators has been defined but their impact and effectiveness in monitoring seems unclear
 - The school's finances are well managed so that best value is gained from spending.
 - The use of computer technology to support data analysis and monitoring is underdeveloped.
26. The governing body is well organised and effective in supporting the work of the school. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and work hard with the head teacher to shape the school's strategic direction. The governing body is prepared to make difficult decisions when necessary to ensure that the school is as efficient as possible in all areas. The governing body complies fully with its statutory duties and responsibilities. The finances of the school are well managed and very good procedures are in place to ensure that best value principles are applied. Very good liaison between the governors, head teacher and staff ensures that finance is directed to identified targets to improve standards.
27. A very good ethos has been developed that is reflected in very good levels of care and support for pupils throughout the school. It is a major factor in the good behaviour of pupils, their inclusion in all aspects of school life and the good progress made by them. The provision to support pupils with Special Educational Needs is well managed and the co-ordinator has clear plans to develop this further.
28. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school aimed at raising standards and supporting the achievement of all pupils in all areas of its work. She has a clear understanding of the curriculum and how it can best be adapted to meet the pupils' needs. A high priority is placed upon the development of a positive team spirit and this is evident in the shared commitment to school improvement among all staff. This is a school that thinks critically about how it can improve based upon the regular monitoring of standards and the needs of its pupils. It results in clear long term planning for improvement.
29. The management of performance is organised well and objectives are identified to support plans for school improvement. There is regular monitoring of teaching

providing feedback and appropriate support. The deputy head teacher and members of the senior management team have expertise in their areas of responsibility but the role of some subject co-ordinators in monitoring is unclear. The use of computer technology to support data analysis and monitoring is under-developed and results in a bureaucratic paper system being used.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003			
Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	412715	Balance from previous year	53475
Total expenditure	414276	Balance carried forward to the next	51914
Expenditure per pupil	2639		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall with some **excellent** provision in the Nursery class.

30. On entry to the Nursery class, the attainment of most children is below that expected for their age, especially in their communication, language and literacy, their mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In the Nursery class, a stimulating and very well planned curriculum that meets the children's needs, coupled with very good and imaginative teaching on the part of the teacher and support staff, mean that children make the greatest progress possible and are well prepared for entry to the Reception class. In the Reception class the provision is generally well managed and good teaching enables children to maintain good progress. Despite this good progress, the majority of children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in their communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start Year 1. The majority of children do achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, and in their physical and creative development, by the end of the reception year.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **excellent** in the nursery class and **good** in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children who are new to the nursery class settle very happily, quickly adjust to Nursery class routines and display a very positive attitude to new experiences.
- Children in the reception class persist for a good length of time in activities they have chosen themselves but a significant number of them lose concentration during longer whole class sessions.

Commentary

31. As a result of very close links with parents and outside agencies and regular observations, nursery class staff know individual children very well. This, together with their more general knowledge of the personal needs of very young children, enables them to provide a nurturing, yet stimulating environment through which the children develop a positive disposition to learn. Good use is made of role-play areas and good outdoor provision promotes co-operative play and enables children to develop self confidence and independence. The teacher in the reception class sets clear expectations for behaviour and plans activities that are well matched to children's abilities. As a result they interact well and play harmoniously together. However, pauses or interruptions in some whole class sessions mean that some children find it difficult to sustain concentration for a prolonged period. Teaching is good, and children make **good** progress and achieve **well**, reaching the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception class.

Communication, Language and Literacy Development

Provision for the development of communication, language and literacy is **excellent** in the nursery class and **good** in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery class children make very good progress in their communication skills because of the sensitive intervention of the teacher and support staff in their activities.
- Children in the reception class have a positive attitude to books and enjoy listening to stories. More confident children comment on the events depicted. They are beginning to recognise individual letters and know their sounds.

Commentary

32. The nursery class teacher and other adults skilfully join children as they work, asking questions, making observations and providing a running commentary using language which is well matched to children's level of understanding. As a result, more experienced children use a wider vocabulary, reflecting the experiences they have had. In the reception class, children benefit from good teaching. Children enjoy a good range of language activities and there is a good balance between those that are adult-directed and those that children choose for themselves. The majority of children do not reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception class although they make **good** progress and achieve **well**.

Mathematical Development

The provision for mathematical development is **good** in both the nursery class and the reception class. Children make **good** progress from a low level of attainment on entry.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of counting skills in the nursery class is very good.
- Good provision of a range of mathematical experiences in the Reception class enables children to consolidate their knowledge of numbers and shapes.

Commentary

33. The nursery class teacher uses very effective teaching strategies that appeal to the children's sense of humour and they excitedly identify missing numbers in a sequence. The reception class teacher conducts counting games and rhymes at a good pace and both she and the nursery nurse work effectively with children, reinforcing their understanding of mathematical language. Children do not reach the Early Learning Goals for mathematical development although they make good progress and achieve well.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

It was not possible to see all aspects of this wide area of learning during the inspection. However, provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world in those aspects that were seen is **excellent** in the nursery class and **good** in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for nursery class children is often very imaginative and kindles their curiosity about the world around them.
- A particular strength of the provision in both nursery class and reception class is the way in which outdoor play activities extend and enrich class-based provision.

Commentary

34. An example of the imaginative provision in the nursery class was an investigation of heavy and light objects. Children were fascinated as they observed the effects of the breeze from an electric fan on different objects as they dropped them. Outdoor play in the Reception class consolidates children's knowledge of different homes as they play in the 'castle' and build homes from giant Lego blocks. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery class and good in the reception class. The majority of children have not achieved the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception class. However, the wide range of learning activities provided inspire children so that they enjoy learning and make good progress.

Physical Development

35. Provision for physical development is **very good** in the nursery class and **good** in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many effective opportunities for children to develop their physical skills in both nursery class and reception class.
- In physical education lessons most children in both classes move confidently and use space increasingly well.

Commentary

36. In the nursery class, children' manipulative skills are successfully developed through design and make activities which involve the use of scissors, split pins, dowel rods, small wheels and a range of materials for fixing and attaching materials and objects. In the reception class children use a variety of implements and materials to practise writing and drawing. However, warm up activities before physical activities are sometimes limited in the nursery class and in the reception class opportunities for children to initiate their own movements are under-developed. By the end of the reception class, the majority of children do not reach the expectations for their age, although the quality of teaching is good and children achieve well.

Creative Development

37. It was not possible to see all aspects of this wide area of learning during the inspection. However, provision for children's creative development in those aspects that were seen is **excellent** in the nursery class and **good** in the reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An outstanding aspect of creative development in the nursery class is the provision for imaginative role-play and artistic activities.
- Imaginative role-play is also well catered for in the reception class.

- The large size of groups in some music sessions, reduces the enthusiasm and attention of some children

Commentary

38. The excellent provision in the nursery class includes a very wide range of materials from which children can choose and express their creativity. Nursery class staff effectively find a balance between demonstrating techniques and encouraging children to experiment and develop skills themselves. Reception class children handle brushes and paint well, choosing colours carefully. They engage in imaginative play based on their experience of stories. As a result, most children enjoy expressing themselves in a wide range of creative ways and demonstrate very good levels of co-operation and collaboration during activities. By the end of the reception year standards are in line with expectations and teaching and achievement are good.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is good. Pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes are working in line with national expectations. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well from the low levels at which they start school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and as a result pupils' achievement is good across the school.
 - Assessment is used effectively to track pupils' progress and identify areas for improvement.
 - The pupils enjoy the subject and are motivated to work hard.
 - The needs of most groups of pupils are well planned for but at times not enough challenge is given to higher attaining pupils.
 - The explicit planning of literacy in other curriculum subjects is not yet in place to support learning.
 - The quality of marking is good overall but lacks consistency.
39. In Year 2 many pupils are confident readers and obviously enjoy books. They are beginning to write with growing confidence and spell many common words correctly. Although the pupils form letters correctly the good handwriting seen in their practice books does not consistently transfer to other writing. The majority of pupils listen well and respond appropriately. Pupils are willing to answer questions and speak confidently. However a significant number have a narrow vocabulary and are not yet confident enough to contribute to class discussions. Most of the pupils in Year 6 are competent readers, however, they are not yet confident when reading for information or in the skills of working and learning independently. The pupils understand that there are appropriate styles of writing for different purposes. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are usually accurate. Pupils do not yet consistently use joined writing for their work, which is sometimes untidy. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good.
40. There is no judgment of improvement since the last inspection as this is the school's first inspection.

41. **The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.** Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively to raise standards. In most lessons a range of activities is used well to generate interest and reinforce learning and understanding. Teachers use texts well to illustrate teaching points. For example in Year 3 and Year 6 pupils learned about parts of speech as they shared poetry. Very positive relationships mean that pupils work hard, are confident and willing to take risks with their learning knowing that their attempts will be valued. Work is usually matched to their needs, however, ways of providing sufficient challenge for the more able pupils are not consistently identified.
42. **Assessment is used effectively** to monitor pupils' progress and to identify individual learning objectives for the pupils. However, the pupils' understanding and involvement with what they need to do to improve is not consistently developed across the school. Marking is mostly effective but not always used effectively to direct pupils and set targets for improvement.
43. **English has been effectively led and managed** despite the recent long-term absence of one of the co-ordinators. Good use is made of assessment data from end of key stage National Curriculum tests to guide and develop aspects of the curriculum and teaching and learning. Regular reviews are made of pupils' work and the quality of teaching during lessons to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. **Satisfactory.** Although there are many occasions when pupils use skills of writing to record what they learn in other subjects, for example in history or in science, the full benefit of using such opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to apply their writing or reading skills are not yet fully exploited. This is because explicit links for using literacy across the curriculum are not yet adequately planned for.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Numeracy Strategy is taught effectively in most classes and pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Assessment is used well to guide planning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are carefully identified and well supported.
- Opportunities for pupils to engage in mathematical investigations and to apply their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum are less well developed.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

Pupils make good progress overall and are achieving well by reaching standards that are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

45. **The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall.** A very good feature of teaching, observed particularly in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6, is the use of

challenging questions and the encouragement of pupils to explain alternative strategies for working out answers. Teachers use a good range of resources and techniques to hold pupils' interest during the introductory part of the lesson, which is usually conducted at a lively pace. As a result, most pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics. Where the pace of lessons slackens, in Year 4/ Year 5, pupils are less well motivated and do not learn as much as they should. Another good feature of mathematics teaching is that key mathematical terms are emphasised and pupils learn to use them correctly. For example, Year 1 pupils are reminded to use the term, pence (not elephants!) when working with money; Year 6 pupils use the terms, estimate and partition accurately.

46. **Assessment is used well.** Teachers assess pupils' responses to previous lessons effectively to plan for the next lesson. Some examples of good planning to meet the needs of more able pupils were seen in Year 2 and Year 6. On the whole, however, teachers plan more effectively for below average pupils than they do for above average pupils. Good liaison between class teachers and the learning support assistant, together with well-focused teaching, mean that the introduction of the 'Springboard' project for lower attaining pupils in mathematics is making a positive impact on standards. Marking is satisfactory but not always used to enable pupils to see how they can improve.
47. There is good coverage of the content of the mathematics curriculum in number and algebra. However, pupils engage less frequently in mathematical investigations and there are missed opportunities for them to use their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science and geography, although there are some good examples of the use of mathematics in pupils' work in art.
48. **Leadership and management of mathematics are good.** Effective in-service training has increased teachers' expertise and confidence in teaching mathematics so that the overall quality of teaching is now good, enabling pupils to make good progress. The co-ordinator, with support from the local Numeracy Consultant, has evaluated the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and correctly identified pupils' problem solving abilities as an area for development. The school has made a good start on raising the quality of teaching and learning in this aspect of mathematics.
49. There is no judgment of improvement since the last inspection as this is the school's first inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Although pupils develop satisfactory skills of applying their knowledge and understanding of numeracy to solving mathematical problems, there are few planned opportunities for them to develop and apply their numeracy skills alongside other subjects. This reduces the overall progress that pupils make in their application of mathematical knowledge.

SCIENCE

The overall provision for science is good. Pupils are currently achieving well in science and reaching standards that are in line with national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well given the low level at which most start school.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and is supported by excellent links with the secondary school.
- There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of each area of science.
- Pupils' ability to perform scientific experiments and investigations without too much adult support is satisfactory.
- Good use is made of the local community and the school grounds to support aspects of learning.
- The quality of pupils' recorded work varies between classes. It is mostly good, but unsatisfactory at times with work being untidy with weak marking.
- Aspects of teaching in the middle years of Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory

Commentary

51. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and facts appropriate for their age but their ability to work on their own in performing scientific investigations is satisfactory. The needs of pupils with special educational needs across the school are effectively met and these pupils make good progress given the difficulties they have.
52. **The quality of teaching and learning is good.** By the end of Year 2, the good teaching and learning results in pupils making good progress, achieving well and acquiring a knowledge and understanding of science that is securely in line with national expectations for their age. They develop a secure understanding of living things appropriate to their age, and have a sound knowledge of the characteristics of a range of everyday materials such as paper, plastic and metal. Although pupils learn about aspects of physical science such as forces and their effects and electricity, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of this area of science is not as high as in other aspects of the subject. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall but in Year 4/ Year 5, progress slows and pupils tend to mark time. This is because of a weakness in teaching based on unsatisfactory management and organisation of pupils resulting in some pupils losing interest and concentration during lessons. Progress accelerates rapidly in upper Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations with some pupils exceeding them. Although pupils know the principles of how to perform scientific investigations and there are some good examples of this being done, there are inconsistencies between classes.
53. **Excellent links with the local high school makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided for pupils.** The regular attendance of a teacher from the science department is received very well by pupils who show particularly high levels of enthusiasm for the lessons he provides. Good use is made of the local community to enhance aspects of learning in science for example by using Sankey Valley Country Park.
54. **The subject is satisfactorily managed.** The curriculum is carefully evaluated to seek improvements and changes are made accordingly. Assessment data are used to inform planning and initiatives have been taken to improve the quality of teaching in scientific investigations but the emphasis on literacy and numeracy has reduced opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There

is no judgment of improvement since the last inspection as this is the school's first inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils of all ages are making good progress overall and achieving well.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and is supplemented by excellent support from staff from the Penketh High School.
- Effective curriculum planning ensures that pupils systematically learn the skills and knowledge expected for their age as they move through the school.
- The very good leadership and vision of the co-ordinator ensure that the quality of learning and the standards achieved by pupils are carefully watched so that improvements can be made.
- All staff are committed to developing and improving their own subject knowledge.
- Some computers and printers in Key Stage 1 are in need of upgrading.
- Planned opportunities for the use of information and communication technology to support research skills could be better.
- Older Key Stage 2 pupils can benefit from attending after school workshops using the secondary school information and communication technology suite and also taking part in a Sport in the Community funded information and communication technology project associated with Warrington Wolves.

Commentary

55. **Standards at the end of both Year 2 and in Year 6 are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages and pupils are achieving well and making good progress.** Standards are rising as a result of improved resources, very good subject management and excellent support from the secondary school.
56. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident when using a keyboard and computer mouse to create short pieces of text or using tools such as paintbrush to create some impressive designs in the style of the American artist Jackson Pollock. Pupils are doing well in acquiring essential skills such as logging on and off and saving work to file prior to printing. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very comfortable with information and communication technology. They are skilled at combining different forms of information for example using publishing techniques to create texts in different styles and fonts that are combined with images imported from other sources. Pupils are developing good skills of using digital camera technology in order to create documents and advanced skills of using hyperlinks to construct individual web pages. Computers are seen by pupils as being an exciting tool for learning and a way of accessing information for example through using CD-Rom material as well as for storing information for future use for example word processed texts or through data handling files and programmes.
57. **The quality of teaching is good across the school** and promotes pupils' confidence with computers. During lessons, pupils respond well to the good management and organisation. Lessons are effectively planned and, with some excellent levels of support from staff of Penketh High School, pupils receive good, and at times, very good levels of instruction and guidance. Expectations are high and are increasing as

the positive impact of new resources and staff training start to take effect. Pupils learn well and gain high levels of satisfaction from the progress they are making. They work hard and co-operate well with classmates when sharing a computer. A good range of extra-curricular activities provides additional opportunities for pupils to enjoy using the computer for learning.

58. **Very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator are driving the subject forward rapidly.** All resources are used well and a carefully constructed curriculum and well-organised access to the information and communication technology suite ensures that all pupils have regular opportunities to develop their computer skills. Other aspects of information and communication technology are also covered in the curriculum for example, the use of a sound recorder or a digital microscope, thereby ensuring that the full spectrum of information and communication technology is covered. The subject has a very good action plan for its future development. Effective management ensures that adequate resources are available and updated to keep pace with demand and change. There is no judgment of improvement since the last inspection as this is the school's first inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The use of information and communication technology is **satisfactory** overall although some very good examples exist in some classes. Word processing skills are applied by pupils in creating short pieces of text and poems coupled with basic skills of editing and reshaping poems. In mathematics, pupils gather data for example in Year 2, pupils use data base programmes to represent in bar charts their favourite crisps and in humanities research into aspects of history and geography occurs. The full potential for using computers to support learning across the curriculum is reduced by restricted access to the information and communication technology suite. Planned improvements in resources will increase the potential for extending the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

The provision for history and geography is satisfactory overall. Limited teaching was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based upon an analysis of pupils' work, curriculum planning and discussion with pupils. Religious education is inspected under Section 23 of the Education Act.

History and geography

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- A range of planned educational visits contributes well to learning.
 - At times too much use is made of low demand worksheets and this reduces pupils' development of skills of enquiry and research.
60. **Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally and pupils achieve satisfactorily.** The pupils can discuss the work they have recorded in these areas and make simple connections between the impact of discoveries and major events on everyday life but they could make more use of research skills.

61. **The quality of teaching is satisfactory.** Teachers plan work based upon national guidelines and use assessment well to identify the pupils' acquisition of skills. Despite adequate planning there are some aspects of humanities that are not taught in depth and pupils' knowledge is limited. In some classes there is a significant use of worksheets that can prevent higher attaining pupils from extending their knowledge and skills. There is some use of information and communication technology to find information, however, the use of this and explicit planning for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not consistently used. Good use is made of educational visits to extend pupils' learning in school.
62. The leadership and management of both history and geography are satisfactory. The performance of pupils and the quality of curriculum planning is adequate and there is a suitable system established to assess the progress of pupils as they move across the school. There is no judgment of improvement since the last inspection as this is the school's first inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The provision for creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects is satisfactory overall with good provision in art and design and design and technology.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is very good. The standard of pupils' work is above expectations at the end of both key stages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of pupils' two-dimensional work using a very wide range of media, tools and techniques is very good and some of it is outstanding.
- The key skills of drawing and painting are progressively developed.
- Teachers use the work of famous artists from the Western tradition very effectively to provide inspiration for pupils' own work, but there is scope for them to seek inspiration from a wider range of artists from non-Western traditions.
- Pupils regularly work with clay, but there is scope for the development of three-dimensional work.
- Residential visits and professional artists make a positive impact on standards.

Commentary

63. Teachers value pupils' work in art and design. Their achievements are celebrated in assemblies and elsewhere and work is very attractively displayed throughout the school. The strengths of the school as a whole are well illustrated by the work seen in a lesson in Year 2, where the pupils were drawing and painting leaves using watercolours. They talked knowledgeably about the work of Georgia O'Keefe, whose painting of oak leaves had inspired their work. Pupils organised their own collection of leaves so that they were overlapping and, with very good support from the nursery nurse, discussed key features of the composition and details observed on the leaves. Pupils are aware of how to use and apply a range of techniques and skills for example in drawing using shade and perspective and in using paints to create a range of colours through mixing. Pupils make perceptive evaluations of work in progress, identifying aspects they would change if they did it again and display an excellent attitude to their work, showing patience, perseverance and pride.

Design and technology

No teaching was observed during the inspection but evidence gained from interviews with staff and observations of pupils' work in the school indicates that provision is good and standards are high.

Commentary

64. Pupils' receive a broad and balanced curriculum that is well planned. Innovative steps have been taken to adapt when the subject is taught by blocking days each half term for design and technology work. This is effective because it enables pupils and staff to start and complete design assignments in set time strengthening the continuity of learning for everyone. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 benefit from opportunities to use the design and technology facilities of Penketh High School and this makes a very good contribution to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the design process.

Music

65. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement of teaching, learning and standards in music. However, the recent initiative with the high school, where the head of music takes two lessons in Key Stage 2 once a week is a very promising development and achievement was at least good in the two lessons seen. Pupils sing sweetly and enthusiastically in assemblies and pupils are given good opportunities to perform in musical concerts and events in the locality.

Physical education

66. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to make a secure judgment about the quality of provision, standards achieved by pupils or the quality of teaching other than the provision meets the statutory requirements including provision for swimming.

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	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3
<i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i>	

EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

Outstanding practice in the Nursery class

Adults take every opportunity to enrich children's use of language through a wide range of stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs and interests.

It is the beginning of the school year, but in the Nursery class small groups of very happy children, including four new entrants, are busily engaged in a range of interesting activities that completely engross them.

The teacher sits with three children making vehicles from an assortment of boxes and construction materials. She carefully observes what they are doing and makes comments and asks questions in a way which introduces new vocabulary and helps them develop their ideas, but which does not distract them from the task that absorbs them.

Under the guidance of the Nursery nurse, another group of children are fascinated by their experiments with marbling inks, water and paper. She gives clear instructions and demonstrates when necessary, but allows the children to take the lead in their investigations and enjoys their evident delight in pointing out and commenting on what they see.

A huge space rocket, built by the children and adults, dominates another corner of the room. Two or three children are dressed in space suits and play inside the rocket. Two of them talk on toy telephones to the learning support assistant who is in 'mission control,' modelling the sorts of conversations that astronauts might have. A child with special educational needs, on his way to get some paper, explains very clearly his intention of making a "control screen" for the rocket.

These three examples give a flavour of the way in which the teacher, working in close partnership with her assistants, seeks to develop children's understanding and use of language through structured play and other imaginative practical activities.

Outstanding links between schools

The links between the primary school and Penketh High School are excellent. The senior management team of the primary school has worked very hard to develop excellent links with the high school. Part of the high school budget has been earmarked for secondary-primary liaison and is used to release high school staff to work alongside staff in the primary school. This is a consistent feature of the school and is maintained from year to year. This particularly benefits the education of pupils in information and communication technology, science and design and technology and pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, regularly visit the high school to use their facilities. This results in pupils getting additional support during their primary school education. In addition pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 regularly visit the high school to use their facilities so by the time they move from Year 6, pupils know where they are going and even know some key staff. This reduces the traumas of transition. Very good staff liaison has developed and a shared understanding of the different demands of working in each phase is benefiting staff development.