

INSPECTION REPORT

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Prenton, Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105092

Headteacher: Mr S. Dainty

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Bamber

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 257753

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	424
School address:	Woodchurch Road Oxton Prenton Birkenhead
Postcode:	CH43 5UT
Telephone number:	0151 6526781
Fax number:	0151 670 1843
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Warren
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a larger than average urban Catholic primary school with 424 pupils on roll, with 52 children who attend part time in the nursery. Pupils come from a wide catchment area and mixed social backgrounds. The school's population is predominantly white British with no pupil using any other language other than English. The mobility of pupils is below average. Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need are below the average. The school is in receipt of the Healthy Schools Award and a Department of Education and Skills Schools Achievement Award in 2002 and 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15064	Paul Bamber	Lead inspector	Mathematics Physical education
9013	Anita Strong	Lay inspector	
29504	Shirley Herring	Team inspector	Foundation stage ¹ Geography History Music
22704	Garry Williams	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology
22398	Lynn Wright	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school, which offers **good** value for money. Standards are generally above average in English, mathematics and science and most pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is satisfactory. The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In English, in Year 6, standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning as a result of their very good spiritual, moral and social development and the school's evident Christian ethos.
- Some activities for children in the Foundation Stage lack purpose.
- The pupils are very well cared for and learn in a very safe and secure environment.
- The headteacher and key staff provide effective leadership.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used enough to promote and support learning across the curriculum.
- Lessons are not observed frequently enough to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- The school's very good partnership with parents contributes significantly to pupils' education.

Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Most of the key issues for the school show improvement, although there are still too few observations of lessons. Standards have improved in Year 6. Many of the aspects previously judged to be good have remained as strengths.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table shows that standards over the last three years have been at least above average when compared nationally. It also indicates that in 2003, the pupils' progress between Year 2 and Year 6 was well above average when compared with similar schools.

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Overall achievement is **good**. Children enter the nursery and reception classes with broadly average skills. In all areas of their learning, they make satisfactory progress and most are likely to reach the national targets set for them by the time they enter Year 1. Standards in reading, writing and science are above average in Years 1 and 2 and in line with expectations in mathematics. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in English and science. Most pupils achieve well in mathematics, but more-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. Throughout the school pupils reach expected standards in ICT. In Year 6, standards are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and in line with expectations in science. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well overall.

Pupils' personal development is very good overall. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils behave sensibly and have positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good** overall. The quality of teaching and of learning is **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**. There is some very good teaching in English throughout the school, good teaching in science in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Some activities provided for children in the Foundation Stage lack purpose. The curriculum is satisfactory. The range and quality of enriching experiences offered to pupils outside the classroom are good. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. ICT is not used effectively enough to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils are very well cared for. There are very good links with parents, which contribute well to pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership is **good** and that of management is **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides open and effective leadership. The leadership of other key staff is good. Lessons are not observed often enough. Governance is **satisfactory**. Financial arrangements are good but governors are insufficiently involved in monitoring the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with what the school offers their children. One or two expressed some concerns about bullying but there was no evidence of aggressive behaviour during the inspection and pupils reported that any 'fall-outs' were quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils were also very keen to tell inspectors how much they liked the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To plan more purposeful activities for children in the Foundation Stage.
- To make sure that pupils use ICT more effectively to support their learning throughout the curriculum.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching by more frequent lesson observations.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- To rectify some omissions from the information governors are required to provide for parents in both the school prospectus and in their Annual Report to Parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well above expectations in reading and writing. More-able pupils in Year 2 do not always achieve as well as they should in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are well above average in Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well especially compared with similar schools
- Children in the Foundation Stage could achieve more if teachers' planning was better.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- In mathematics, the achievement of more-able pupils in Year 2 is not always high enough.

Commentary

1. Standards have improved since the previous inspection in mathematics and in art and design in Year 6. Standards in other subjects remain broadly similar, but in physical education they are now in line with rather than above expectations.
2. Achievement is good for most pupils in Years 1 to 6. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily, entering the school with expected standards and with most attaining the levels expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. There are some limitations placed upon their achievements because their activities, both in and outside the classroom, are not always planned rigorously enough.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.9 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.6 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Standards in English are above average in the current Year 2. Evidence indicates that the lower average attainment of the year group and some disruption to learning caused by staff changes contributed to the disappointing 2003 national test results in Year 2. Currently, standards are much higher in English and in science. In mathematics, standards in Year 2 are in line with expectations, an improvement upon last year, but with more-able pupils still not achieving as well as they should. Improvements to pupils' achievements accelerate in Year 3 due to good teaching, especially in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.1 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.1 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

4. The grades achieved by Year 6 pupils in the 2003 national tests were well above average in all three tested subjects. Pupils' performance meant that they made very good progress from the standards they achieved in the Year 2 tests, compared with pupils in similar schools. Currently, standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, above expectations in mathematics and in line with expectations in science. The lower overall standards in science this year reflect the greater emphasis placed on investigative work in national tests and the school's awareness that pupils' skills in this area need further improvement. Achievement of pupils in the current Years 3 to 6 is good overall. It is very good in English in Year 6.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Support is well targeted for these pupils and the areas of learning which need to improve most. As a result, many pupils who have learning, physical or emotional difficulties, which might restrict their progress, reach or even exceed the standards expected of them in national tests

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to learning and their behaviour is also **good**. Their personal development including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural is **very good**. Attendance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes, which contribute effectively to their learning.
- Very good social and personal development throughout the school promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils are happy to come to school and attendance is well above the national average.

Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They enjoy their work and having responsibility when given the opportunity. They respond well to praise and are proud to receive rewards for their house or classmates. In lessons, pupils' attitudes are good. They listen carefully, respond immediately and relate very well to each other. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are good. Concern from a few pupils over some poor behaviour in the playground has been successfully addressed. The 'special friends scheme' operated between pupils in Year 6 and Year 3 is noticeably beneficial to the younger pupils. Expectations about behaviour are clear and pupils respond positively to them. There were no exclusions during the last academic year. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. No incidents of bullying were witnessed during the inspection. Pupils are confident that any incident of bullying or harassment would be addressed immediately. The staff encourage pupils to discuss social and moral issues, which enables them to have a very clear understanding of what constitutes good citizenship.
7. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils gain an awareness of the needs of others through supporting a number of charities and local community events. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. The school council is recently formed and has already had effective input into the school. Pupils develop their personal and social skills and awareness well through residential visits.
8. Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have opportunities to experience other lifestyles and faiths. They are interested in finding out how other people live and are well aware of their own culture. Study of another faith and a visit to its place of worship has been further enriched by the enactment of one of its main ceremonies. The pupils receive a good insight of life in a part of Peru through the visits by a priest who lives and works there. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Throughout the school, pupils have the

opportunity to reflect on what they have seen or heard. Teachers value pupils' ideas and contributions to lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.4	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

9. Attendance is very good. There is very rigorous monitoring and the school is well supported by parents. Punctuality throughout the inspection was very good. Registration meets all requirements and lessons begin promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**, overall. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and enrichment is good. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Pupils are very well cared for and there is a very good partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning remains the same as that found at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading and writing are well taught.
- The good quality of relationships and positive management of pupils' behaviour contribute well to pupils' learning.
- Some activities carried out by children in the Foundation Stage lack purpose.
- The good quality of support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
- Teaching in Year 6 is rigorous and promotes good quality learning in English and mathematics.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (12 %)	14 (33%)	23 (55%)	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.

10. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection in that there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Although there were more satisfactory lessons observed than those of higher quality during the inspection, other evidence gathered and the sometimes very good quality teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science indicates that the overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, there are some weaknesses in teaching in the Foundation Stage. There is some very good teaching in English in Year 6, of mathematics in one Year 3 class, with mathematics generally well taught throughout Years 3 to 6. Science is well taught.

11. Reading and writing are well taught throughout the school, promoting well above average standards by the time pupils reach Year 6. Pupils are encouraged to read daily in school and at home. In Years 1 and 2, strategies for reading unfamiliar words and for reading with expression and meaning are well taught. In Years 3 to 6, teachers encourage wider reading and effectively help pupils to understand and interpret what they read. Writing is taught effectively. In Years 1 and 2 good teaching of spelling, handwriting and basic writing structure provide pupils with a solid foundation. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are introduced to a much wider range of writing purposes and provided with relevant and interesting topics about which to write. For instance, in a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were extremely keen to improve their persuasive writing as a result of the teacher's very effective introduction and prompting.
12. In most lessons, teachers and pupils get on very well together so that learning takes place in a positive and calm environment. Teachers take a keen interest in pupils' welfare to which pupils respond positively by trying hard to succeed with their work and by behaving well. Where a small minority of pupils do not immediately conform to accepted behaviour, teachers manage such behaviour firmly and positively, resulting in most cases in pupils settling down to their work and not disturbing others. In one or two classes, this same level of good discipline and positive relationships is sometimes lacking, resulting in learning being less good.
13. A weakness in the quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is that some activities lack purpose. The main reason is because teachers plan lessons with children's activity uppermost, rather than the purpose in terms of their learning. When this occurs, children happily engage in activity but little productive learning takes place. Because learning outcomes are not planned for, it is difficult for staff to assess what the next step in children's learning should be.
14. There is much good and very good teaching in Year 6, which makes a significant contribution to the above average standards pupils achieve. Lessons are well planned, a brisk pace is maintained, tasks match pupils needs and relationships are good. Because the inspection occurred two weeks before the national tests, many of the lessons observed in English, mathematics and science were geared towards helping pupils to be as well prepared as possible. These lessons were effective in achieving this objective, but were also characterised by good humour, very good relationships, and teachers' very good subject knowledge. In a well-taught mathematics lesson, pupils were encouraged to talk about their feelings when they were unsure whether their answers were correct and reassured that it was 'OK to make mistakes'. They were also given sound advice about how to deal with quick mental calculations and to take a more reflective approach when tackling problems involving lots of words, in order to identify exactly what they are being asked to solve.
15. Because they are provided with good quality support, most pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. Support staff sensitively support and prompt these pupils complementing and reinforcing the class teachers' contribution where extra explanation is required. The close partnership between class teachers and teaching assistants is effective in enabling pupils to keep up, to concentrate well and to modify their behaviour in order that the quality of their learning is at least satisfactory.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum that includes **good** enrichment of opportunities for learning outside of lessons. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good curricular enrichment through voluntary clubs contributes to the pupils' self-confidence and good social development.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The best use is not made of the school's ICT resources.

Commentary

16. The school provides a curriculum that covers all subjects and is relevant to the ages and interests of pupils at all stages, and fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Carefully structured whole school and termly plans ensure that in most cases pupils achieve well as they progress through Years 1 to 6. The exception is in Year 2, in mathematics, where more-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they might. Curricular planning in the nursery and reception classes, and the Foundation Stage, focuses more on activity rather than the aims and purposes of learning and children here make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in their learning.
17. The quality of learning opportunities currently provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is effective in her role, working closely with class teachers, parents, pupils and external agencies to formulate individual education plans. These are reviewed termly and interested parties are invited to attend. The organisation of the special educational needs provision ensures that those pupils become confident members of the school community. The generous amount of accommodation available contributes well to the good achievements of pupils with special educational needs.
18. The expenditure on ICT software and hardware has strengthened the provision for the subject. However, the integration of work in ICT between the computer suite and classrooms is unsatisfactorily organised due to the isolated position of the suite. Good partnership with the local college and sporting groups has improved the quality of the physical education curriculum.
19. The range of after-school clubs has improved and there is good spread of activities to appeal to most pupils. The emphasis on sporting activities fosters pupils' individual talents successfully and gives them enjoyment in this area of learning. These clubs involve a wide cross-section of the community and help pupils' social skills considerably by widening their contact with adults and other children. A satisfactory range of visits is planned every year to make learning more meaningful to pupils, and they recall them with pleasure.
20. The very large accommodation means that there is plenty of room for small group teaching and to explore and investigate in subjects such as science and art and design. The quality of resources has improved since the previous inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for and supported effectively in their academic and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are happy to come to school and are very well looked after.
- The school provides a very safe, secure and caring environment.
- Good support from staff for developing personal and social skills is helping the children to understand what it means to be a good citizen.

Commentary

21. The school looks after all pupils very well. Procedures for monitoring individuals' progress are effective. This school can be justifiably proud that its Christian ethos is reflected in the very caring support it gives to all its pupils. Absence or any lateness is rigorously followed up. Through the implementation of agreed methods, the school has addressed the poor behaviour of a few pupils in the playground. Child protection procedures are very good and all the staff are clear about what to do if they have concerns. The educational social welfare officer and

other agencies provide very strong support when required. There is a strict policy for the administration of medicines and several staff have been trained in first aid. Provision for health and safety is very good overall and detailed risk assessments are carried out.

22. Pupils speak freely to staff with trust, confidence and respect. Annual reports comment on personal development and pupils confidently express their likes and dislikes about school. The merit rewards for house-points and the *petal system* promotes both individual self-esteem and responsibility to others. There is a good induction programme for pupils joining the school from the nursery. Pupils joining at other times are effectively supported. The extra-curricular clubs and other school activities are well supported.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established **very good** links with parents, who support it strongly. Links with other schools and colleges are good. Pupils benefit from effective use of the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents have very positive views of the school.
- There are strong links with the local church.
- There is an excellent parent and teachers' association.
- The school works hard to ensure its place in the community and benefits from strengthening links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

23. The school has worked hard to create a very strong partnership with parents and effective links with the community. All parents who shared their views during the inspection expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They trust the staff to deal with the care of their child at school and praise the 'open door' policy. They state that their children are happy, enjoy the after-school clubs and have confidence in their teachers dealing with any bullying. The school holds two main meetings for parents during the year and opportunity for individual discussions on their child's annual report. These opportunities provided do not appear to support the view of a few parents who feel that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress. The school welcomes parents to all assemblies. The quality of information sent to parents is very good with regular newsletters and a detailed programme of the forthcoming term's curriculum. The school has sought parents' views and suggestions on specific matters. There have been three ICT evening courses held at the school for parents.
24. A significant number of parents help regularly in the school. The excellent parents and teachers association is a very successful fundraiser for the school. The school maintains its history of strong cross-parish links with St. Joseph's and Holy Name churches. Services are taken regularly by visiting priests and the local curate comes into school each week. The school hosts the celebrations for both parishes after Holy Communion. There are several links with local businesses. There are very good procedures in place for preparing pupils in Year 6 for the next stage of their education. These are aided by the successful relationships with other schools and colleges. The school participates in sports activities with other local schools and hosts the Birkenhead musical festival. The school provides work experience and mentoring for students from various educational institutions and there is a very important link with a local gymnastics club.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **good** and management is **satisfactory**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership.

- Lessons are not observed often enough to securely evaluate the quality of teaching.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed.

Commentary

25. The headteacher has a clear vision for the further improvement of the school that he shares positively with the school community. The developments prioritised in the school improvement plan closely reflect the school's determination to maintain or improve pupils' existing standards and achievements. There is clear evidence that the improvements since the previous inspection in the rigour of test data analysis and of systems for tracking pupils' progress have contributed well to raising standards. Parents and pupils think highly of the headteacher and of the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher has contributed significantly to the smooth running of the school and to the professional development of subject co-ordinators. As a result, co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science lead their subjects well. They write effective subject action plans, provide well-focussed training and advice for staff and successfully implement new initiatives.
26. The arrangements for managing the school's performance meet statutory requirements and the targets set for improvements in pupils' writing, mental mathematics and investigative science have been successfully met. However, apart from the minimum requirements, lessons have not been systematically observed to evaluate the quality of teaching. This means that some relative weaknesses, for instance, in the Foundation Stage, have not been highlighted so that specific action to bring about improvements could be identified. Action has been targeted at a whole school level rather than an individual level as a result. Because lessons have been too infrequently observed, aspects of very good practice have not been fully identified. Too little time has been made available for key subject co-ordinators to evaluate practice in their subject, or to disseminate their own skills. As a result, best use is not made of the expertise that exists in the school to help improve the quality of teaching and learning where required.
27. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Some parents expressed concern that because the co-ordinators management time had been reduced that the quality of provision might be compromised. Inevitably some opportunities for the previously close monitoring of pupils' progress in parallel classes are restricted, but there is no evidence that pupils' achievements and the quality of the support they receive have been compromised as a result. The co-ordinator works closely with class teachers, parents and teaching assistants, especially those who support pupils with statements, to ensure that individual education plans are effectively followed and reviewed. As a result, many of these pupils achieve expected standards in national tests and achieve well, demonstrating positive attitudes and strong self-esteem.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	886,781	Balance from previous year	26,599
Total expenditure	895,577	Balance carried forward to the next	-6,310
Expenditure per pupil	2,112		

These are figures provided by the school

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

28. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**. Pupils join the nursery with a wide range of experiences and skills, but overall, their attainment is average. This is a change from the previous inspection when attainment on entry was above average.
29. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and so their attainment remains average as they enter the reception class. Children continue to achieve at a satisfactory rate during the reception year, and the majority of children are likely to attain the recommended Early Learning Goals² in all the recommended areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Standards are average at the start of Year 1. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The current teaching staff are comparatively new to the Foundation Stage, but the school has succeeded in eliminating the unsatisfactory teaching observed at the previous inspection. However, no examples of very good teaching were observed. A strong aspect is the way the skilled Nursery Nurses are deployed to give good support to individuals and groups.
30. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. A good start has been made in compiling the Foundation Stage profiles through observations and specific assessment tasks. The curriculum is appropriate and all areas of learning are suitably covered. Work in different areas is linked by topics, but the planning does not readily identify how to develop the appropriate skills in each area. Accommodation for the Foundation Stage is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory.
31. A strong feature is the good number of parents who support learning in the nursery on a regular basis. This is particularly valuable in supervising games and helping children to learn to share.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good co-operation between adults sets a good example for children.
- Most children have good attitudes to learning and work together well.
- The slow pace of some lessons and a lack of rigour in expecting children to listen to the teacher mean that some children become restless in whole class sessions.
- Children develop a good awareness of their own religious beliefs and the beliefs of others.

Comment

32. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and children achieve the satisfactory standard by the end of the reception year. The way that adults work together well provides a good example for the children. This was observed in the nursery when all adults joined in with snack time and were careful to say *please* and *thank you* to each other for their fruit.
33. Children settle quickly into school life in the nursery, gaining security from the routines at the start of the day. They come happily into school and are confident and happy in being part of a class. This continues in reception where children readily accept responsibilities such as taking

² Early Learning Goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

the register to the office when they are *helpers of the day*. Children respond well to the good opportunities to work together, co-operating well in the *vet's surgery* or when making models.

34. In some lessons, the teachers are not firm enough when calling children to order or insisting that children listen before they start an explanation. Consequently, a significant minority become restless and lose concentration. Children are not given enough guidelines and time limits to encourage them to act more quickly, for example, the start of the physical development lesson for reception was delayed because children were allowed to talk amongst themselves rather than getting changed promptly.
35. A strong aspect is the children's appreciation of their own families and people who help them, and their understanding of their own Catholic beliefs. Prayers are an important part of the day and children also learn about the celebrations of other religions such as Divali and Hannukah.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in reading is good.
- Good use is made of resources to enhance learning.
- Opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills are sometimes missed.

Commentary

36. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the majority of children achieve the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1. Children achieve well overall in reading. A strong aspect is the high proportion of children who achieve the reading standards appropriate for their age, because of the good emphasis on hearing the children read regularly, the good concentration on developing phonic skills and the good support for less-able children and those with special educational needs. However, not enough children are working at a higher level and achievement for higher attaining children is average.
37. When the children are interested they listen well and explain their ideas confidently. This was observed in the nursery when the teacher caught the children's attention by using a very attractive big book. Good use of three-dimensional characters helped the children to appreciate the conventions of reading from left to right and to sustain their interest in listening to the story. In some lessons, however, the pace is too slow and children lose interest and gaze around instead of listening. In a literacy lesson in a reception class, children were keen to share their recollections of the previous day's talk, given by a Year 6 pupil about his budgie. However, the teacher "shushing" and telling them to keep still, with no attempt to raise the pace of the lesson so that more children had a turn, broke the flow of the children's ideas.
38. Writing skills are developed satisfactorily. There is a good early emphasis in developing the correct letter formation with children practising writing patterns in the nursery. This is reinforced in reception where children also practice copying the letters regularly. In reception, more-able children write a simple sentence, using capital letters and full stops, whilst less-able children copy a sentence that has been written by an adult. The writing table is a regular feature of independent activities that children enjoy, though the reading required in the outline of the pets' pamphlet was too difficult for many to follow.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Counting skills are developed well.
- There are limited opportunities for children to solve problems.
- The effectiveness of activities is often limited by a lack of pace.
- Learning is more successful when activities have a clear focus.

Commentary

39. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The children achieve at a satisfactory rate, maintaining their average mathematical skills as they enter Year 1. Counting skills are promoted well through activities such as identifying missing numbers on a number line and singing number rhymes.
40. Teachers provide a good range of activities to develop children's mathematical understanding. However, their effectiveness is often reduced by a lack of pace. Learning is more effective in small groups where adults keep children focussed on the task. A good example was observed in the nursery when the nursery nurse worked with a group of more-able children to help them program a toy to travel the correct number of steps to reach the kennel. Good questioning helped children to speculate as to what would happen if the robot travelled too far. Learning is less effective during independent activities. In some cases, the teacher concentrates solely on her teaching group, and does not give timely reminders to the rest of the class to keep them focussed.
41. All areas of mathematics are introduced, so that children have a satisfactory recall of shape names and also construct a pictogram showing the different kinds of pets that children have. Children have satisfactory knowledge of basic mathematical operations, such as simple addition, but there were few examples of children in the reception year being challenged to use their skills to solve problems.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of visits and visitors to the school improve children's understanding of the world around them.
- The school provides a good range of construction toys.
- The computers in classrooms are underused.

Commentary

42. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the children achieve average standards in the reception year. A strong aspect of the quality of teaching and in the children's curriculum is the range of visits to places of interest such as a candle factory, which was linked to the study of celebrations, to enhance children's learning. The expertise of visitors is used well to enrich children's learning, for example, a park ranger spent time with the reception year in their outdoor area to explain which animals might visit and what they need to thrive. The animal topic is being extended well in the classroom as children observe frogspawn changing into tadpoles.
43. Children satisfactorily build a wide range of objects using construction toys and discard materials and make adjustments to their models where necessary. In ICT they program the robot to move and operate the listening centre, using pause and play when following instructions. The computer is often offered as a free choice activity, though its use was not built in to lessons such as literacy and numeracy. Consequently opportunities are missed for children to develop their computing skills further through regular use.

Physical development

Provision for children's physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children show a good sense of space when working in the large hall.
- A lack of firm discipline in some movement lessons means that children do not hear or follow instructions properly.
- Children benefit from using a good range of small equipment to develop fine control and co-ordination.

Commentary

44. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Achievement is satisfactory and children maintain average standards as they enter Year 1. Children show a good awareness of space in the large hall, and reception children know how to judge whether they are too close to another person. However, the sheer size of the hall and a lack of rigour in controlling children's behaviour mean that children become over excited and do not listen to or hear instructions. This inhibits the quality of their work. In a music and movement lesson in the hall, the nursery teacher and the nursery nurse successfully encouraged the children to move like cats or dogs by joining in the movements themselves. This provided a good starting point to help the children to improve.
45. Children in the nursery show good control as they pedal and manoeuvre the wheeled toys outside. Such opportunities have not yet been planned for the reception outdoor area on a regular basis and this limits their full physical development.
46. A good feature is the wide range of implements and toys readily available to help children develop control and co-ordination. Children roll out dough carefully to an even thickness before stamping the required shapes, and they fix together quite small bricks to build quite complex boats and cars.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The imaginative play areas are used well to develop children's creativity.

Commentary

47. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Achievement is satisfactory, and children leave reception with average attainment. The well planned, imaginative play areas are a recent development in the reception classes and contribute well to pupils' achievement in this area of their learning. Stethoscopes and pet carrying baskets help children to recreate the scenes in the *vet's surgery*, developing their imagination and language skills well.
48. Work displayed shows that children use a good range of material to create different effects, such as paint and collage. Children in the nursery use papier-mache well to make impressive animal heads. The process took several sessions and this helped to develop children concentration and perseverance well.
49. Children know a suitable range of songs and sing them with enjoyment. In a music lesson in reception, the teacher used a good strategy of raising and lowering her arms to reinforce the concept of high and low notes. However, the overall effectiveness of the lesson was marred as

the teacher was not firm enough with instructions and so the children took a long time to settle in a circle. Reception children join in well when singing in assemblies for the whole school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English at Year 2 are above average and standards and achievement in Year 6 are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes in a variety of styles.
- The use of literacy to support other subjects is well developed and contributes to the high standards achieved.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to their peers.
- Assessment procedures are good and there are examples of quality marking in Year 6.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

50. By the end of Year 2, standards are currently above the national average and have returned to previous standards despite a 'blip' in the 2003 national tests, caused principally by staff changes. Standards in Year 6 are well above average, which indicates an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be above average. The findings of the inspection confirm the upward trend over the past few years and indicate very good achievement in Year 6.
51. Presently standards in reading are good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. The school gives a high priority to reading. Pupils read to their teachers regularly, an important part of lessons. Books are used for research purposes and where necessary effective support promotes and develops reading for the less-able pupils. Intervention programmes have a positive impact, resulting in high quality reading by the time pupils reach Year 6. The school provides pupils with a wide range of writing opportunities throughout the school and its focus on handwriting and spelling, particularly in Years 1 and 2, ensures good presentation of work.
52. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to these. Lessons are informative, lively and well structured, resulting in effective learning. Explanations are clear, relevant and sufficiently detailed to ensure that pupils understand the objectives of the lesson. Pupils throughout the school listen attentively and are confident in their responses because teachers focus carefully on questioning techniques. The result is that pupils are very good listeners and confident speakers by the end of Year 6. Relationships are secure and pupils are not afraid to offer answers, which may be incorrect. Pupils trust their teachers, which promotes self-confidence and self-esteem. Work is designed to match pupils' needs and is taught in an interesting manner, so that the pupils sustain concentration. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for, and they respond positively to well-matched work and well-targeted support, often attaining expected standards in national tests as a result.
53. Assessment procedures are good and provide the school with valuable data, which is used well to help teachers plan lessons. There are good examples of effective marking, particularly in Year 6, which is diagnostic in its approach and indicates what pupils need to do in order to continue to improve. The curriculum provided is good and provides pupils with many opportunities to write in a variety of styles and for a wide range of different purposes. However,

pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to support their work. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and receive similar opportunities as other pupils. The setting arrangements adopted by the school promote effective learning and ensure all pupils achieve well within their own capabilities. Discussions in class, before pupils write, are lively and well focused and contribute significantly to the high standard of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

54. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The co-ordinators for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 work well together to ensure that teaching is effective and that strengths and those areas for development are consistently reviewed through analysis of data from national tests, optional tests and end of unit tests. They acknowledge, however, that further development is required in the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards to ensure that high standards are promoted throughout the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Literacy skills are used well to support all areas of the curriculum. Many writing assignments in subjects, such as science, history and geography improve the quality and range of writing as well as raise standards in reading. In all lessons the emphasis of questioning in introductory and plenary parts of lessons contributes to the school's high standards in this area.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement in Year 6 are above average.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall.
- More-able pupils in Year 2 do not achieve well enough.

Commentary

56. The results of the Year 6 national tests over the last three years indicate at least above average standards and good achievement. This is the result of good teaching and of the school taking effective action to improve aspects of the pupils' competence in mental mathematics and in problem solving. Pupils are now secure in these aspects and demonstrate a good understanding of a range of strategies for simplifying calculations. Recent test results show that more-able pupils achieve as well as their peers nationally, and that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level exceeds national benchmarks and is well above the percentage achieved by similar schools. There has been a good improvement in standards in Year 6 since the previous inspection, whilst in Year 2 standards remain the same.
57. Overall, the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. Very good and good teaching in the Year 3 classes ensures that those more-able pupils who tended to underachieve in Year 2 make up ground and achieve well. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher's effective planning, involvement of pupils, very clear explanations and sharpness of purpose, helped pupils reach above expected standards and to achieve very well. There is consistently good quality teaching in Year 6, which enables pupils to achieve above average standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the ability to explain methods and concepts clearly and they motivate pupils' commitment through their very positive responses to pupils' successes. Where teaching is of lesser quality, for instance, in a Year 4 lesson observed, a lack of rigour in managing pupils' behaviour and in anticipating difficulties, resulted in pupils' achieving and learning less well. Teachers give pupils too few opportunities to use ICT as a tool to support their learning in mathematics.
58. Recent test results, analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations indicate that there is some underachievement amongst the more-able pupils in Year 2. Whilst the proportion of

pupils attaining expected levels has been and continues to be in line with and sometimes above national benchmarks, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 3 is lower. Evidence indicates that the quality of teaching in one Year 2 class has been better than in the others. Whilst one class has benefited from consistency, the other has suffered disruption due to staff turnover. It is in this class that the underachievement of more-able pupils has been most marked. More settled staffing arrangements are now in place. However, in both classes too great a reliance on worksheets, too few opportunities provided for more-able pupils to investigate number relationships and patterns and to respond to open-ended questions, all restrict their achievement.

59. The quality of leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has contributed well to improvements in standards through successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, providing training for staff and through effective links with the local education authority and other schools. However, limitations placed upon the time made available to the co-ordinator to observe lessons, to model her very good teaching skills to other teachers and to rigorously analyse test results mean the management of the subject is only satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Opportunities provided for pupils to apply and practice their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects, are satisfactory. In history, pupils use their knowledge of time to understand chronology better. In geography, their understanding of co-ordinates and negative numbers is put to good use when compiling maps or measuring and comparing temperature in different cities around the world. Pupils organise data sensibly in science and use their knowledge of measure well in physical education and in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2.
- Teachers now have a clear idea of the stages in investigative science.
- Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of methods to record their results in science.
- Teachers have a very accurate idea of pupils' attainment.
- Marking of pupils' written work does not give them a clear idea of how to improve.

Commentary

61. In the current Year 2, a higher proportion of pupils are attaining expected standards and a much higher proportion than average are attaining at Level 3. The high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is due to the teachers in Year 2 working closely as a team and conscientiously following the advice of the local education authority.
62. Overall standards in Year 6 meet expectations. Pupils' factual knowledge of natural and physical science is good and they achieve well in these areas. However, despite recent improvements, pupils' ability to apply this knowledge to investigations in science remains only satisfactory and tends to diminish their overall standards.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well-structured and through teachers' questions and in written work, pupils are given time to explore their own ideas and explanations. Teachers plan for pupils to record their work in a wide variety of appropriate ways, clearly teaching the skills needed. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well, using scientific terms to explain their findings, illustrating them with well-drawn labelled diagrams and symbols. Pupils begin to link cause and effect in a more generalised way when they explain the

effects of changing components in an electrical circuit. They understand the principles of fair testing well. High standards are maintained in Year 4, again through well-structured teaching, and pupils make good progress. In Year 6, pupils continue to achieve well, especially in natural and physical science. They measure data accurately, representing results as a graph where appropriate, and use them to confirm or reject their own hypotheses. Pupils satisfactorily link explanations of scientific events or phenomena, such as the water cycle. Teaching makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, but there is insufficient use of ICT in science lessons.

64. Teachers use accurate assessments of pupils' work to set relevant work for pupils of all abilities. This ensures that overall pupils achieve well. Although pupils have a good understanding of what level they are achieving, teachers' marking does not help older pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses in their work.
65. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Although there has been effective leadership in introducing new teaching approaches for investigative science, which are improving pupils' attainment in this area, the opportunities provided for the co-ordinator to observe a wide range of lessons have been limited. As a result, some of the relative strengths and weaknesses in teaching have not been fully identified. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising quickly.
- Good emphasis is given to pupils' evaluation of their work.
- Pupils enjoy ICT lessons.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills to learning in other subjects are too limited

Commentary

66. Standards in ICT throughout the school are in line with national expectations. School assessments show that standards are rising and more pupils are attaining at higher levels as teachers' confidence and expertise grow with training and experience. Inspection evidence confirms this. In all year groups, pupils use computers confidently and competently and make satisfactory progress in using a range of skills and programs for a variety of purposes. Younger pupils use a word processing program with increasing accuracy to write poems and recipes, and enhance digital photographs to create self-portraits in the style of Andy Warhol. Older pupils combine many skills in the design and production of their own multi-media presentations. More-able pupils adeptly combine text and graphics, with video clips and music, to create thought-provoking images. Pupils' confidence and secure understanding of computer techniques and processes help them to master unfamiliar programs, such as in Year 5 when they model altering the phasing of traffic lights.
67. The quality of teaching and learning in the ICT suite is satisfactory. Teachers take care to link new knowledge and skills to what the pupils already know and can do. They teach new skills clearly and check that pupils understand what they have to do in order to start work promptly. Formal evaluations encourage older pupils to consider what they have learnt, difficulties they encountered and how they could improve. Teachers work hard to help pupils who experience difficulties and providing further work for the more-able. However, teachers do not plan work to match the different ability groups so that all pupils have the same starting point, and this sometimes slows the progress of more-able pupils. In a good Year 6 lesson observed, pupils achieved well because the lesson was challenging and the subject interesting in its links to the local studies topic of Birkenhead Park.

68. The ICT suite is well laid out and spacious. However, it is isolated from many classes, particularly those on the ground floor. This means that the ICT suite is underused outside timetabled class sessions. The use of laptops goes some way to address this problem, but as yet there are not enough to ensure that ICT is a regular and effective part of learning in other subjects.
69. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has no formal opportunity to monitor provision but is enthusiastic and helpful to colleagues so that they feel more confident in trying new programs and skills. He has a good idea of standards through careful analyses of assessments. Despite similar standards to that found at the time of the previous inspection, improvements in teaching and provision meet the more exacting curriculum demands introduced.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. This is an unsatisfactory aspect of the curriculum. ICT lessons in the computer suite make interesting links with several curriculum areas, such as mathematical modelling using algebra, and Internet searches as part of history and geography studies. Little is done in class in other lessons, due to lack of equipment. It is difficult for classes to use the ICT suite for part of an English or mathematics lesson because of its isolation. Similarly pupils cannot use the suite for individual work and research, as they cannot be easily supervised.

HUMANITIES

71. During the inspection only two lessons were observed in geography, and no history lessons were observed. Therefore, it is not possible to make overall judgements on provision in these subjects. Inspectors gained further evidence by talking to pupils and staff and analysing samples of pupils' work.
72. In both history and geography, the work in pupils' books in Year 2 is of a good standard, it is well organised and high expectations of presentation are evident. In Year 6, pupils' books reflect standards in line with those expected for their age. As history and geography are taught in blocks, there is little recorded work in geography, as pupils in Year 6 were just starting a new topic at the time of the inspection. In both subjects, good use is made of visits to places of interest to enhance learning. For example, pupils visit Styal Mill to further learning about the Victorians, and in geography pupils visit Birkenhead Park to study its development and use. In addition, visitors to the school, such as an archaeologist, contribute considerable expertise. The enthusiastic humanities co-ordinators co-operate well together to plan an interesting curriculum, and they are currently trialling a promising, simple system of assessment.
73. In **history**, pupils study topics in some depth. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the lives of famous people such as Boudicca and Guy Fawkes, whilst older pupils in Year 6 study a good range of aspects of life in Victorian times. They gain a sense of chronology as they produce a time line showing events from Victorian times to the present day. Good opportunities are taken to develop and use literacy skills as pupils write detailed descriptions of contrasting living conditions for rich and poor Victorians.
74. In **geography**, pupils in Year 2 make perceptive comparisons between life on a Scottish island and in Birkenhead, showing a good appreciation of the differences between physical and human features in the landscape. Both lessons observed were good. In a Year 4 lesson, the imaginative link between drama and geography gave pupils a good understanding of how rivers are formed as they enacted the movement of water from the top of the mountain to the sea, identifying the forming of its tributaries on the way. In Year 6, a good review at the start of the lesson showed that pupils had gathered a lot of information from books and the Internet about the development and use of Birkenhead Park. There were good links with pupils' history topic as they related the living conditions of the poor and why they might need the use of a park.

Achievement was good as pupils became interested in their task and gained an appreciation of how the park was developed to reflect the needs of a changing and increasing population.

75. Because of the school's denominational status, **religious education** was not within the remit of this inspection and will be inspected by the Diocese.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' skills are well developed using a range of media.
- There is evidence of good curricular links with other subjects.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Monitoring of teaching, learning and standards is under-developed.

Commentary

76. Standards in art and design are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but with evidence of good features in Year 2. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection when attainment in art and design was judged to be in line with expectations in Year 2 and below expectations at the end of Year 6. In Year 2 pupils created realistic and attractive butterflies using squared paper to colour patterns symmetrically. They use computers to produce colourful paintings in the style of Modrian and design interesting patterns on clay tiles, decorating them according to their designs.
77. Teaching, although satisfactory overall, is occasionally good and pupils respond with enthusiasm. Teachers rigorously evaluate pupils' work and require pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work. Pupils develop their artistic skills such as pencil drawing and painting well. Cross-curricular activities are encouraged effectively. For instance, the puppets Year 2 pupils made, in design and technology, reflected their good ability to use colour to its best effect.
78. The co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the leadership and management of the subject. She is enthusiastic and committed and has a good understanding of what needs to be done to further integrate art and design within the curriculum and raise standards.

Design and technology

79. Design and technology was not a focus of the inspection and it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning. However, from analysis of teachers' plans, pupils' work and risk assessment procedures, it is clear that the pupils have a curriculum that matches statutory requirements and which is skills based. In all classes, pupils complete design sheets, identify materials and discuss how completed models could be improved. All teachers complete risk assessment sheets for all projects and the models made are of good quality. Resources are good and are well stored and easily accessible. The co-ordinator is experienced, committed and encourages cross-curricular support, such as the use of ICT, for example, to record in graphical form the data gathered.

Music

80. Only two lessons and a choir practice were observed. Therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in music. Singing by the whole school in assembly was tuneful, in time and of a satisfactory standard. The lunchtime choir gives pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 the

opportunity to improve their singing skills through extra practice and good guidance from the two teachers who lead the activity. The choir achieves a good standard as they prepare for the music festival for local schools that the school is to host. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 1, pupils have a good introduction to simple notation. Pupils responded enthusiastically when asked to sing or play an instrument and built up their understanding of rhythm and beat steadily and began to appreciate how instrumental accompaniment may improve the quality of singing. On this occasion, only a small number of instruments were used and so there were periods of inactivity for some pupils. In a good lesson in Year 3, very good relationships and control set a good atmosphere for pupils to listen to and appraise a range of music. Pupils were asked to express their responses to different pieces in a variety of ways. They discussed a piece of music, played on pipes, with considerable maturity. In a contrasting country and western song, pupils enjoyed expressing their feelings as drawings. The teacher set a good example to pupils by volunteering to show her drawing first, and this gave some potentially diffident pupils the confidence to display and discuss their own pictures.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range and quality of out-of-class activities and links with the community are good and pupils respond positively.
- Good quality accommodation enhances provision.
- Teachers focus too much on activities in lessons rather than improving pupils' skills.

Commentary

81. The school organises a good quality and range of out-of-class activities that attract substantial support from pupils of all ages. Many activities are organised which enhance pupils' physical development and skills. Apart from football and netball there are cricket, tag rugby and athletics clubs. The strong links with a local secondary school, specialising in sport, provides valuable tuition for pupils and staff. Recently, a course of training in basketball has considerably enhanced pupils' skills in this sport and culminated in an inter-school's tournament. Coaches from the local professional football club provide after-school clubs for girls and boys from Year 1 to Year 6, taught in separate age groups. The number of pupils from Years 1 and 2 attending was much greater than that found in most schools. Annually, pupils in all year groups have a six week block of swimming lessons from qualified instructors at a nearby pool. As a result, around 85 per cent of pupils swim a length of the pool unaided by the time they leave the school.
82. Throughout the school, pupils attain standards in line with expectations and the curriculum fully spans all areas of physical education. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Many of the lessons observed were focussed upon games. While pupils enjoyed lessons, which were brisk in pace and full of activity, in too many, teachers concentrated overmuch on instructing pupils in the process of the activity rather than on improving their techniques and skills. As a consequence, pupils, especially those with lesser skills often failed to make much progress in their ability to run faster with more style or in improving their technique in throwing or hitting a ball with a hockey stick. In a good dance lesson observed in Year 1, the teacher's specific demonstrations helped pupils improve their ability to interpret mood and emotion and resulted in above expected standards and achievement.
83. The good quality of accommodation available for physical education enhances the quality of provision. There is a very large, well-equipped hall and the school has use of an excellent, specialist gymnasium in which gymnastics and dance are taught. The soft flooring in the gymnasium encourages teachers to plan lessons which require pupils to perform more adventurous activities, especially in gymnastics, than would be possible given a hard surface. Outside are two large hard areas on which it is possible to teach games lessons

simultaneously. The good links with a local gymnastics club, who currently rent the specialist gymnasium, provide further high quality training for some older pupils with a talent in this sport.

84. The subject is led well by the recently appointed co-ordinator who has promoted very effective links with the community and successfully sought to make the curriculum more interesting for pupils and accessible for teachers. Management is satisfactory. The lack of opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe colleagues teaching has resulted in the relative weaknesses, noted in the second paragraph of this section, being unidentified.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. No lessons were observed and therefore no overall judgement about provision can be made. The school has identified this as an area for further development and new initiatives are proving successful. The lunchtime player-manager scheme has made the playground a happier and safer place. In this, older pupils show good care of younger ones. Involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative is helping pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.
86. Good citizenship is promoted successfully through local studies, which helps pupils to understand the nature of local society, and their place within it. Their care of the environment is evident in the good work of the Eco club. The newly formed school council is helping pupils understand the nature of democracy and is giving them a voice in decision-making on school matters.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	4
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	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	4

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