

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Leo's Catholic Primary School**

Prescot

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104475

Headteacher: Mrs J. Grundy

Lead inspector: Mrs S. M. Barnes

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 257773

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: 163.5

School address: Lickers Lane  
Whiston  
Prescot  
Merseyside  
Postcode: L35 3SR

Telephone number: 0151 477 8410  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Fr J. Dale

Date of previous inspection: 22/6/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Leo's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average school, situated in Whiston, near Prescot, on Merseyside. The boys and girls who attend are aged between three and 11 years. Most of the pupils come from houses around the school, but some travel from further a-field. Children who attend the nursery do so part-time initially, for either a morning or an afternoon session. Older children may attend full time in the term before they start in reception. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 are taught as straight age classes. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are taught in mixed age classes. There are falling numbers of school-aged children in the area and significant changes in the socio-economic background since the previous inspection. More children than nationally come from socially disadvantaged homes and homes where fewer adults have had higher education. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is higher than average at over 29 per cent. Virtually all of the pupils are of white British origin and all speak English as their main language. Attainment on entry to the school fluctuates due to the small size of each year group. It covers the full range, but is well below that expected nationally overall, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. A much higher than average proportion of the pupils, over a third, have special educational needs. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs vary considerably between year groups, due, in part, to the lower than average size of classes. Half of the pupils in Year 2 and over a third of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs. While overall movement into and out of the school is broadly average, a sixth of the current Year 6 have started at the school since Year 2. There have been many changes to staffing in the last four years, including the appointment of the current headteacher, administration officer, site manager and all but one of the class teachers. Recently, the school has been awarded Healthy School status and an Achievement Award. It is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16249	Mrs S. M. Barnes	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup> Science Educational inclusion Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects
19335	Mrs S. Dixon	Lay inspector	
20003	Mrs S. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Information and communication technology
25577	Mr W. Jefferson	Team inspector	Mathematics Personal, social, health education and citizenship Humanities

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<sup>1</sup> 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 an effective school that provides a good quality of education for all its pupils. The good quality of the leadership and management results in good quality teaching and learning. As a consequence, the achievements of boys and girls from all groups are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very high aspirations for the school of the headteacher, and her ability to motivate and influence staff, pupils and parents with her vision, are very good.
- The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievements by pupils of all levels of prior attainment.
- Assessment is good overall. It is particularly good in English and mathematics. Assessment in non-core areas is still being developed.
- Care and welfare of pupils is very good.
- Partnership with parents is very good.
- The role of co-ordinators is developing well and they are developing whole-school tracking of standards in their subjects. However, the role of co-ordinators in non-core subjects to monitor teaching and learning and standards across the school is at an early stage of development.

There has been a **good level of improvement** since the previous inspection. The school development plan is good and includes a good programme for staff development. There has been an improvement in the consistency of teaching across the school. Child protection procedures are now very good. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are very good. In addition, there have been improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in the quality and use of assessment, in links with parents and the community, and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The achievements of pupils throughout the school are **good**.

Results in end of year tests fluctuate year-on-year due to variations in the cohorts due mainly to their small size and the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs. Results at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were average for reading and writing, and well below average for mathematics. Currently standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. However, this represents good achievement for these pupils as a higher proportion of them than average have special educational needs. At the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and below those expected in mathematics and science. Again this represents good achievement for these pupils in the light of the special educational needs of a third of them, and this is shown by their results in interim assessments in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Standards in history, music and information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected for their ages at the end of both key stages. Attainment on entry to the nursery covers the full range and varies slightly year-on-year, however, overall it is well below the standards normally expected, particularly in language skills, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children from all groups make good overall progress in their learning in the nursery and reception classes and their achievements are generally good. In personal and social development, and creative development they are very good. Children are likely to attain the goals expected of children their age by the time they transfer into Year 1 in physical and personal and social development and in most areas of creative development. In musical development, the current reception are likely to be very much more advanced than is usual, due to the innovative programme of teaching they have received as part of a pilot scheme run in conjunction with the local education authority. Standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> for their age, although children have made good gains in their learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good**. Their cultural development is **good**.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are **good**. Attendance is satisfactory, and this represents a huge improvement in the last year, due to an increased emphasis by the school on raising standards.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education for all its pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school. Assessment is **good**, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics and in the Foundation Stage.

Teachers are very good at encouraging pupils to do their best and having high expectations of what they can achieve. They provide pupils with a good level of practical and interesting tasks. This has a positive effect on the attitudes pupils develop to their work and to the amount of effort and determination they put in. Support assistants are very committed and involved and have high levels of expertise. They enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by teachers and assistants alike, and their learning is good as a result. The quality of the curriculum is good with good innovative aspects, such as the links with the local university. Pupils are given good opportunities for enrichment, including trips and visitors, and opportunities to take part in clubs outside the school day. These all have a positive impact on the quality of learning and the ethos of the school. Partnerships with parents are very good, as are partnerships with the community. The standards of care, guidance and support, which the school provides for all its pupils, are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good**.

The leadership of the headteacher is good and she has a very clear vision and high aspirations for raising standards further. Her ability to inspire and motivate staff and pupils alike is very good and has led to the development of a whole team spirit in a comparatively short time. The management of the school is good overall. Administration is good. Leadership and management of core subject areas are good. However, the school acknowledges the need to develop the role of the co-ordinator in non-core subjects to include monitoring of standards of teaching and learning. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a good level of awareness of school strengths and areas for

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

improvement. Information for parents is good, but some required pieces of information are missing from the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils alike have very positive views of the school. They feel that they are included in decisions and that their views are listened to and considered. Parents are very appreciative of the hard work the school does and the efforts it makes to involve them in their children's learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop whole-school systems for assessment in the non-core subjects.
- Continue to develop the co-ordinators' role in non-core subjects to include monitoring of standards of teaching and learning across the school.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all of the required information is included in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement of boys and girls throughout the school is **good**. Standards pupils attain are broadly average at the end of both key stages.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs do well.
- Standards in the musical aspect of creative development of the current reception class are well above those expected for their age.
- In science and history, pupils are good at setting up experiments and taking part in practical activities and investigations.
- Achievements of children in the nursery and reception classes in personal and social, and creative development are very good.

#### Commentary

1. There are significant fluctuations over time in the results of national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. These fluctuations are due, in the main to the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs in the small cohorts. Half of the pupils in Year 2 and a third of the pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs. In the case of the current Year 6, there have also been a sizable proportion of pupils, many of whom have special educational needs, who have joined the school in Years 3 to 6.
2. Results in the end of key stage tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003, were pleasing in reading and writing, as they were in line with the average for schools nationally and were above average when compared with similar schools on the basis of eligibility for free school meals. However, results in mathematics were well below average and well below those attained in similar schools. The school is aware that these pupils did not achieve all they could in the subject, and as a consequence, there has been an increased focus on developing the subject, including staff training, that has had a positive impact on the standards pupils are currently achieving. Teacher assessments of standards in science were very high in relation to the proportions of pupils attaining the expected Level 2. Pupils attained standards in experimental and investigative science that were well above the national average. However, they were well below other schools nationally and also well below similar schools in the proportions attaining the higher Level 3.

#### Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (13.5)	14.6 (15.8)
mathematics	14.7 (14.2)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. In tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards in English were well above the national average. When compared with similar schools they were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Results in mathematics were well above average and well above average for similar

schools. In tests in science, standards were above average and well above average compared to similar schools.

4. When taken over time, standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 are currently broadly average. This represents good achievement for pupils from all groups. Similarly, although the standards attained by the current Year 2 in mathematics are likely to be below the average in the end of year tests, when taken over time they are broadly average overall and pupils' achievements are good. Standards in science are broadly in line with the standards expected and pupils' standards of achievement are good.
5. Standards in English for the current Year 6 are average overall. Standards in mathematics and science are below average. However, these standards represent good levels of achievement for these pupils, many of whom have special educational needs. A particular strength in science is pupils' confidence in practical aspects of the subject, which are particularly good. Standards in information and communication technology and history are in line with those expected for pupils' ages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievements are good.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, because of the very good provision that is made for them.

### **Foundation Stage**

7. Children in the Foundation Stage start schooling with standards which cover the full range, but which, when taken overall, are well below those expected for their ages, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good gains in their learning overall and their achievements are good in all six areas of learning for young children, due to the good quality of education provided for them. In personal, social and creative development their achievements are very good. By the time they transfer into Year 1, standards are in line with those expected and children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in physical, personal, and social development. Standards are in line with those expected for children's ages in creative development and, in the current reception class, standards are well above those normally attained in music. This is due to the specialised teaching they receive as part of a particular initiative supported by the local education authority. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, standards are likely to be below those expected overall. However, this represents good achievement and some of these children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals.

### **Key Stage 2**

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

Standards in:

School results

National results

English

29.5 (25.9)

26.8 (27.0)

mathematics

28.4 (25.0)

26.8 (26.7)

science

29.7 (26.6)

28.6 (28.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The school's actions to monitor and improve attendance are **very good**, although attendance levels and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have positive attitudes to the school and the staff, and behave well.
- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils use their initiative and willingly accept responsibility.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, are very good and their appreciation of their own and others cultural traditions including multi-cultural issues, are good

### **Commentary**

8. This is a happy school with pupils who are welcoming and well behaved in lessons and about the school. Parents are particularly enthusiastic about the ethos and the very positive attitudes and values that the school promotes. Pupils of all ages like coming to school, think that they learn a lot, and have good support when they need help with both their work and relationships. Because they have very positive relationships with the teachers and supporting adults, they respond well and are willing to try hard to do all that is asked of them. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve the targets set for them in personal and social development and are making good progress from a very low start. Older pupils work well independently or as part of a pair or small or larger group because they are trusted to get on with tasks sensibly. They share resources well, take turns in using equipment and willingly help to keep the school clean and tidy.
9. All but a very few pupils with behavioural special educational needs behave well during lessons and at break and lunch times. Older pupils cheerfully help the younger ones about the school and in the playground. Nobody could remember any instances of name-calling and harassment, and all are confident that they would be dealt with quickly. All are aware that the school tolerates no form of bullying. Pupils are confident that the school takes all such issues seriously and would work well with both parties to resolve difficulties.
10. No pupils have been excluded in the last school year.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good as a result of the positive personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are proud of all their achievements both in and out of school and are motivated to put hard work and effort into all they are asked to do. The school gives full acknowledgement, not just for their academic and physical skills but also for the use of their initiative and support for others. All achievement is celebrated. In class there are

personal and social development sessions that enable pupils to discuss issues of common concern and consider relationships. As pupils feel teachers are fair and listen to their views and that they are trusted to do things on their own they are happy to share their opinions and concerns with others in group discussions. They are developing the social skills of taking turns and listening carefully to the teacher and each other.

- Children are encouraged to use their initiative and accept responsibility well. The school council collects opinions from each class and, after discussion negotiates with the school senior managers changes that will benefit the whole school community. The school also asks for pupils opinions via questionnaires, this is very good practice. Pupils take responsibility individually and independently. This was particularly well demonstrated by pupils tidying away after assemblies and running errands, raising money for charity and helping those younger than themselves when they needed a 'buddy'. The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development through the behaviour policy and moral focus within classes. The contribution pupils make to the life of the school supports their social development well. Their cultural development is good, including good provision for learning about life in multicultural Britain. The work in history and religious education is enhanced by celebration of festivals, theme days and weeks and visitors into the school from the local community. Spiritual development is very well developed with each class having a focus area and using gentle music to set the atmosphere for reflection. Teachers make the most of opportunities to inspire pupils and nurture a sense of awe and wonder concerning the world around them, especially during the inspection with the growth of plants and colours of the spring.

### Attendance

- Attendance levels are significantly improved due to the school's very good action to promote good attendance. Pupils' punctuality is also satisfactory. The role of the learning mentor has been of considerable importance. Attendance is carefully monitored and the families of pupils causing concern are offered support and encouragement. Good and improved attendance are recognised and rewarded. Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners and this is reflected in the improved attendance. Despite the schools success, there are still some families that take holidays in term time and some pupils who miss too much school.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	7.7
National data:	5.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.0
National data:	5.4

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is of a consistently high standard throughout the school. The curriculum is **good** and covers all of the required aspects. It is effectively enriched by a wide range of other activities. Provision for pupils' care and welfare is **very good**, as are links with parents, the community and other schools.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **good** overall throughout the school. The quality of assessment is **good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide pupils with a good range of practical and investigative activities.

- Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning due to the good teaching they receive.
- Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and dedicated.
- Teachers make learning interesting for all pupils.
- Assessment is used efficiently to raise standards in mathematics and English.

## Commentary

14. Teachers throughout the school are very good at encouraging pupils to do their best and having high expectations of what they can achieve. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and there are consistently high expectations of how boys and girls will behave. As a result, pupils, including those with behavioural special educational needs, know how they are expected to behave and very rarely need more than gentle reminders to keep them on task.
15. Teachers provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to take part in practical investigations and research. This makes the lessons memorable and has a very beneficial effect on the quality of learning, which is good. For example, in science pupils in Year 2 take part in hatching chicks as part of their work on life cycles and pupils in Year 6 hatch butterflies as part of their work on eco-systems. In history, pupils investigate local famous figures such as John Lennon.
16. Teachers take good regard to the things that their pupils enjoy. They make good use of local history and the environment, for example, and plan a good range of visits and visiting experts to broaden pupils' learning experiences. For example, visitors come from the local university, and specialist musicians teach lessons to children and their teachers together. The effect of these interesting lessons is that pupils find their work fascinating. This has a positive effect on the attitudes they develop, their self-confidence and belief in their own ability and also to the amount of effort and determination they put in to their tasks. Levels of effort and concentration are good.
17. Support assistants are very committed and involved, and have high levels of expertise. They are fully involved in professional development to enhance their skills. As a result, they are confidently involved in the planning of lessons to meet individual pupils' needs, so that they know exactly what the learning objectives are. They work very effectively to enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to take a full part in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by teachers and assistants alike. Parents and pupils themselves are actively involved in setting their next targets in discussion with their teachers. Everyone knows what each pupil is aiming to achieve, and how it will be done and learning is good as a result.
18. The assessment of pupils' work is good overall and meets statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage, in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of assessment of pupils' progress and attainment in these subjects and in information and communication technology is good. Early assessments are made in the Foundation Stage when children start in the nursery. These assessments are used well to monitor progress and to identify any child who needs special extra support. In the main school, information gained is used effectively to monitor what pupils do well and what needs to be improved in English and mathematics. In science, procedures have only recently been put in place so the accumulated evidence is less and its impact as a tool to track progress and raise standards is still to be developed. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school, with clear targets to address, which are known by pupils, teachers and parents alike.
19. Results of a range of tests provide good quality data. Overall, this information is used well to track individual progress and also to set group and individual learning targets for English and mathematics, as pupils move through the school. This tracking of the progress of each pupil is particularly valuable, due to the small size and the variations year-by-year in different classes.

20. The school has no whole-school systems in place to assess pupils' achievement in non-core subjects. Co-ordinators do not have access to standardised information about how each pupil is getting on in these subjects, which would enable them to monitor progress against national curriculum levels of attainment. Individual pupils' are not yet involved in regular self-assessment in non-core subjects, to further develop awareness of their own learning. The quality of marking is generally good, but there are inconsistencies. In most classes it is used very effectively to guide pupils' learning and to encourage them to be proud of neat and tidy work. However, in a few lessons teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to set work out neatly. Junior pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve is good.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3 %)	4 (12 %)	25 (73 %)	4 (12 %)	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.

### The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and provides **very good** support to pupils' personal, social and health education. The enrichment of the curriculum is **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is good and helps them achieve well.
- The school makes good provision for all pupils to be fully included in all activities.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Senior staff ensure that innovations, such as the personal, social and health education programme, music provision and accelerated learning opportunities, give effective support to the learning of all pupils.

### Commentary

21. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements for all pupils. The programme to support pupils' personal, social and health education has been carefully constructed to reflect the caring ethos of the school and is linked well to other areas of the curriculum, including science and religious education. There has been a continuing improvement to the curriculum for Foundation Stage children since the previous inspection, and all issues have been addressed. Likewise, there have been good, continual improvements in the enrichment of the curriculum for all pupils, including themed weeks of focused teaching and the introduction of French to the whole school. New schemes of work have been devised for music and ICT, among others, and resources classified to maximise support to learning. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well integrated into the school.
22. A positive influence on the curriculum across the school has been staff training to implement each area of development. For example, New Opportunities funded training for information and communication technology. Likewise, there has been training in strategies such as Early Excellence and Accelerated Learning for staff with responsibility, so that they can then effectively supervise the introduction and organisation of these new initiatives. Activities extra to the curriculum have been well planned. The headteacher has implemented French for all pupils in all classes. Ten minutes a day are devoted to learning and using vocabulary in conversational sessions such as identifying the days of the week, answering names when taking the register and commenting upon the news. There are many sporting opportunities, including games and football, and participation in the arts is good, with opportunities for music, drama, library and story. The school makes visits into the community such as Foundation

Stage children taking their violins to a headteachers' meeting to share their enjoyment with others and taking part in a music festival where, although the youngest, their singing and playing earned them the first place. Visits to museums and churches, environmental areas and galleries occur as well as visitors coming into the school, including actors, the fire and police and visiting musicians. All of these activities have a positive impact on pupils' self confidence and self esteem, as well as in their academic achievement.

23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Good use is made of the skills of outside agencies to support learning by contributing to identifying needs and suggesting ideas to match the individual education plans of such pupils. Pupils benefit from working in ability groups in English and mathematics as this helps staff to match work very precisely to pupils' needs, and ensures that they all work at a suitably challenging level. The school has the policy of keeping all pupils in the classroom unless being withdrawn for very specific and targeted support and if this occurs teachers ensure that they receive a full involvement upon their return. The school has a positive, inclusive focus and monitors access to activities across the school. At present the school does not have any pupils who have a mother tongue other than English, but strategies are in place to identify and provide for their need.
24. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. The accommodation that the school provides is good. Classrooms are of uneven size, but all allow the full curriculum to be taught. In addition there are wide corridor areas and spaces used efficiently, for example, allocated to music and information and communication technology. The large hall accommodates assemblies, lunchtimes and performances comfortably. The playground provides for the basic needs of the pupils in Years 1 to 6. The Foundation Stage play area is attractive with grassed as well as hard play surfaces. Resources throughout the school are good. The resources to support pupils with special educational needs are good.

### **Care, guidance and support**

This aspect of the schools work is **very good** and one of the school's strengths. The arrangements for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance for all pupils is **very good**, as is the involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school offers its pupils a happy and supportive environment where all are equally valued.
- Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are looked after very well.

### **Commentary**

25. Pupils new to the school are well provided for. The very good relationships that exist in this school community and the very good provision for social and moral development has created an environment where pupils are happy and confident. This has a positive effect upon their learning. Pupils feel that they are treated with kindness and there is always someone to listen to them and help them.
26. The health and safety arrangements and child protection procedures show a notable improvement since the previous inspection. The supporting policies are comprehensive and daily practice is very thorough. All adults in school are suitably trained and alert to the needs of everyone in this school community.
27. The academic and personal support and guidance offered to pupils is very good. Pupils have a very good awareness of their own learning and success is recognised well. Pupils' individual targets for improvement are well understood and they feel that the marking of their work is very helpful and encouraging.

28. The school's arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are very good. Individual views can be expressed in lessons and through a school problem box. In addition there is a school council and pupils' opinions are canvassed through questionnaires. The pupils feel that they are listened to very well and that the response to their suggestions is very good.
29. Pupils new to the school benefit from good induction procedures. These include meetings, information packs and opportunities for children to visit the school and make a settled start to their education. Pupils joining the school after the Foundation Stage are equally well supported with the allocation of buddies to help them feel welcome.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership with parents, other schools and the community is **very good** and one of the schools strengths. This creates a very enthusiastic and supportive environment and has a very positive effect upon learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The partnership with parents has a very positive effect on pupils learning.
- The information provided for parents about school life and their children's learning is good.
- The involvement of parents in their children's learning at school and at home is very good.
- The links with the community play an important part in enriching pupils' lives.
- The links with other schools and colleges support teachers' professional development well. It also offers parents and the community extensive opportunities for their own development and education.
- The mechanism for the transfer of pupils to secondary school is good.

### **Commentary**

30. Parents are very appreciative of all that the school provides. In particular they feel that the school is very approachable and that they and their children are supported very well. They feel that their children have benefited greatly from the many improvements that have taken place in recent years. Parents' views are sought regularly and good use is made of them.
31. Parents are very appreciative of the work the school has done to help them support their children's learning at home and in school. This area is especially well supported by the provision of very good guidance for parents and family learning courses. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and are provided with good advice and guidance on how to help their children at home. However, some required pieces of information are missing from the school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents.
32. The schools' very good links with the community and its partnership with other schools and colleges have a very positive effect upon learning. The local community provides a good resource to support and enrich learning. Pupils visit places of interest and many parents and members of the community offer their help in school. Of particular benefit to parents and the school is the link with adult education providers who offer a wide variety of opportunities to the community, for example, classroom assistant training courses and family learning events. Links with other schools provide good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary school. Professional development is well supported by the links with other primary and secondary schools and pupils benefit from sharing resources, for example, sports facilities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is **good** and governance of the school is **good**.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The clarity of headteacher's vision and ability to lead and motivate staff is very good.
- There are very good induction procedures and continuing professional development of staff.
- The school makes a very good contribution to initial teacher training.
- The role of non-core subject co-ordinators is acknowledged as an area for further development.
- The governing body has a good level of awareness of school's strengths and areas for improvement.

## **Commentary**

33. The headteacher is an effective leader and has a very clear vision for the school's development. It is based primarily on eradicating the current need for mixed age classes by enhancing the good reputation of the school to encourage an increase in pupil numbers. This outcome is seen as the means to enable teachers to refine planning for a smaller number of target groups and so improve overall standards. The continued professional development of teaching and support staff is central to this aim, and there is a very good commitment which, combined with good self-review, provides many opportunities for staff to attend relevant courses. These are regularly taken-up by all staff and have a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Every teacher is given management experience, the results of which are monitored by the headteacher.
34. Recently qualified and appointed teachers and others with few years experience, speak very highly of the welcome and continuing support they receive from the school and also from the local authority. A very good team spirit exists that includes the entire staff of the school. Administration of the school is good, and the welcome visitors and parents receive is friendly and efficient. The site manager fulfils a valuable role as part of that effective team. The school contributes significantly to the professional development of student teachers. For a small school, it accepts and plays a major role in supporting a proportionately high number of trainees, mentored by the headteacher and class teachers.
35. Management of the school is good. Leaders of the core areas of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology monitor their subjects rigorously and have a good knowledge of standards in their subject throughout the school. Most leaders of non-core subjects currently monitor pupils' work. Monitoring of teaching and learning and the systematic assessment of what pupils can do in relation to National Curriculum levels, are areas for further development acknowledged by the school.
36. The governing body is well organised and prepared to challenge the headteacher's proposals. For example, her decision to change swimming organisation has resulted in a pilot scheme that will be evaluated after a year trial period. The Vice-Chair plays a significant role. Her very regular presence in classrooms enables the governors to have a good grasp of the school's strengths and also areas for development. In the recent past, the governing body successfully made difficult decisions related to staffing.
37. The schools finances are managed well. The headteacher and governors have introduced effective procedures for evaluating spending as, for example, in the strategic deployment of additional staff and support staff. Considerations of best value for money are good. They are well supported by the archdiocese.
38. The school faces a number of barriers to raising achievement. Most notable are the under developed language and numeracy skills of many children when they start school, and the low academic expectations of a significant number of parents. Particular aids to overcome some of these obstacles, is targeted classroom support and on-going endeavours to involve parents in their children's learning. The school provides good value for money.

## **Financial information**

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	479,623
Total expenditure	484,216
Expenditure per pupil	2,831

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,000
Balance carried forward to the next	13,407

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

39. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage in the nursery class and reception class is **good**. Children enter with a wide range of ability, including a very small number who are gifted or talented. Attainment on entry fluctuates year by year due to the variations of numbers of children with special educational needs and the small class sizes. However, overall attainment is well below the average, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The good leadership and management of the co-ordinator have resulted in the provision of a rich and stimulating curriculum, which effectively meets the needs of boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment. Assessment is good and is used effectively to track children's progress and to identify any child with special educational needs, including those who are gifted or talented. Currently, the quality of teaching and learning is good in both classes. In both the nursery and the reception class, the range of activities provided for the children takes due regard of their interests and capabilities and also the Early Learning Goals. This high quality curriculum represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. At that time it was noted that in reception, there was little to stimulate children to want to write and opportunities for them developing their numerical skills were not always followed up. The approach was much more formal than the nursery and children sat for long periods of time. They did not take much part in practical investigations and the quality of teaching was judged to be not as stimulating as it could be.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment is very good.
- Nursery children show curiosity and reception children persist for extended periods of time in activities they have chosen.

#### **Commentary**

40. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teachers and learning support assistants work together very effectively to provide a wide range of activities within a well-established set of routines so that there is a very good balance of new things to find out about, but also children are comfortable that they know what will be expected. Children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Nursery children quickly develop a good sense of trust and confidence in the well established routines. They come into the nursery happily and separate from their parents and carers, many of whom stay to make toast and other early morning snacks for all to share. Nursery children make good progress and play happily with materials that are new to them, such as corn-flour. They learn to show care for living things and the environment, such as watering seeds and plants in the garden. They demonstrate pride in their own achievements, such as when they work with the support assistant to make snacks for the rest of the class. Reception children develop the skill to persist for lengthening amounts of time at activities, such as washing toys, pretending to paint or playing with toy animals. However, a significant number of them prefer to play alongside others or to play quietly on their own, rather than to play games together.
41. This is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when children's achievement was judged to be good in this area of learning.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception children learn to take account of the views of others.
- Nursery children rely on gesture to support their communication with others.
- Higher attaining children learn to experiment with language.

### Commentary

42. Teaching and learning of this aspect of the curriculum are good. As a result the achievement of boys and girls from all groups is good. However, children are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Teachers and support assistants take care to make good use of opportunities for the development of language in daily activities. Nursery children are often at very early stages of using language. They use simple statements to express their needs and these are often supported by simple gestures. *Get that (crocodile) out!* (waving hand to elaborate) *Can't (it's) stuck!* However, teachers and learning support assistants take good care to model language effectively to develop children's vocabulary and provide good opportunities for higher attaining children to begin to experiment with language. For example, when playing with corn-flour and water, one child started to chant the different ways he could think to describe the experience. *It's squishy, wishy, squishy wishy, squishy wishy.* They learn to ascribe meaning to marks, such as when they paint and draw. Reception children incorporate language into their play, but often talk alongside their friends, rather than with them. For example, when playing with dough, one child suddenly laughed and said *It's a baby!* and moved it in a rocking motion. Due to the good examples they are set, reception children start to take account of other's views and use language to help each other. For example, when one child who was painting was joined by another, she tried to help put up a new sheet of paper *Which way? Like mine?* Reception children learn to listen to words and identify the sounds at the start and end of words and use this when trying to write. They learn to use writing as a means of recording and communicating, such as when they write about a story they have heard.
43. The standards noted by the previous report have been effectively maintained.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in nursery and reception are given good opportunities to learn through practical experiences.

### Commentary

44. Teaching and learning in this aspect of the curriculum for young children are good. As a result, the achievements of boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment are good. However, overall they are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Nursery children are encouraged by their teacher and support assistant to develop their interest in numbers and in counting. They count small numbers of objects and toys in the nursery classroom and join in with enjoyment in singing simple number rhymes and songs, such as *Five little monkeys, bouncing on the bed.* They are given good opportunities to develop mathematical skills and knowledge in practical ways, such as playing with puzzles, cutting different shaped sandwiches for snack and developing mathematical vocabulary such as *big and little.* Reception children learn to enjoy counting and are given a good range of opportunities to practise and refine their skills. They count objects, such as toy elephants, one

at a time and learn to recognise numerals one to five and then one to nine. Sometimes they initiate their own activities, chanting numbers when they play outside with the cars and blocks, for example. The previous report said that children achieved well, but noted that there were missed opportunities for children in reception to learn through first hand experiences, such as sand and water play. This has been effectively resolved.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers ensure children are provided with a wide range of interesting and practical tasks and experiences.
- Children with special educational needs are supported well so that they have equality of access to all activities.

### **Commentary**

45. The achievement of boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment is good and they make good gains in their learning as a result of the good quality of teaching. However, overall they are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals for their age by the time they transfer into Year 1. Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with a rich range of opportunities to learn about the world around them. In the nursery children are provided with good opportunities to develop their curiosity. They observe and manipulate objects with great concentration. For example, building “homes” for toy animals or pouring water from one container to another. They remember things that have happened to them. For example, they talk with animation about the walk they took to the church, remembering the things they saw and plotting them on a simple map with their teacher. They are already confident users of technology, listening to stories on tapes and on the computer and using the mouse to move items on the screen. Reception children describe features they observe, such as ice melting when salt is added. They begin to use a range of tools safely, such as using paint brushes and “squirty” bottles of water to “redecorate” and clean paintwork. They construct a “car wash” with the classroom assistant and talk about significant events this brings to mind. *My Dad’s got a new van! It’s big!* However, while they talk with animation while these activities are going on, many have difficulty in recalling and describing them at a later date.
46. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, which said that teaching was satisfactory, but not always appropriate for children’s age and ability. At that time there were too few opportunities for children to find things out for themselves, and children did not have sufficient free access to computers throughout the day.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Nursery children generally show respect for other children’s personal space, when playing among them.
- Children combine and repeat a range of movements with developing accuracy.
- Reception children learn about healthy practices, such as washing their hands.
- Children develop increasing hand and eye co-ordination
- Teachers and support assistants work together well to give children a good range of opportunities to develop their skills each day.

### **Commentary**

47. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support assistants plan carefully each day to ensure that children all have a good and interesting range of activities available to practice their physical skills and to develop new ones. They carefully plan so that there is a good balance of activities such as riding tricycles and using large blocks and also to manipulate small objects such as beads and small toys. As a result, the achievement of boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment is good. Children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals for their age by the time they transfer into Year 1. In the nursery, children show awareness of their own needs, such as having a drink or eating a snack. They engage in activities, which require hand and eye co-ordination, arranging flowers, for example, in foam blocks in the “Florists shop”, or making patterns in dough. In the reception class, children learn to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and to put on coats and jumpers before going outside. They move freely with pleasure and confidence, playing outside with toy cars. They negotiate space successfully, going backwards and sideways as well as forwards. They develop increasing skill in using tools to make marks, such as brushes and sponges and in playing with “small world” toys. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, teaching and achievement was judged to be satisfactory.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for musical development of the children in the current reception class is very good.
- Children in both classes are given good opportunities to develop their imaginations.

### Commentary

48. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers and support assistants provide children in both the nursery and reception class with a wide range of good opportunities to develop their creative skills and imagination. As a result, children’s achievements are good and they are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals expected of them by the time they transfer into Year 1 in most areas, such as using different media and materials and developing their imagination. However, the quality of teaching and learning of music for the current reception children is very good. The school is taking part in a special initiative in combination with the local education authority, to improve the teaching and learning of music throughout the school. The programme has been underway for the last two years and started with the current reception children when they were in the nursery. The teaching is undertaken by a music specialist, who visits twice each week to teach the children, the class teacher and the support assistant. The aim is to develop teachers’ skills and confidence as the children progress through the school so that they can use their new skills and confidence in teaching successive classes of children. Current nursery children are benefiting from the increased confidence their teacher and support assistant have gained from taking part in this programme last year. Teaching and learning are good and children make good progress in learning to sing songs such as *Wind the bobbin up* and *Howdy doody doody*. They sing enthusiastically and join in with hand actions and clapping.
49. The current children in reception have benefited from this highly skilled teaching by music specialists for two years. Their achievement is very good and they have developed musical skills far in advance of those expected for their age. They read simple musical notation and are aware of the different lengths of notes. They are all currently learning to play the violin and pick out notes and bow their instruments with developing skill and obvious enjoyment. This is having a very beneficial effect on their self-esteem and confidence.
50. There has been a very good level of improvement since the previous report, which judged that teaching was satisfactory overall, but children did not have enough regular access to painting or music making activities.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good across the school.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good and excellent teaching was seen.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons and behave well.
- Leadership and management are good.

#### Commentary

51. Standards in the national tests for Year 6 pupils vary year by year, as the numbers in the group can be small and the number with special educational needs can be high. In the 2003 national tests, pupils aged 11 attained results that were very high when compared with the national average. It is unlikely that this will be repeated in 2004. The current Year 6 is small in number and over a third of the pupils have special educational needs in developing their language and literacy skills. However, standards over time for the school remain at satisfactory levels overall. This is as a result of good quality teaching and learning which results in pupils achieving well overall. Pupils aged seven attained standards in reading and writing in 2003 that were in line with the national average and above those of pupils at similar schools. The school expects the current Year 2 pupils to reach similar levels in the 2004 tests and tasks. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are average across the school. The school's focus on developing pupils writing skills further is working well, and the standards seen in lessons and in examples of pupils work in books and displays across the school were satisfactory.
52. Achievement for all pupils is good. Although pupils have low standards when they start school, they make good and frequently very good progress as a result of the consistently good quality teaching and learning seen across the school. Standards in speaking and listening are average. All but a very few pupils with special needs listen well to their teachers and to what other pupils say. This reflects their good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils who have problems focusing upon and understanding what others have to say are well supported by their teachers and class assistants. Initially standards of speaking are low, as seen when younger pupils try to contribute to a lesson and struggle to clearly explain their ideas. By the time pupils are in Year 6, the frequent opportunities for sharing their opinions in class debates and during question and answer sessions have raised their standards to satisfactory levels.
53. Attainment in reading is average. The very good development of pupils' letter and sounds knowledge starts in the early year classes and is developed further in Years 1 and 2. These, combined with the opportunity to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books in school and at home with parents and carers, enables pupils across the school to develop more advanced reading skills. Thus achievement is good from a low initial standard. The school has staff qualified in using national strategies such as 'Early Literacy Skills' and this gives a boost to those needing extra support to make progress. Pupils have good attitudes to reading and the well-stocked library areas and class book corners make a significant contribution to this.
54. Attainment in writing is average and improving. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress from a low base. In older classes there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length than before writing became a whole school focus and this is positively affecting the standards that pupils achieve. The opportunity to use the interactive white boards in classrooms and the computers in the computer suite to support the wider curriculum is beginning to give pupils good opportunities to draft and edit their work.



55. Teaching seen was particularly good for pupils in Years 6 and 2. Here there is a very high challenge to pupils learning. Pupils learn to concentrate, to develop the skills of thinking hard about their own and others ideas and to learn new information and skills. They are taught to learn to listen and respond carefully to what others have to say and to learn to work with others, co-operating about sharing resources and collaborating in group and paired activities. Teachers have been well trained to use the National Literacy Strategy and have very secure knowledge of a good range of texts and how to use these to develop pupil's skills. The National Literacy Strategy is well established. Learning support assistants are used very well to support pupils with learning difficulties. This helps them to take a full part in lessons and so achieve well. Pupils are grouped within classes for literacy lessons. This means they are working with those of similar ability. Very good assessment procedures have been established to track the pupils' progress. Pupils are given good guidance in the marking of their work to help them to improve. Teachers insist that pupils present their work well, and standards of presentation are good. Pupils make good use of their handwriting skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.
56. The subject manager has examined teacher's plans, observed lessons and looks at samples of pupils' work. Although a recent appointment, she has a clear vision for the development of English and these should impact on the standards pupils attain. Visits from the community and 'themed weeks' enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' learning. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils listen to poetry on different themes and stories from different countries and cultures. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching and learning and pupils' progress was only satisfactory.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

57. Younger pupils' weak speaking skills often prevent them explaining their ideas clearly. However, teachers work hard at encouraging pupils to persevere and provide structured chances for the development of speaking and listening across the curriculum, especially in their personal, social and health education work, discussing school rules and rewards. There are some good examples of pupils' writing that support and enhance learning in other areas of the curriculum. In their cultural and multicultural work in geography, for instance, pupils had composed a French booklet and written letters from Mexico about the climate and activities. During "Tudor Week", older pupils researched life at the time of Henry VIII by reading a range of fiction and non-fiction about the period, and used the information effectively to write reports for the "St. Leo's Echo", word processing their work using different fonts and colours.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils find lessons memorable and are given good opportunities to work out solutions to mathematical problems in different ways.
- Teachers are confident in the subject and use assessment well.
- Pupils' attitudes are good.
- The co-ordinator has put good, exciting initiatives in place.

#### **Commentary**

58. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Standards throughout the school are broadly in line with those expected nationally. However, in the current Year 6 classes there is a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a high proportion of pupils who joined the school as juniors. Almost half of Year 2 pupils have special educational needs. Standards in both classes are below average.

59. In the 2003 Year 2 national tests, standards were well below average. In Year 6 they were well above average. Relatively small numbers in all age groups have a significant impact on standards year-on-year.
60. From inspection of lessons and analysis of pupils' recorded work, the overall quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and very high expectations of pupils' concentration and involvement in lessons. Teaching assistants and support staff make very effective contributions to pupils' learning and good behaviour. Most lessons are developed with good pace to sustain interest, and as a result pupils remember what they have been taught. The school uses a good range of tests, the results of which enable teachers to have a good knowledge of what pupils have learned and what areas of learning need to be revisited. This information enables the school to set targets and to track individual pupil's progress. Marking is undertaken systematically and in most classes, in a manner that gives pupils direction as to how they might improve.
61. In most lessons, pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics and many say they enjoy it. They co-operate very well and nearly all of them show a clear eagerness to succeed. Relationships are very good and many are confident to demonstrate their mathematical understanding when invited to write on the board or to explain a strategy they understand. Younger pupils work well together and happily share materials in support of their learning.
62. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is a mathematics specialist and has been in post for some time. Before her recent period of absence, she began a programme of monitoring teaching and learning. In order to drive standards higher, this aspect and the monitoring of pupils' workbooks are areas for consolidation and development. Resources are good. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were average in Year 2 and in Year 6.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. The school has adopted nationally approved schemes of work for most curriculum areas. They identify a good range of planned opportunities for teachers to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding and also to enable them to appreciate the importance of the subject in many aspects of life. For example, when costing a camping trip, pupils in Year 4 and 5 generated pie-charts and discrete bar charts to display their findings effectively.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide pupils with a good range of practical experiences.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support so that they are fully included in all lessons.
- Good assessment systems have been put in place.

#### **Commentary**

64. Teacher assessments of standards in science at end of Year 2 in 2003 placed the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, in that all of the pupils attained the level expected for their age. However, these results were well below the national when looking at the proportion attaining the higher Level 3, as none of the pupils attained that level. These results were also much higher than those attained by similar schools when eligibility for free school meals was the criterion. Analysis of teachers' assessments indicated that the pupils were best at working out how to set up experiments, but weaker in their knowledge of life processes and living

things. The results of tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well above those attained nationally when the proportions of pupils reaching the expected Level, 4, were considered. They were also above average for the proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. When compared to similar schools on the basis of eligibility for free school meals these results were well above average for pupils attaining at least Level 4. They were also well above average for the proportions attaining Level 5. When compared with similar schools on the basis of how well these pupils had done in the tests at the end of Year 2, the results were well above average overall.

65. Currently there are great variations between the attainment of individual cohorts, largely due to the proportions of pupils with special educational needs in individual year groups, but also due to variations of movements of pupils. Nearly half of the pupils in the current Year 2, for example, have special educational needs. In Year 6 the proportion is well over a third and in addition, a sixth of the pupils, many with special educational needs, have joined the school since the Year 2 assessments were undertaken.
66. The achievements of pupils in Year 1 and 2 are good and they are likely to attain the standards expected by the time they transfer to Year 3. They have a suitable knowledge of life and living processes due to an increased emphasis on this aspect of their work. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about parts of the body and how humans grow and develop. In Year 2, pupils look at the differences between plants and animals. They learn about healthy eating, linked to the school's "healthy schools" programme and are able to sort food into different types. In the classes for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, pupils' achievements are good. Overall, standards are broadly in line with those attained nationally. The standards of the current Year 6 are unlikely to be at that level, due to the high proportions of the pupils with special educational needs. However, school tracking, in the form of standardised annual assessments, indicate that the achievements of these pupils are good and that they have made good gains in their learning.
67. The quality of teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school. They are enhanced by teachers' efforts to make learning memorable by providing a good range of practical experiences such as hatching chicks in Year 2, growing seeds linked to work on life-cycles, hatching butterflies in Year 6 and listening to the sounds different instruments make in work linked to sound in Year 1. This good teaching results in good levels of learning by boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment.
68. Good assessment systems are in place, based on government advice. As yet they have not been in place long enough to accrue sufficient evidence to allow detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has reviewed the policy and developed a good scheme of work. She monitors teachers' planning and their evaluations of how well lessons have gone, and has started to monitor teaching and learning and work in pupils' books. She has conducted pupil questionnaires to evaluate their understanding and enjoyment of topics they have undertaken. This gives her a good knowledge of standards across the school. She has also reviewed resources and ensured that they are of good quality to meet the needs of pupils' differing levels potential attainment, from higher attaining pupils to those with special educational needs. Standards are broadly in line with those noted at the time of the previous inspection. However, good leadership and management have resulted in greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average by Years 6 and 2 and improving.
- Achievement is good for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school.

- The curriculum is well focused on the development of pupils' skills and knowledge with good links to other subject areas.
- Leadership and management are good and committed to improving both standards and resources.
- Resources have improved since the previous inspection with interactive whiteboards in most classrooms.

## **Commentary**

69. Provision has improved well since the previous inspection. The school timetable lets each class give pupils more than one 'in-suite' session a week along with the opportunity to practise and develop skills further within classrooms. Most teachers use these opportunities for distinct ICT skills development as well as to support different curriculum areas such as mathematics, English and science well. As a result, pupils have regular, good quality learning opportunities and they attain satisfactory levels overall.
70. Pupils work hard. They know how to use the wide range of information and communication technology equipment well. They use the Internet, to research in history and science, the interactive white boards in their classes, overhead projectors in assemblies, digital cameras to record their work and activities, and scanners, televisions, videos and CD players with competence and confidence. From the youngest in Year 1 to the oldest in Year 6, pupils open, work and exit a good range of programs. They identify different icons on the screens and use addresses to research on the Internet. By Year 6, pupils understand and work with more advanced programs to enter data into spreadsheets accurately. Good use has begun to be made of presentation packages, for example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 made a "PowerPoint" photograph gallery of the Beatles linked to their history work, but the more advanced skills, such as the addition of video clips, fade-ins and outs, as well as adding a running commentary, still have to be mastered.
71. Teachers are developing good levels of confidence. Lessons are planned carefully, and focused upon the development of pupils' learning and increasing their knowledge of a range of programs. They allow pupils suitable opportunities to learn the skills of concentration and perseverance, the skills of accessing different programs and understanding how computer use can support all their work in and out of school. In the suite teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils rise to these expectations. As a result, pupils work hard and produce good amounts of work within the carefully structured sessions. Teachers are good at asking questions that give good guidance to learning. Pupils listen carefully to instructions, concentrate and work independently as well as collaboratively.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are very thorough. In the three years since her appointment the co-ordinator has worked hard with the City Learning Centre to ensure resources are up to date and staff trained to use these resources. Although she has not lead staff training herself, she has used the Learning Centre to support with twilight courses. All staff have had New Opportunities funded training as well. The scheme of work and policy has been updated as the resources have improved. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Although the co-ordinator has monitored teachers planning, she has not had time within classes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Future plans include the development of a portfolio of pupils work matched to the requirements of the scheme of work and National Curriculum, and further work on assessment systems to enable pupils to be involved in assessing the quality of their own work.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

73. ICT is starting to be linked well to other subjects of the curriculum and so skills, knowledge and understanding are promoted effectively. Lessons in the suite give pupils good opportunities to see how ICT can support their learning in a range of different subjects. However, pupils do not always have enough chance to practice what they have learned in lessons back in the

classroom, although each classroom has at least two machines equipped with similar programs. This limits their ability to refine and develop skills. Links with history and the development of research skills are especially well developed.

## **HUMANITIES**

74. Insufficient work was seen in **geography** to make reliable judgements on standards, because history was the focus of humanities teaching in most classes. However, based upon evidence in displays and pupils' work, standards appear broadly in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages.

### **History**

The school makes **good** provision for history.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement of pupils from all groups is good overall.
- Teachers present work in a memorable way.
- There is good curriculum provision and enrichment through visits and visitors.
- Good leadership and management ensure the curriculum is interesting and relevant to pupils.

### **Commentary**

75. Pupils achieve well in reaching the nationally expected standards for their age in Year 2 and in Year 6.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Good subject knowledge presented in a motivating manner, well supported by good quality photographic and pictorial evidence, sustains pupils' interest and concentration. Development of pupils' investigative skills and understanding of the importance of different sources of evidence are well supported. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 studied a good range of texts and photographs when researching the life of John Lennon, and other pupils interviewed a grandmother to learn about her life in the 1950's. Pupils effectively evaluate how greatly things have changed since then.
77. The school has adapted a nationally approved scheme of work to cater for mixed-age classes and this provides good support for teachers' planning. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of out-of-school visits and visitors. For example, all pupils recently took part in a history week. Every class looked at different aspects of life during Tudor times and staff from Prescott Museum held a workshop with pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. Staff and pupils dressed the part and history was brought alive. This made the learning memorable and pupils chatted enthusiastically about what they had learnt.
78. The recently appointed subject leader has attended relevant courses, put her own written action plan into practice, organised the history week and has made a start on monitoring pupils' books. The introduction of formal assessment procedures and the monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning are areas for further development that the school has identified. Resources, including the use of information and communication technology are good. Standards in history have been maintained since the previous inspection.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

79. It was not possible to gather enough evidence for art and design, music, and design and technology to make secure judgements about the provision in these subjects. No lessons were seen in art and design or design and technology during inspection, but work in books and on walls was scrutinised and schemes of work and policies and planning analysed. Too few lessons were seen in music to enable a provision judgement to be made.

80. The standard of work seen in **art and design** is broadly in line with the nationally expected level at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils learn to use a suitable range of different media. Planning indicates that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being followed and art work is used appropriately to illustrate work in other subjects, such as portraits of John Lennon linked to work in history. However, there is as yet no established system for recording what pupils achieve in relation to the National Curriculum levels. The work seen around the school shows a suitable range of art-work, including a study of the work of a broad range of different artists from a range of different cultures. For example, pupils in the oldest classes try out starch resistant textile dying in the style of the Yoruba people in work linked to geography.
81. In **design and technology**, examples of pupils' work in books and on walls show that they learn to plan their designs carefully from an early age. The standard of work seen was broadly in line with that expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils design and make puppets, using a range of skills including sewing and sticking fabric. They design illustrations for tee-shirts and use a range of different fabric colouring techniques. Older pupils evaluate their work, such as when working on shelters, but usually this is verbally, so opportunities for this to support development of literacy skills are sometimes missed.
82. During the inspection, a limited number of **music** lessons were seen although pupils were heard playing during instrumental lessons and displays show photographs of community performances, especially the youngest violinists winning at a music festival. No overall judgements of all the areas of music can be made, but the quality of singing and performing is in line with the expectations for pupils' ages. Older pupils enjoy listening to how music was used in 'silent movies' as sound effects and reflecting the mood of the actions on the screen. Pupils began to work out how to annotate a story-board to add sound effects – the instruments and how they were to be played and the duration of the sound – matched to the story of 'The Society Raffles'. The use of percussion instruments to provide an accompaniment to singing together helped younger pupils learn how sounds can be used descriptively, describing and enhancing an environment. Whether in class or assembly pupils try hard to sing in tune, listen carefully to the melody and showed a developing sense of rhythm, dynamics and control when using simple percussion instruments to learn the chords to accompany their singing. Through the teachers carefully development of their skills, pupils controlled the volume of their singing well, taking care to provide a pleasing performance. Teachers make sure that work in music is well linked to other areas, especially to literacy when planning a class advertisement with a jingle, and the cultural and multicultural elements of the curriculum when joining in a song with Gujarati lyrics.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with very good teaching seen, especially for younger pupils. Teacher planning shows that good opportunities to cover the full curriculum are made for the subject during the year. Group instrumental lessons give good support to the development of pupil's musical learning. Foundation Stage children, for instance, are learning the violin while Year 3 pupils have had taster violin and keyboard lessons and groups of pupils have continued with such lessons. Extra-curricular activities include music making for Years 3 and 4. Pupils are encouraged well to concentrate, think hard and follow carefully given instructions regarding a performance of a range of percussion instruments. Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to listen to the works of great composers, such as Chopin, Vivaldi, Beethoven and Mozart. Indeed, in one class pupils are grouped for activities by composers' names.
84. The co-ordinator for music is a skilled musician with good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She has introduced a new scheme of work linked to the National Curriculum, ensuring that a very good range of resources are available for music, especially percussion instruments and recordings of a range of music from different periods and people. Currently the co-ordinator is working on establishing assessment procedures that teachers will not find too time consuming but will enable them to plan to challenge all the abilities within classes.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality and development of teaching are good.
- Curriculum enrichment gives pupils good opportunities.
- The quality of resources is good.

### Commentary

85. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected for pupils by the end of both Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
86. The quality of teaching and learning are good, both in lessons seen and on video recordings of recently taken lessons. Teachers dress appropriately to enable coaching and to motivate their pupils. They demonstrate good subject knowledge that supports the positive coaching of skills. Good resources are made available that enable individual, pair and group activities to be undertaken with maximum pupil activity. Class management skills are well developed and ensure that lessons take place in a safe and well-controlled manner. Staff initiative has resulted in the very good use of available ICT equipment. Teachers make video recordings of their own lessons that are used positively for evaluative, professional development purposes. This is innovative practice. A good, 'outdoor and adventurous' Year 6 lesson inspected from video, showed very good quality planning of interesting and challenging activities.
87. All classes have swimming lessons for one half-term every year. This provides insufficient water-time either for ultra-nervous pupils to consolidate gains in confidence, or for swimmers to receive multi-stroke and water safety coaching that would enable them to swim independently and so have a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. The school is soon to start a pilot scheme of Year 3 boys and girls having lessons throughout the year.
88. Pupils are not involved in competitive activities with other schools. This is an area for development to enable skills learned during lessons to be practised in team situations, against opposition from similar-sized schools. The school has acknowledged this and has been waiting for recent resurfacing of uneven playground areas before inviting other schools in.
89. All pupils enjoy physical education lessons. They co-operate very well in sharing resources when working with partners or in groups.
90. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' performance against National Curriculum objectives and the monitoring of teaching and learning, are areas for development. Resources to support the teaching of physical education are very good and include generous hard surface and grassed areas. Standards at the age of seven and 11 were in line with those expected at the time of the previous inspection.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

91. Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled. One lesson was seen. Pupils' work was considered and discussions were held with staff, parents and pupils. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to make a secure provision judgement.
92. The development of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education plays a big part in cementing the very good all-round relationships that permeate the school population. Statutory policies are in place and are regularly updated. During weekly timetabled lessons and discussions, pupils are successfully encouraged to openly share feelings and opinions. A school council and involvement in a Children's Parliament provide very good opportunities for

pupils to represent their peers in formal discussion and decision-making situations. An 'Ambition and Achievement Programme' continues to be developed with pupil visits to and visitors coming from Liverpool University. This very good curriculum enrichment opens pupils' eyes to what is available to them if they continue to achieve well in their schoolwork.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	2
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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

