

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Saint Mary and Saint Paul's Church of England Voluntary  
Aided Primary School**

Prescot, Liverpool

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104453

Headteacher: Mr Neil Dixon

Lead inspector: Stafford Evans

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

Inspection number: 257808

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:	133
School address:	Bryer Road Prescot Merseyside
Postcode:	L35 5DN
Telephone number:	0151 426 6869
Fax number:	0151 430 8266
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Captain Peter Cowley (CA)
Date of previous inspection:	4 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Saint Mary and Saint Paul's is situated in the town of Prescot, which is east of Liverpool. A very significant number of pupils come from homes that are economically and socially disadvantaged. The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, at 70 per cent, is over three times the national average. Two per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. There are 39 per cent of pupils on the register of special educational need. This is well above average and higher than at the time of the last inspection. No pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The number of pupils who start the school other than at the normal dates varies from year to year and from class to class. It averages 12 per cent annually, which is above the national average. The decline in the number of pupils who attend the school has stopped. The number on roll is now rising. The school has Training School status.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21217	Mr S G Evans	Lead inspector	Special education needs Mathematics English Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education
11450	Mr L Kuraishi	Lay inspector	
21020	Mrs T Galvin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Citizenship Design and technology Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Saint Mary and Saint Paul's is an improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education. It gives satisfactory value for money.** Higher attaining pupils achieve well in all subjects. Other pupils achieve satisfactorily. The teaching and learning are good, as are the leadership and management of the school. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is good. This ensures that pupils leave the school with good social skills despite many of them entering school at a level that is well below that expected.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the headteacher provides very good leadership of the school;
- provision in the Foundation Stage is very good;
- standards attained in English, mathematics and science are below the national average;
- pupils' attendance rate is well below the national average;
- within the good quality of teaching there is some good marking of pupils' work, but some marking and assessment is unsatisfactory;
- despite very recent good improvements, the organisation of special educational needs provision is unsatisfactory;
- pupils receive a good level of care;
- the leadership and management roles of subject co-ordinators are unsatisfactory; although steps have now been taken to improve their effectiveness;
- provision for training student teachers is very good.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the time of the last inspection. After an initial rise in standards, they declined. That decline has now stopped and the school has made very significant improvements during the last 12 months. The school has a very good capacity to improve further. Standards achieved are now similar to those reported at the last inspection. However, ICT and design and technology standards are now higher, but science standards are lower. The quality of teaching is now good compared with satisfactory. There has been good improvement in the Foundation Stage provision. All statutory requirements are now met. The leadership and management of the school are much better. The leadership provided by the governing body is now satisfactory compared with unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. From the key issues for action identified in the last report, improvements still need to be made in the assessment of pupils' work and in the development of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** By the end of the Foundation Stage, achievement is good. Children attain standards in line with national expectations in physical development and in their personal, social and emotional development. Despite good progress, children attain below nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in lessons in relation to the standards they attained previously. Despite this good

progress, pupils are capable of doing even better. This is because they have previously underachieved in school. Currently, the higher attaining pupils achieve well. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve satisfactorily and make satisfactory progress in lessons. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are well below the national average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Throughout the school, there has been a very significant improvement in the standards pupils are attaining this year compared with results in 2003. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards attained in ICT are in line with nationally expected standards.

**Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** This ensures that pupils' personal development is good. The current attendance rate is poor and there is a significant minority of pupils who are frequently late for school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory.** The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved significantly during this academic year. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory, but teachers do not always make effective use of the information to plan pupils' work. Although there is some good marking of pupils' work, the overall quality is unsatisfactory. This means that pupils do not always have a good knowledge of their own learning and how they can improve. Good use of skilled and very skilled support staff ensures that pupils who need help in lessons receive it and therefore make good use of their time. Teachers have high expectations for the higher attaining pupils. These pupils achieve well in lessons. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are taught satisfactorily. Although they receive good support in lessons, the quality and use of their individual education plans is unsatisfactory. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers plan the development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects satisfactorily. However, the use they make of other subjects to develop pupils' literacy skills is poor. Teachers use computers satisfactorily to help pupils learn.

The learning opportunities provided for pupils are satisfactory. The school enhances pupils' learning through a good range of extra-curricular activities. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good. Pupils receive very good support from the school's learning mentor.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and has ensured that, since his arrival 12 months ago, the school has improved very significantly. He has a very clear vision of what sort of school it should be and how to bring it about. This is based on very good school self-evaluation. He is building up a very good team spirit in the school and has created an atmosphere that is making it a good place to come to and learn. Until very recently, teachers have not been given the responsibility to develop throughout the school the subjects for which they are responsible. The exception to this is the very good leadership provided by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. The governance of the school is satisfactory and improving at a good rate.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school. They expressed no concerns about any aspect of its work. They recognise the improvements made in the last 12 months. The school has sound links with parents, who support it satisfactorily. However, some parents do not do enough to ensure that their children regularly attend school.

Pupils think very highly of the school. They say they like school very much, that their views are valued and they are treated fairly and with respect.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards attained in English, mathematics and science and develop pupils' literacy skills more effectively across the curriculum;
- increase pupils' attendance rate;
- ensure that all work is marked to a consistently high standard and the results of assessment are used effectively to plan pupils' work;
- the organisation of special educational needs provision including full use of pupils' individual education plans;
- the development of the role of subject co-ordinators.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is **good** in the Foundation Stage and **satisfactory** in the rest of the school. The standards pupils attain are well below average in English by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. They are below average in mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6. In science, pupils attain standards that are below average by the end of Year 2 and well below average by the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the nursery.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in English, mathematics and science lessons.
- Higher attaining pupils achieve well.
- There has not been sustained improvement since the last inspection and this means that pupils have previously underachieved.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT by the time they leave the school.
- There have been significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in the national tests.
- Not all pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

#### Commentary

##### Foundation Stage

1. From a very low starting point, most children make very good progress in the nursery because of the very good quality teaching. Through good teaching in the reception class the progress is maintained. As a result, by the time they leave the reception class most children reach the expected standard in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. Despite at least good progress, standards are below national expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards attained are significantly higher than they have been in recent years by the time children leave the reception class.

##### Years 1 and 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.1 (14.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	11.3 (11.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.8 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities by the end of Year 2. They make good progress in their lessons compared with their attainment when they left the Foundation Stage. This is because standards for the current Years 1, 2 and 3 when they left reception were very low. Standards are similar to those reported on in the last inspection. There are definite signs of improvement. This is most noticeable amongst the higher attaining pupils - 25 per cent of pupils - who now attain a level higher than expected for pupils this age and achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Also, writing and mathematics standards are higher than they have been for the last four years. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading and writing are well below average and below average in speaking and

listening and mathematics. Pupils attain below average standards in science. Pupils achieve well in ICT and standards are in line with national expectations.

### Years 3 to 6

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (24.3)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.3 (24.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.0 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils achieve well, whilst other pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities. This is because the school identified particular underachievement amongst higher attaining pupils. The headteacher made it a priority that teachers match work accurately to their needs and provide extra staffing to support their learning in Year 6. This has been very successful. All pupils make good progress in lessons in Years 3 to 6. Year 3 pupils have made very significant progress this year and attain much higher standards compared with their results in the national tests at the end of Year 2. There has been a decline in overall standards until this year from the time of the last inspection. That decline has stopped and standards are now similar to those attained at the time of the last inspection. This is because the quality of teaching is better and the leadership of the school makes the raising of standards the number one priority. The headteacher supports his drive for raising standards by identifying areas for improvement and gives very good support to staff in order to bring about improvement.
4. In ICT, pupils' achievement is good and pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Standards are not higher because pupils' competence in the skills of control technology is not sufficiently developed. Standards attained in the control technology aspect of the subject are unsatisfactory, whereas they are good in all other aspects.
5. There is variation in standards achieved by boys and girls from year to year. However, in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, this is not significant as there is no discernible trend. The same is true for science in Years 3 to 6. In writing in Years 1 and 2, girls have attained much better than boys in test results over the last three years and much more so than is found nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that this trend is changing and boys are beginning to achieve better than they have previously. Taking the last three years together, in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, boys have attained significantly better than girls in the national tests. That trend is also changing and, based on inspection evidence, the gap is narrowing significantly. In science, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
6. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve similar standards to their classmates. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is not significantly different from that of their classmates. They make good progress in lessons because they are taught well and receive good and often very good support from teaching assistants. However, not all pupils with special educational needs have good quality individual education plans and many make unsatisfactory progress in relation to their targets in their individual education plans.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good attitudes** towards the school and their **behaviour is good**. There is **good** provision for **pupils' personal development**, including the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The rate of **attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships throughout the school community.
- The school has good strategies in place to encourage pupils to attend school.
- Some parents do not make enough of an effort to ensure their children attend school regularly.
- The school council successfully promotes pupils' social development and sense of citizenship.
- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well.
- There has been good improvement in spiritual development since the last inspection.

## Commentary

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.1	School data:	1.5
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

7. The school works closely with local authority attendance services to encourage good attendance and punctuality. The learning mentor effectively supports vulnerable families and, as a result, some pupils have a good attendance record and come to school on time. However, overall attendance remains well below the national average. Large numbers of children do not attend school regularly and some arrive late every day and this adversely affects their education.
8. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are very good. In particular, older pupils show responsibility in caring for younger ones. Most pupils show enthusiasm for school and participate with keenness and interest in their lessons and the general life of the school. Adults give pupils lots of praise and encouragement and this raises pupils' self-esteem and gives them the confidence to learn. Most pupils respond well to their teachers and try as hard as they can with their work. They behave well in lessons and about the school. However, the behaviour and attitudes of a minority of younger pupils are sometimes worse than this in lessons when the teacher does not firmly apply the school's positive behaviour strategies or engage the pupils' attention enough. Teachers in Year 1 to 6 do not provide enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.
9. The Christian ethos of the school underpins its good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Staff use a range of taped music to create a special atmosphere in collective worship and they provide good opportunities to reinforce moral issues and for prayer and reflection. Also, staff effectively develop pupils' sense of morality through Circle Time<sup>1</sup>. These activities promote pupils' awareness of a range of moral issues and how their actions and words can impact upon the feelings of others. Therefore, pupils have a secure understanding of what is right and wrong.

<sup>1</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

10. Pupils' social skills development is good. Adults provide good role models and they encourage pupils to contribute to setting rules and sanctions. Pupils are courteous, polite and keen to show their reliability when given jobs to do. The school council makes a significant contribution to pupils' social development. Its enthusiastic members actively seek the views of pupils throughout the school and act upon them. This has led to improvements, for example in playground resources. Members of the school council say that they like school because it is a friendly place. There is a good buddy system, in which older pupils look after younger ones, and a very good system, known as *Bully Busters*, for dealing with bullying incidents. Incidents of bullying, racism or other harassment are rare. There were no exclusions last year and one pupil has been excluded for three days this year. Parents say that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
11. The school effectively promotes pupils' knowledge and appreciation of different cultures through many subjects. Therefore, pupils learn about what has shaped and influenced the multicultural society in which they live. The school enriches pupils' cultural understanding through special weeks each term that focus on specific subjects, such as art and music. Also, there are pen pal links that older pupils have with school children in Germany and Ireland. Good account is taken of the feasts, festivals and celebrations of other religions, as well as those pertinent to Christians.
12. Children join the nursery with low social skills, but by the time they leave the reception class the majority of children reach the nationally expected standard in personal, social and emotional development.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good** and curriculum provision is **satisfactory**. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is **unsatisfactory**. The school provides a **good** level of care for its pupils. Links with parents are **satisfactory** and **good** with the community. There are **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory**, but there is a significant amount of **unsatisfactory** use made of the results of pupil assessment.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the nursery is very good.
- Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to want to learn. In response, pupils are keen learners.
- Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and this leads to a good level of interest from pupils.
- Teachers do not always use pupils' individual education plans to help them prepare work at a right level for pupils identified as having special educational needs.
- Teachers do not mark all work to a consistently high standard.
- Teachers have high expectations of how they want pupils to behave in lessons.
- Classroom assistants provide good support to help pupils learn effectively.

### Commentary

13. There has been good improvement in teaching since the time of the last inspection. The improvement is particularly marked during the current academic year. Through very effective monitoring, evaluation and support, the headteacher identified areas for improvement. The staff responded very positively to ensure that pupils make good progress in lessons.
14. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. They mainly use a range of good teaching methods. These include whole-class teaching, group and individual work, involving practical,

investigative and problem solving activities. In some science lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for investigative and experimental work. Time is managed well in most lessons. Little or no time is wasted because lessons are well organised, correctly resourced and pupils are clear what is expected of them. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject they teach. Teachers make good use of skilled support staff to help pupils learn. Pupils say that learning is fun and the lessons are interesting. One of the main reasons for this is that teachers are enthusiastic about their teaching and constantly encourage pupils to do their best. This leads to good progress. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively in most lessons. The strength of their behaviour management strategy is the very good relationships between staff and pupils.

15. Teaching for children in the nursery is very good and sometimes excellent and in reception it is good. This has a positive effect on their learning. Staff manage children's behaviour very well. Their excellent relationships with the children, clearly established classroom routines and good organisation of resources all underpin the staff's approach. Staff frequently praise children's efforts and achievements and this fosters children's confidence and learning. Staff teach basic skills very well with high expectations of what children can achieve. There are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress which staff use successfully to plan the next steps in their learning. Support staff are deployed effectively in lessons and make a positive contribution. Homework provision is satisfactory.
16. There are examples of good marking by teachers. In the best marking teachers emphasise what pupils need to do to improve their work. Teachers use information from their marking to help set targets for the next piece of work. These pupils make good progress and are well motivated to learn. In some marking, pupils are given very little idea of how well they are doing or how they can improve their work. This is most apparent in Years 4 and 5 and slows the rate at which pupils progress. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly. These systems are relatively new and the results of the assessments are not always used effectively to plan work at the right level. This is particularly evident in science throughout the school.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are taught satisfactorily. There is good care taken in providing them with good additional help with their learning. However, apart from pupils in the Year 2/3 class and children in the Foundation Stage, pupils' individual educational plans are not used effectively to plan work to meet pupils' specific learning needs. This slows the rate at which they progress.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	6	12	5	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Provision for enrichment through extra-curricular activities is **good**. The accommodation meets the needs of pupils **satisfactorily**. Resources of **satisfactory** range and quality support the curriculum.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Foundation Stage curriculum provision is very good.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well.
- Aspects of provision for special educational needs are unsatisfactory.
- Planning for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is poor.
- There is good provision for higher attaining pupils.
- There is good provision for personal, social and health education.
- The imaginative design of the attractive outdoor area contributes significantly to pupils' positive relationships and good behaviour at playtimes.

### Commentary

18. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects. The curriculum in English and mathematics is satisfactorily planned and helps pupils achieve at a satisfactory level. Literacy skills are promoted effectively through the National Literacy Strategy. However, there is an almost total absence of interesting and relevant cross-curricular links, which are poorly developed. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well. The mathematics curriculum provides a sound balance between practical, problem-solving activities and mental activities. There has been satisfactory improvement in overall curriculum provision since the last inspection.
19. There has been good improvement in the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and provision is now very good. It provides a very good balance between tasks directed by the teacher and opportunities for children to learn independently. Practical first-hand experiences support progress well in each of the six areas of learning appropriate for this age group.
20. The whole-school approach to personal, social, health and citizenship education emphasises healthy lifestyles and personal responsibility so that pupils are well prepared to be reliable citizens of the future. The curriculum is satisfactorily designed to ensure all pupils receive similar experiences, but one that mainly meets their needs. This means that pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is relevant and sensitive to the needs of pupils from ethnic minorities. The school identifies gifted, talented and higher attaining pupils. The provision for these pupils is good and means they achieve well. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. However, the system for identifying pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Also, in a number of classes there is ineffective use made of pupils' individual education plans to help plan work for them. The co-ordinator has recently put in place good strategies to remedy this fault. The school has barrier free access for wheelchair users.
21. Pupils' learning is made much more interesting by visits, including residential visits, visitors to the school and clubs for pupils. These clubs include choir, football, cross country and dance. A good number of pupils participate in these clubs and this has a positive effect on their enthusiasm for school. It also develops pupils' good social skills and relationships. Parents have a high regard for the amount of activities the school provides outside lessons.
22. The school has considerably improved the outdoor areas since the time of the last inspection. It has plans to improve the inside accommodation by building a computer suite. The playground has been thoughtfully designed to provide seating and quiet places as well as areas for more boisterous activities. Consequently, pupils play together harmoniously. The outdoor accommodation for Foundation Stage children is very good. Resources are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. An important deficiency is in the amount of resources to help pupils learn to read. Displays in classrooms are attractive, but

not enough of pupils' own work is displayed in many classrooms. There are more teachers and support staff to help pupils learn than is found in most primary schools.

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

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. Pupils form trusting relationships with staff and receive **good** advice and guidance. The school seeks and acts on pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a safe place where all pupils feel valued.
- Children have good relationships with adults in school.
- All pupils receive good levels of support for their personal development.
- Pupils' views are sought through the recently constituted school council.

### **Commentary**

23. The school monitors health and safety well. Regular risk assessments of the premises are undertaken. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene and healthy life-styles as part of the curriculum. The good care taken by the premises staff ensures that the buildings are clean, safe and free from hazards. Staff are trained in first aid and parents are confident that a qualified person will look after their children if there is an accident. The headteacher has received basic training in child protection and the school complies fully with the child protection procedures recommended by the local authority.
24. Parents are happy with the care and support provided for their children. Teachers and the very good work of the newly appointed learning mentor ensure that vulnerable children are totally included in the life of the school. All pupils know that help is available in cases of need.
25. Staff value all pupils and their opinions are often invited and taken into consideration when formulating school policy. The formation of a school council has improved this aspect of the school's work. Induction procedures are good and parents are pleased with the arrangements for settling new children in the school.

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

The school **has very good links** with other schools and colleges. The links with parents are **satisfactory and** there are **good** community links.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very high opinion of the school, but they seldom take part in the school life.
- Large numbers of parents do not bring their children to school on time.
- Local business community provides very good support to the school.
- The school has very constructive links with the other schools and colleges.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents are extremely happy with the work of the school. They think that Saint Mary and Saint Paul's is a good school. They particularly appreciate the leadership of the headteacher, the quality of the teaching, the range of activities on offer and the fact that their children are expected to work hard. The school works very closely with other schools and makes every effort to involve parents in the school life.
27. The governing body seeks parents' views and deals promptly with any concerns. Some parents respond well by supporting school initiatives and by helping their children at home and in the school. Parents also participate in the Parent Teacher Association to arrange social events to raise money for school funds. However, a lot of parents do not ensure that

their children attend school regularly or get them to school on time. Also, very few parents visit school to help with their children's learning.

28. The school keeps parents very well informed. Regular newsletters inform parents about what is going on in the school, about the content of the curriculum and how they can get involved. The school provides good information and training to keep parents abreast of educational initiatives. For example, parents were involved in the family literacy initiative. Pupils' annual progress reports are good. They highlight clearly what pupils can do and where they need to improve.
29. The school has established successful partnerships with the local business community. These businesses donate time, resources and expertise and this enhances the curriculum for all pupils. Forming these links has been a priority for the headteacher and it has been successful in increasing pupils' understanding of being part of the wider community. There are very good links with the local church. The school has very constructive links with other schools. Supporting links with the family of schools, outreach work for information and communication technology projects and the links with the Beacon school contribute to pupils' learning. The school welcomes the local community into the school and provides its buildings and grounds for use for social and educational activities. A mothers' and toddlers' group is established in the school, but only a handful of mothers use the facility.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

There is **good** leadership and management. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides inspiration and very clear direction for the work of the school.
- The school development plan is at the heart of the school's drive to raise standards.
- The role played by subject leaders in improving their subject is a recent development.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The school's finances are managed efficiently.

### **Commentary**

30. The new headteacher is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. He sets the tone for the good relationships and mutual respect between all members of the school community. Staff make it a priority to value all pupils and ensure that they are included in all the activities that the school offers. The members of the senior management team are very supportive of the headteacher. However, the team has only recently been established so the leadership it provides is satisfactory. The new deputy headteacher has enthusiasm, expertise and the potential to carry out the role effectively.
31. The headteacher, supported by staff from the local education authority, checks and reviews rigorously the quality of teaching. He supports staff very well in the development of their expertise. The headteacher provides effective leadership and management for mathematics and the nursery teacher leads the Foundation Stage very well. However, before the new headteacher was appointed subject co-ordinators had not been asked to carry out the responsibilities that are expected of a subject leader. Structures and procedures are now in place to remedy this. The headteacher has had to carry out many roles and responsibilities during his first year at the school until management structures and systems, such as performance management and staff development, were correctly established. The headteacher plans to delegate more responsibility to subject co-ordinators and the deputy headteacher.



32. The management of the school is good. The headteacher and governors manage the staffing of the school well, such as the recruitment and deployment of staff. Staff enjoy their work. There are good procedures for supporting newly qualified teachers and other staff new to the school. The school contributes very well to initial teacher training and to school-based routes into teaching.
33. The poor attendance rate of some pupils poses a problem for the school and it deals with this well. The learning mentor, who is funded by the 'Excellence in Cities' project, works very successfully with disaffected pupils in order to improve their attendance. Further work needs to be done to relate the attainment of these pupils to their poor attendance record.
34. The headteacher accurately evaluates the work of the school and he uses the information to lead staff in the formation of the school development plan. The plan is a good document that gives a clear overview of the school's main priorities for improvement, which are rightly identified to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The document is displayed in the staff room and this means that it is very much a focus for the school's work. However, it contains rather a lot of initiatives for staff to complete in two years.
35. In discussion with governors, it is clear that the headteacher and local education authority representatives have been pivotal in developing their knowledge and understanding of their role. The governors have responded very positively. The headteacher keeps governors very well informed about the school's work, for example when he presented to governors a clear analysis of the school's national test results. There is now a good committee structure and partnership between staff and governors. This now means that governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, these good features are recent developments so the governance of the school does not currently rise above satisfactory.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	543 183
Total expenditure	527 763
Expenditure per pupil	3 362

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	15 596
Balance carried forward to the next	32 348

36. The management of the school's finances is good. The school administrator very effectively supports the smooth running of the school each day and the management of its finances. The school seeks to ensure that the services it receives are provided at the best value. The balance carried forward last year was 6 per cent and that was above average. This was because changes in staff during the year led to a decrease in staffing costs. The expenditure per pupil is above average. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

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

The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes (Foundation Stage) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses across all the areas of learning**

- There is a significant amount of very good teaching.
- Staff link all the areas of learning together to provide an imaginative and stimulating curriculum.
- The poor attendance and language skills of some children adversely affect their learning.
- Staff have high expectations of what children are able to achieve in their work and in their personal development.
- Teachers and support staff work very successfully together.
- Leadership is very good.

### **Commentary**

37. From a very low starting point most children make very good progress in the nursery because of the very good quality teaching. Through continued good teaching, progress is maintained throughout the reception class. As a result, by the time they leave the reception class most children reach the expected standard in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. Despite at least good progress, standards are below national expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. One of the main factors that adversely affects the standards that children reach is the narrow range of everyday vocabulary of a significant minority of reception children. Staff teach the specific language for the different areas of learning very effectively. Their development of children's everyday vocabulary is good.
38. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory and is good overall. Teachers organise the work and resources imaginatively so that all the areas of learning are inter-linked. They plan many very interesting and enjoyable experiences to extend children's learning. This enhances the quality of teaching across the whole curriculum. Staff make good use of the assessments of children's progress in order to match the work to children's varying learning needs. Therefore, most children achieve very well. Support staff contribute significantly to the teaching.
39. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator uses her considerable teaching expertise and knowledge of the curriculum to lead the Foundation Stage staff very effectively. However, her role in monitoring teaching and learning in the reception class has not yet been developed. The Foundation Stage staff encourage parents to support their children in the classroom but the response from parents has been poor. Parents are very happy with the satisfactory arrangements for settling children into school. There has been good improvement in the provision since the time of the last inspection.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

### **Main strengths**

- Very good relationships between adults and children underpin the very effective learning.

### **Commentary**

40. Children achieve very well and by the time they leave the reception class most children reach the nationally expected level. Staff give this area of learning a high profile and children's

personal skills improve rapidly. Teaching is very good. Staff are very caring, supportive and friendly and they give children many opportunities to choose their own activities and to learn independently. Therefore, children's confidence increases. They show good levels of initiative and responsibility and have good attitudes to their work so they produce a good amount. Staff give children good opportunities to discuss their ideas and feelings and to reflect upon their relationships with each other. As a result, children develop a sound awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong. Their behaviour is good. They take turns, share equipment and work sensibly together as friends.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very effective teaching of writing and of the initial sounds of letters.
- The key vocabulary for the reading scheme is not taught as effectively as it could be.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching is good, therefore children achieve very well. Despite very good progress overall standards remain below the nationally expected level by the time children leave the reception class. High teacher expectations were very evident in an excellent lesson in the nursery. The older, more able children arranged the key sentences from a story in the correct order. Higher attaining and average attaining children identified some of the letter sounds when they typed the names of the plants, such as daffodil and tulip, on the computer. The reception teacher builds very well upon children's knowledge of initial letter sounds, writing and handwriting skills. As a result, reception children begin to spell and write correctly simple words and sentences. On the other hand, the teaching of the key words for the reading scheme is less effective.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is effective teaching of number work through practical activities.

### **Commentary**

42. Staff teach number work very well. Therefore, children achieve very well and many reach the early learning goals in number work. Despite this, children reach standards that are below the nationally expected level for mathematical development overall, because less attention is given to other aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Staff have high expectations so they give children challenging work. As a result, nursery children begin to recognise numbers to five. Reception children count and order numbers from zero to ten and higher attaining children beyond this. They begin to calculate simple addition sums to ten.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

The provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many children achieve the early learning goals in early practical science and computer skills.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching is very good and therefore children achieve very well by the time they leave the reception class. Despite the very good achievement they reach standards that are below the nationally expected level in knowledge and understanding of the world. Nursery and reception

staff bring their own attractive resources into the classroom such as plants and fruit to illustrate the stories *The Flower Garden* story and *Oliver's Fruit Salad*. They also organise a wide range of visitors to the school, including a vet and the fire service, to enrich and extend children's experiences. Nursery children know what plants need for healthy growth and reception children identify the different parts of a plant. Nursery children use the computer mouse with increasing skill and reception children use it confidently to work a variety of computer programs.

### **Physical development**

The provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

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

- Staff use very effectively the outdoor activities to extend children's learning.

#### **Commentary**

44. Teaching is very good so children achieve very well and reach the expected level by the time they leave the reception class. There has been very good improvement in the resources and provision for outdoor physical activities since the time of the last inspection. Staff use the outdoor activities very effectively to extend children's control of larger movements and their learning across the whole curriculum. For example, the reception teacher imaginatively arranged the outdoor equipment, such as crates and tyres, so children climbed and played with great confidence and enthusiasm. Staff developed successfully children's vocabulary, such as 'over' and 'under'.

### **Creative development**

The provision in this area of learning is **good**.

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

- Staff do not sufficiently develop children's spoken language through their play and free activities.

#### **Commentary**

45. Teaching is good. Children achieve very well in many elements of creative development. Many children reach nationally expected standards in artwork. They draw, paint and make effective patterns and pictures that show good attention to detail. Despite the good achievement, standards remain below national expectations by the end of the reception class. Nursery and reception staff organise the structured play areas, such as *Under the Sea*, to stimulate children's interest and extend their language skills. However, staff do not always spend enough time with children in the structured play areas or when children choose their own activities. Therefore, they do not develop as effectively as they could the children's spoken language and learning across the whole curriculum. Consequently, on these occasions the learning of some children is satisfactory rather than good.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.
- Higher attainers achieve well.
- Teaching and learning has improved a lot during the year and is now good.
- There is effective use of skilled support staff and student teachers to help pupils' learning.
- Some marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.
- The development of language and literacy across the curriculum is poor.

#### Commentary

46. The standards improved for the two years following the last inspection, but then declined sharply. That decline has stopped and standards are similar to those reported on in the last inspection. There have been significant improvements during the last 12 months in standards achieved, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in lessons. Therefore, overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Inspection evidence indicates that standards attained by the end of Year 2 are well below average in reading and writing. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils in relation to their capabilities. However, it reflects good progress compared with what they attained at the start of Year 1, when attainment was very low. At the end of Year 6, standards of attainment in national tests in the last four years have been well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently below average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities. This is reflected in comparison with similar schools nationally. There is variation in standards achieved by boys and girls from year to year. However, in reading in Years 1 and 2, this is not significant as there is no discernible trend. In writing in Years 1 and 2, girls have attained much better than boys in test results over the last three years and much more so than is found nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that this trend is changing and boys are beginning to achieve better than they have previously. Taking the last three years together, by the end of Year 6, boys have attained significantly better than girls in the national tests. That trend is also changing and based on inspection evidence the gap is narrowing significantly. Throughout the school, the poor attendance of some pupils adversely affects the progress and therefore the standards they reach in English.
47. A significant factor in the current improvement in standards is the leadership provided by the headteacher, with very good support from the local education authority. Through a thorough evaluation of the quality of teaching and monitoring and analysis of pupils' achievement, he identified a lack of high expectations as a major cause in the decline in standards. Within a short time, he created and secured a commitment from the staff and pupils to strive for improvement. For example, throughout the school, higher attaining pupils progress at a very good rate. They now achieve well and are on course to attain a standard that is a level higher than expected for their age. Very few pupils in the school last year attained high standards. For example, in the 2003 Year 2 national test, no pupil attained a level in reading above that expected for pupils this age. This year, about 20 per cent of pupils are on course to attain the higher level. The picture is broadly the same for the current Year 6.
48. Another reason for the improvement in standards and the increased rate at which pupils make progress is the good quality of teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was mainly satisfactory. Teachers plan activities and structure their lessons well to develop skills and knowledge. They work hard to ensure that their lessons are interesting and plan with imagination. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they share this understanding with pupils so their learning is good. Teachers introduce lessons effectively to ensure that pupils know what they have to do. Teachers share with pupils what

they have to learn and pupils have learning targets in their exercise books. As a result, teachers and pupils alike are very focussed on improving their work.

49. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactorily developed. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and when other pupils speak. Teachers encourage pupils to express their views and opinions in lessons, assemblies and as members of the school council. However, many pupils have a narrow everyday vocabulary so find it difficult to express clearly their ideas and experiences. Despite this, they are confident speakers in front of others. Teachers teach the basic skills of reading and writing well. However, expectations of pupils' handwriting are not high enough and consequently a lot of pupils do not write in a joined script by the end of Year 6. The standard of spelling is mainly satisfactory. The teaching of reading is adversely affected by a deficiency in resources to support pupils' learning. Standards in writing are now satisfactory. Pupils consolidate their writing skills in literacy lessons and in time set aside specifically for writing longer pieces of work. However, pupils do not have sufficient time to practise and develop their literacy skills in other subjects.
50. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to help pupils learn. This skilled support is fully involved in the lesson planning and is clear about what exactly they and the pupils are to achieve. They have very good relationships with the pupils and this underpins their good behaviour management. The school has a lot of visiting student teachers as well as a graduate student teacher who is in school full time. This benefits pupils because many receive good individual help.
51. Satisfactory assessment procedures ensure that teachers have a sound knowledge of what pupils know, can do and understand. This is being used with increasing effectiveness to plan work for pupils' varying needs. It is satisfactory in many respects, for example, in helping higher attaining pupils achieve well. A weakness in the system is the unsatisfactory use of individual education plans to help teachers plan work for pupils with special educational needs. Recent improvements in special educational needs provision is beginning to deal with the problem and pupils with special educational needs now make satisfactory progress. There are examples of good quality marking by teachers. In the best marking teachers emphasise what pupils need to do to improve their work. However, there are examples of unmarked work and of teachers not providing helpful comments about how pupils could improve their work. Homework provision is satisfactory.
52. The newly appointed deputy headteacher is the subject co-ordinator. She is an enthusiastic and well-informed leader. She acts as a good role model through her good quality teaching. However, she has been in post for one term and so has had little opportunity to influence practice in the school.

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

53. Teachers provide a poor range of opportunities for pupils to develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects. Much of the written work consists of copied work from the board. Pupils have little or no chance to record work themselves because they regularly complete worksheets. The exception to this is that pupils spend a satisfactory amount of time using computers to develop good word-processing skills. Pupils in Year 4/5 have good opportunities to develop their literacy skills using ICT. This is because they have much more access to computers because their classroom doubles as the computer suite.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Some marking of pupils' work is very poor.
- Some pupils miss too many lessons because of poor attendance.

### Commentary

54. By the end of Year 2, inspection findings indicate that standards are below the national average. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is an improvement compared with recent years, when standards have been consistently well below average. This is reflected in the average standards pupils attain in comparison to similar schools. Some pupils' achievement is adversely affected by their poor attendance. By the end of Year 6, standards attained in the national tests have fluctuated from below average to very low. In 2003, standards attained placed Year 6 pupils in the school in the bottom 5 per cent of schools nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now below average and improving. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities. The exception is the good achievement of higher attaining pupils. For example, no pupil attained a level higher than expected for pupils this age in the Year 2 national test in 2003. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are on course to attain this level this year. It is a similar picture for Year 6 pupils.
55. Despite a decline in standards over a few years, there has been satisfactory improvement since the time of the last inspection. This is because standards have risen significantly over the last 12 months and show every sign of continuing to rise. The most important factor in the improvement in standards is the leadership and management of the subject by the headteacher. There is rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. As an outcome, expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher and teachers' planning is more effective. There is currently good quality or better teaching in most classes, which contributes significantly to the increased rate of progress pupils make. The headteacher also identified weaknesses in the way mental calculation work was taught. Standards in this work have risen very significantly because it is now taught well at the start of mathematics lessons. As a result, pupils develop their mental skills well in order to quickly and accurately work out problems. Teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy well. There is good coverage of the mathematics curriculum.
56. Boys attain better than girls, but the gap is narrowing at a good rate. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons. They receive good quality support from skilled support staff. However, an important weakness is the unsatisfactory use of pupils' individual education plans to help plan appropriate work for them. The new special educational needs co-ordinator is aware of this and has good plans to rectify the situation. Ethnic minority pupils attain similar standards to their classmates. Their achievement is not significantly different to that of other pupils.
57. Teachers use a range of good teaching methods. These include whole-class teaching, group and individual work, involving practical, investigative and problem solving activities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so most pupils who are capable of attaining highly are given hard enough work. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively because they have very good relationships with the pupils and good use of agreed school procedures for dealing with pupils who show signs of misbehaviour.
58. The way teachers assess pupils is good. Most teachers use the results of pupil assessment satisfactorily, but in Years 4 and 5 the use is unsatisfactory. The same applies to the marking

of work. Although the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, there is some poor practice. This means that pupils are unclear about how to improve their work and the work given to pupils is not always at the right level.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Most pupils have adequate mathematical skills to enable them to make satisfactory progress in other subjects. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills in other subjects. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT to help pupils learn in mathematics. For example, they use spreadsheets to calculate the answers to problems.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6 but the standards are beginning to rise.
- Poor attendance is a barrier to learning for some pupils.
- There is a significant amount of good teaching.
- Assessment and the marking of pupils' work are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers give pupils few opportunities to work independently.
- The role played by the co-ordinator in improving the subject is a recent development.

### **Commentary**

60. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils reach standards that are below national expectations by the end of Year 2 and well below by the end of Year 6. Most pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their capabilities. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
61. Standards in Year 2 are now higher than the school's national assessment results in 2003 when they were well below the national average. This is because 25 per cent of Year 2 pupils now reach the higher Level 3. These pupils currently make good progress in relation to their earlier learning. This is a considerable improvement on previous years when no pupils reached the higher level. Standards in Year 6 are similar to the school's national test results in 2003. Fifteen per cent more of the Year 6 pupils currently reach the higher Level 5 than in the 2003 tests. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level is still below the national average. Throughout the school, the poor attendance of some pupils adversely affects their progress and therefore the standards they reach in science.
62. The Year 6 test results in science have declined in the last two years. The decline has now been arrested and standards are beginning to rise because of the very good leadership of the new headteacher. He has put in place effective systems to improve teaching, learning and standards. Accurate evaluations of test results and detailed school development planning are now in place. Also, the deployment of the science co-ordinator to teach the Years 2/3 class from September and the deputy headteacher to teach Year 6 when she was appointed in January provides good quality teaching of the subject in these year groups. Additionally, a teacher from the local education authority teaches science to the higher attaining Year 6 pupils each week. These staff changes have strengthened teaching in key areas of the school. However, in Year 6 the initiatives have not been in place long enough to improve standards further this year.
63. In two out of the three lessons seen teaching was good. However, the work in pupils' books shows that teaching is satisfactory over time. All teachers make good use of resources, such as computer-controlled whiteboards for older pupils, to explain the work clearly. In most classes there is good, firm, yet friendly management of pupils that results in good behaviour



and no interruption in pupils' learning. In classes in which there is more than one year group the work is often challenging for the younger pupils so the younger, higher attaining pupils make good progress. However, it is not always hard enough for the older more able pupils. Therefore, the progress of the higher attaining pupils varies as they move through the school, but is satisfactory overall.

64. Teachers give a lot of time to practical, investigative work and they apply the work well to pupils' everyday experiences. Therefore, from Year 2 upwards most pupils know why a test is fair and if it is not what needs to be done to make it so. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a secure understanding of fair tests and form conclusions from their results. Pupils have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and forces.
65. However, teachers miss opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking and to check and further develop pupils' understanding and their personal qualities. The assessment, including the marking of pupils' work, is not effective. As a result, teachers do not modify the work so that pupils of all abilities work with enough independence. Pupils mainly carry out the same investigations and use the same worksheets to record their work, or place a suitable word in a gap in a sentence. The work demands little marking by the teacher. Also, it does not exploit pupils' literacy skills. Teaching assistants give good extra support to the less able pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, so they succeed in the same work as their classmates. Teachers do not use pupils' computer skills enough to support pupils' learning in science.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject has not been a focus for development until recently. Also, before the appointment of the new headteacher, subject co-ordinators had not been asked to carry out the responsibilities that are expected of a subject leader. The role is now being developed and there are plans for the science co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning this term. This will enable him to have a clearer picture of the science provision throughout the school. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the time of the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in the development of most of their ICT skills.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils have a limited access to computers.
- Pupils' control technology skills are weak.

### **Commentary**

67. By the time pupils leave the school, their achievement is good and they attain standards in line with national expectations. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection. Standards attained in the control technology aspect of the subject are unsatisfactory, whereas they are good overall in most other aspects. Pupils do not have enough time to develop their control technology skills. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils' word-processing skills are good and they make skilled use of the Internet. They are closely involved in setting up the school website. They successfully used film, digital photographs and the web to create a historical record of the role played by the British Insulated Cable Company in Knowsley's history. Their good word processing skills are evident in their multi-media presentations and in their e-mail writing to pen pals in Ireland and Germany.
68. The improvements since the last inspection have been brought about through a good programme of training and support. Teachers are more confident about teaching the subject. Planning in line with national guidelines ensures that pupils cover the full programme of study.

The subject co-ordinator is a skilled teacher of ICT. He leads the subject well. However, the management of the subject is unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator has not been given the opportunity to monitor, evaluate and support provision in the subject. There are plans to rectify this situation.

69. Pupils make good progress in Years 4, 5 and 6. This is because they have much greater access to computers. The computer suite is housed in the Year 4/5 classroom. This makes timetabling of the suite difficult for other classes. Pupils in other classes have access to only a few computers and this slows their progress to satisfactory. This situation will be put right when the new planned computer suite opens in the next academic year.
70. An example of good achievement and good teaching was observed in a lesson about spreadsheets with Year 4/5 pupils. The teacher built on pupils' previous learning effectively. Secure subject knowledge underpinned the teaching. This meant that the teacher gave clear instructions and pupils knew exactly what they had to do to improve their work. The teacher intervened in pupils' learning to ensure that mistakes were quickly identified and rectified. This meant pupils' learning was brisk and they completed a lot of work. Pupils' learning benefited by well deployed support staff and students who helped pupils when the need arose. This meant that there was a lot of one-to-one help available.

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

71. ICT is used well to help pupils learn in a few other subjects, but this is not widespread. There is room for improvement. The best use is by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 because they have a lot more access to computers. Year 6 pupils produced good quality work in literacy by using ICT to produce newspaper reports. They showed satisfactory research skills when they found information about Nina Bawden, author of *Carrie's War*. There was good use of pupils' ICT skills to produce work about Nigeria in geography. Throughout the school, ICT is used to produce writing of at least satisfactory quality.

### **HUMANITIES**

72. There was insufficient work seen in **geography** or **history** to make a definite judgement about provision. In **history**, one lesson was observed in the Year 2/3 class and, in addition, pupils' displayed work and work recorded in their exercise books was examined. This evidence indicates that their work is in line with national expectations. This is the same as it was at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson observed was good and pupils achieved well. This was because the teacher made learning exciting by using a good range of visual aids. Pupils enjoyed evaluating the differences between the Aztec leaders and our Queen.
73. Teachers rely too heavily upon the use of worksheets. This adversely affects the development of pupils' literacy skills. Much of the pupils' work is not marked rigorously or with guidance about how pupils could improve their work. Pupils' skills in literacy are developed poorly. ICT skills are developed satisfactorily through the use of the Internet for research.
74. In **geography**, no lessons were observed, but pupils' books and displays were examined. Pupils' written and displayed work is of a standard in line with national expectations. There is a sound curriculum in place that includes good opportunities for fieldwork and satisfactory opportunities for map work. Opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy skills in geography are poor.

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

75. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about provision in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**. One lesson was seen in art and one in music and pupils were heard singing in collective worship and in a hymn

practice. Further evidence comes from work on display and in pupils' sketchbooks and from discussions with teachers. The subjects make an effective contribution to pupils' understanding of the variety of cultures within the school and wider community. For example, in art pupils produced effective tie-dye patterns inspired by a garment from Nigeria. In design and technology, Caribbean carnival was the inspiration for the attractive masks which pupils in the Years 2/3 class made. In a hymn practice pupils sang a hymn with a chorus in Swahili, the language spoken by the Bantu people of east Africa.

76. The art and design and design and technology work displayed around the school indicate that standards are in line with national expectations in both subjects. Teaching and learning were good in an art lesson seen in the Years 2/3 class. This was because the lesson built well upon pupils' previous learning about patterns. Also, the teacher effectively used a variety of pictures of buildings to extend pupils' skills in observing objects closely. In design and technology, the school has made good improvement in the work that teachers plan for pupils and in the standards pupils attain since the time of the last inspection.
77. The school has made good improvement in music since the time of the last inspection. A subject specialist has been appointed recently and leadership of the subject is now good. The subject leader teaches most of the music lessons and, as a result, pupils now achieve well. This was evident in the Year 6 lesson seen. It was very carefully planned and the teacher used her very good expertise and visual aids to give a clear explanation of musical notation. This led to pupils very good understanding of how to write notes, such as crotchets and quavers. Standards were in line with national expectations for the subject. The standard of singing is satisfactory in collective worship and in hymn practice. Pupils sing tunefully and they sensitively adapt the volume of their voices to express the mood of the hymns they sing. The choir regularly performs in the local community, for example in Knowsley's *Celebration of Singing*.
78. Inspectors observed only a limited amount of teaching in **physical education**. Therefore, no overall judgement can be made regarding standards of achievement, teaching or the leadership and management of the subject. In the two lessons observed, the teaching and learning were good. Pupils attained standards in the development of their games skills that were in line with those expected nationally. Pupils like physical education and appreciate the range of activities outside of lessons that enhances their learning.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very skilled support provided by the learning mentor.

### **Commentary**

79. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject but as part of personal, social and health education. This is taught well mainly through subjects, such as science and religious education. Also the school's good provision for personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, makes a strong contribution to the subject.
80. Pupils achieve well in their personal, social and health education development. They develop confidence and responsibility and respect the differences between people. There are good relationships between all members of the school community. Most pupils are polite and courteous, mature and responsible.
81. The development of this aspect of work is an ongoing priority for the school and all staff work very well together to promote pupils' personal development. The learning mentor makes a significant contribution to the provision, for example to lessons in circle time. These lessons

are designed to promote pupils' awareness of a range of moral issues and how their actions and words can impact upon the feelings of others. The school council successfully helps pupils develop a sense of citizenship. For example, it has been effectively involved in the improvements in playground resources and in creating a system to help pupils deal with bullying incidents if they arise (*Bully busters*). There is a citizenship club for pupils from Years 3 to 6 Also, pupils contribute to specific overseas charities, such as *Operation Christmas Child* in Bosnia. These activities help pupils to develop a sense of citizenship.

82. The school has achieved the *Sport England Activemark*, which recognises the school's commitment to sport and healthy living. Also, pupils take part in the local education authority *Healthy Schools Scheme*. As a result, they are well on their way to gaining the *National Healthy Schools Award*.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*

