

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104660

Headteacher: Mr T Kirwan

Lead inspector: Mr D S Roberts

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 September 2003

Inspection number: 257903

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	171.5
School address:	Upper Hill Street Liverpool
Postcode:	L8 5UX
Telephone number:	0151 709 1062
Fax number:	0151 707 9367
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Devaney
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Patrick's is a little smaller than the average sized primary school. It provides full-time education for 179 pupils, and part-time education for a further 14 children in the Nursery. The number of pupils on roll has fallen significantly since the last inspection, due to demographic reasons. The school is situated in an area of significant social disadvantage, and benefits from national initiatives such as Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones. Over 70 per cent of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is very high compared with the national picture. Children's attainment levels on entry to the Nursery are very low. There is a rich variety of cultures and heritage in the area. Currently, 40 per cent of pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups. Over 10 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is high compared with most schools.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1743	D S Roberts	Lead inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector	
14459	G Owen	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
17767	S Power	Team inspector	Science Geography History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a highly effective school, which provides very good value for money. It takes very good care of its pupils, and is very successful in promoting their academic and all-round development. Pupils make very good progress during their time in the school. Most achieve highly in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment, particularly in the key areas of learning. The school meets the needs of all pupils, ensuring that they are included and involved in all aspects of learning. A welcoming and supportive community is provided, where the Catholic ethos is strongly emphasised. The school is highly regarded by its pupils, their parents and the local community.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

##### Strengths

- By Year 6, pupils achieve high standards, in relation to their prior attainment, in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Very effective teaching contributes significantly towards pupils' rapid progress in acquiring the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- High quality provision in the Nursery, helps children to settle quickly and gives them a very good start to their education.
- A very good curriculum, including excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, is highly successful in meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre.

##### Weaknesses

- Although provision in mathematics is generally very good, in some classes, insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to use their rapidly increasing mathematical knowledge in everyday situations.
- Some aspects of learning in history and geography are not emphasised sufficiently.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	E	C	A
mathematics	B	E	E	C
science	B	D	C	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.*

**Starting from a very low baseline, pupils at all levels of attainment make very good progress and generally achieve very well, in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment, during their time in the school.** Pupils progress very well in the Nursery and Reception classes, achieving the learning goals expected of them in the physical and creative areas of learning, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, overall standards in the key learning areas of communication, language and literacy and children's mathematical development, are clearly below those expected for the children's age by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils make significant progress in Years 1 and 2. By the age of seven, standards in mathematics are appropriate for the pupils' age. Although a clear majority of pupils achieve appropriate standards in reading and writing, overall standards remain below the national picture. By Year 6, standards in all subjects at least match those expected for the pupils' age, and are above the national average in science. In addition, a significant proportion of pupils achieve high standards for their age in aspects of physical

education, and some of the work produced in art and design is of very good quality. The significant improvement in mathematics standards since the 2002 national tests is reflected in the national test results for 2003, although comparative information is not yet available.

**By Year 6, pupils have developed very good attitudes to learning.** They are interested, enthusiastic, and take a pride in their work and their achievements. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of their learning are very well developed.** Standards of behaviour are generally very good, and the pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is very good.** The high quality curriculum is very effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted very successfully, and the pupils' learning is extended and enhanced significantly by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The provision for pupils to engage in challenging sporting activities is outstanding. **The quality of teaching and learning is generally very good, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT.** Highly effective teaching helps children entering the Nursery to settle quickly and work with increasing confidence in the various areas of learning. Throughout the school, pupils make rapid progress in acquiring the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. At all stages of learning and throughout the curriculum, a high level of guidance and support is provided by class teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors and those providing specialist support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. They plan and work together very effectively to overcome barriers to learning and to support pupils' progress.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre. Purposeful and perceptive leadership by the headteacher, co-operating very effectively with the strongly committed governing body, provides clear vision and a determination to succeed. There is also very effective leadership and management by those at all levels of responsibility, who are strongly supported by a hard working staff.

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

Parents have a high regard for the school. They value the fact that their children are taught well, make good progress, and enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. They have much confidence in the school and feel a strong sense of partnership.

Pupils find lessons interesting and feel that they have to work hard. They appreciate the help that their teachers give them to make progress. A significant number feel that the behaviour of some children is not always as good as it should be.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to use and apply their increasing mathematical knowledge in everyday situations;
- improve the humanities curriculum further, by placing more emphasis on the development of pupils' enquiry and study skills in history and geography.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Pupils achieve very good standards in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment during their time at this school.** The attainment levels of children on entry to the school are generally very low. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards in all subjects are at least appropriate for the pupils' age. During the last four years, the school's rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has kept pace with that found nationally. During the same period, there were no consistently significant variations in pupils' performance in terms of gender. Since the last inspection, the school has worked very effectively to improve the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and that of higher attaining pupils. It has also been very successful in improving ICT standards, previously judged to be unsatisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good start provided for children in the Nursery helps them to settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- Pupils, at all stages of their education, make good and often very good progress in the core subjects.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve high standards in relation to their prior attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- By Year 6, standards are at least appropriate for the pupils' age in all subjects, and above the national average in science.
- Pupils requiring additional support and attention make significant progress.

#### Commentary

- 1 High quality teaching in the Nursery, which enables children to settle quickly and develop increasing confidence, contributes significantly towards their very good progress during the Foundation Stage. Starting from very low baseline, children make very good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, most achieve the early learning goals in their physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although some achieve appropriate levels in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics, overall standards are clearly below those expected by the time pupils enter Year 1.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.9 (13.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.2 (12.6)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.4 (14.3)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.1 (25.1)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.0 (25.3)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.5 (28.0)	28.3 (28.3)



- 2 At all stages of their education, pupils make good and often very good progress in acquiring the key skills of learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is particularly effective in developing the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. The strong emphasis placed on helping pupils to acquire a good understanding of the sounds which form words, and on number work, provides a good base for the future development of literacy and numeracy skills. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good and often very good progress, and a majority of pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age in the key areas of learning. By the age of seven, standards in mathematics are similar to those found nationally. Standards in reading, writing and science, although moving closer to the national picture, are slightly below average. Comparative information, based on the National Curriculum test results for 2002, showed that the pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 was below that found nationally in English and well below in writing and mathematics. However, compared to those in similar schools, the pupils' performance was generally above average, and was well above the average in reading.
- 3 Throughout the school, pupils, at all levels of attainment, make very good progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They make particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching, particularly in the core subjects and ICT is of a consistently high quality. This enables pupils to achieve appropriate standards for their age in English and mathematics, and above average standards in science. In ICT, overall standards are appropriate for the pupils' age, and pupils achieve particularly high standards in aspects of the work concerned with using ICT to achieve accurate monitoring and measurement. The pupils use and apply these skills very effectively in most other subjects, particularly science. The inspection picture in English and science is consistent with information provided by national tests results. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, the performance of pupils in Year 6 matched the national average in English and science, and was well above that of pupils in similar schools. The inspection findings for mathematics present a better picture than the 2002 national test results, but are consistent with those available for 2003, although comparative information is not yet available. They show that 84 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 and above in mathematics.
- 4 By Year 6, pupils achieve at least appropriate standards for their age in all subjects. Some of the work produced in art and design is of a high quality. Pupils benefit considerably from the expertise of visiting artists, which inspires them to achieve high standards. In physical education, very good extra-curricular opportunities and external expertise help a significant number of pupils to achieve particularly high standards in gymnastics, athletics, games and swimming. As pupils progress from Nursery to Year 6, they make significant progress in developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. By the end of their time in the school, these skills are well-developed and contribute very effectively towards the pupils' progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- 5 The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, in relation to their prior attainment, is at least good throughout the school. They make consistent progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, and benefit greatly from the good levels of support which they receive from class teachers and support staff. The very effective arrangements to identify, support and stimulate particularly gifted pupils, help them to make good progress during their time at the school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language generally make very good progress. Their needs are quickly identified, and they benefit particularly from the specialist input of an Arabic speaker, in addition to the well-structured programme of support provided by class teachers and support staff. Throughout the school, the very effective way in which the particular needs of all pupils, in terms of gender, race, background and level of attainment are met, enables those in all of these categories to make significant progress during their time at the school.

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

**The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning, and behave very well.** The school is highly successful in promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils are highly motivated. They work hard and participate enthusiastically in all school activities.
- The school sets high expectations for behaviour. Pupils respond positively and behaviour throughout the school is of a very good standard.
- The pupils benefit from the close attention given to promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is strongly committed to improving further the pupils' rates of attendance.

### **Commentary**

- 6 The pupils enjoy school and are very enthusiastic about all school activities. They behave well in lessons, in assembly, in the playground and when moving around the school. Relationships throughout the school are very good. There have been four fixed period exclusions during the past year.
- 7 At the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and the Reception classes, particular attention is given to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development. Over time they learn to share equipment, take turns and co-operate sensibly. Activities are well organised, relevant and interesting, offering the children appropriate choices which enable them to develop a measure of independence in their learning.
- 8 In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan stimulating lessons which motivate the pupils to work hard and achieve to the best of their ability. The very good range of extra curricular activities, such as lunchtime and after school clubs, inter-school sports and school productions help to make school fun and strongly support the pupils' personal and social development.
- 9 The school sets high expectations with regard to behaviour. The whole school behaviour policy is well documented and consistently implemented by teachers and support staff. Details of the policy are given to parents at the beginning of the school year. School rules are displayed prominently in many areas of the building, useful reminders of the accepted code of behaviour. The pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They appreciate the many rewards they are given for positive behaviour, good work and kind, helpful attitudes. The importance of caring for one another is emphasised, in accordance with the Catholic ethos of the school. Respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs is also given high priority. This is reflected in the very high degree of racial harmony which exists within the school community.
- 10 Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the cultures represented in the school and in the community. They work in close partnership with numerous community groups to bring visitors into school to enrich the pupils' learning and to help promote their personal, social and cultural development. During a recent multi-cultural week the pupils were introduced to African music, Indian dancing and a wide range of other cultural activities. Educational visits in the locality and further afield are used very effectively to broaden the curriculum, extend the pupils' learning and develop their appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of the city. Visits to the city's two cathedrals, and to places of worship for different faiths, including a mosque and a synagogue, contribute significantly towards the promotion of pupils' spiritual development.

- 11 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. With funding from the Education Action Zone initiative the school has been able to introduce a 'first day response' to unexplained absence. This has been successful in raising parents' awareness as to the importance of regular attendance. Attendance is improving steadily and moving closer to the national average for primary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence compares favourably with the national picture. Punctuality has shown good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The vast majority of the pupils now arrive on time in the mornings and lessons start promptly.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

### **Exclusions**

#### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
109	4	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
27	0	0
2	0	0
8	0	0

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

**The quality of teaching and learning is generally very good, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT.** This represents very good progress since the last inspection which found significant weaknesses in the teaching of older pupils. Better teaching contributes significantly towards the continued improvement in pupils' achievement, particularly higher attainers. Pupils, at all levels of attainment, are challenged very effectively, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Their involvement in assessing their own progress, in relation to individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics, is a very strong feature in the teaching. It gives pupils a very good knowledge of their own learning and makes them determined to achieve the targets which

they have set for themselves. Throughout the curriculum, teachers achieve a good balance between whole class, group and individual work. This enables pupils to make good progress in learning how to co-operate and work collaboratively, as well as working independently.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High quality teaching in the Nursery, consistently effective teaching in Years 1 and 2, and highly effective teaching in Years 5 and 6, promotes high standards of achievement.
- English, mathematics, science and ICT are taught particularly well, resulting in very good progress by pupils in these key areas of learning.
- Information from assessment is used very effectively to inform the next stage of teaching and learning and to set individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics.
- Very good work by teaching assistants, contributes significantly towards the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
- Very effective teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language enables pupils to make very good progress during their time in the school.
- Very good classroom management promotes high standards of behaviour.

Areas for development:

- In some classes, insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in mathematics.
- One of the lessons observed was judged to be poor.

### **Commentary**

- 12 Very good quality teaching in the Nursery provides children with a very good start to their education and helps them to develop confidence in communicating with other children and adults. It promotes significantly good progress in their personal, social and emotional, as well as academic development. Consistently effective teaching in Year 1 and 2, is particularly effective in providing pupils with a good grasp of the key skills in literacy and numeracy, providing a sound basis for their future learning. Very effective teaching in Years 5 and 6 motivates and inspires older pupils to work hard and achieve their very best, and contributes considerably to the maturity and sense of responsibility demonstrated by most pupils. Teaching is particularly effective in developing the key skills of learning in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Starting from a very low baseline on entry to the school, pupils make very good progress in all of these subjects, and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. In English and mathematics, the very good use of guidance provided by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy helps teachers to challenge and extend pupils appropriately, at all levels of attainment. This contributes towards pupils' very good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills during their time in the school. In science and ICT, thorough planning and very effective use of expertise provided by external sources help teachers to stimulate and extend pupils' learning.
- 13 The very effective use of assessment information is a strong feature in the teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT. In English and mathematics, this information is used to set individual targets for improvements for pupils throughout the school. These targets are shared with pupils and their parents, and are updated regularly. The pupils benefit from having a better understanding of their own learning, and work hard to achieve the targets set for them.
- 14 Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work together very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. The highly effective support provided by teaching assistants, for pupils with special educational needs, helps them to make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Close co-operation between class teachers, teaching assistants and visiting staff contributes towards the very good provision made for pupils for whom English is an addition language.

- 15 Some teachers make very good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics. They identify relevant opportunities for its use and plan effectively so that ICT enhances the pupils' learning. However, this is not a consistent feature in all classes, and there is scope for more consistent use of ICT in mathematics throughout the school.
- 16 The quality of teaching was judged to be poor in one lesson. This was in history, which is generally taught satisfactorily. In this particular lesson, weaknesses in the teacher's classroom management skills, and inappropriate learning activities, resulted in pupils losing interest and making very little progress in their learning. This is not at all typical of the teaching in this school, where highly effective classroom management contributes regularly towards very good standards of behaviour and a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Teachers are highly successful in making all pupils feel valued, taking account of their needs in terms of gender, race, prior attainment and background, and this approach increases pupils' confidence and helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning.

### **Example of outstanding teaching**

#### **Investigative work, focusing on living things in the environment**

An excellent lesson in Year 6, focusing on the food chain, illustrated very well the pupils' very positive response to science when work is set in practical contexts. In this carefully planned and very well organised lesson, pupils examined the contents of owl pellets in order to discover what the owl had eaten. Inspirational teaching, finely attuned to individual needs, and drawing very effectively on the expertise of a visiting parks' ranger, captured the full interest and attention of the pupils. They were completely engrossed in the task of examining the owl pellets, and demonstrated considerable awe and wonder at the content, which indicated the owl's prey. Excellent use was made of a digital microscope linked to an interactive whiteboard so that enlarged images could be seen by the whole class. This enhanced the excitement of the learning, and enabled pupils to make very good progress in extending their understanding of the relationship between predator and prey in food chains.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	15 (42%)	13 (36%)	6 (17%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	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 school provides a very good curriculum.** The areas identified for development by the previous inspection have been addressed very effectively. There is a broad range of opportunities offered that cater for the needs of all pupils. Very strong support is provided for learning outside the classroom and many activities are organised during lunchtimes, as well as before and after school, that enhance the pupils' learning. Resources are good, and teaching and support staff are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. Since the last inspection, considerable improvements have been made to the accommodation and learning environment, which enhance significantly the quality of pupils' learning in and out of the classroom.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good provision at the Foundation Stage is based firmly on national guidance for the age group.
- The school provides a fully inclusive curriculum, which provides equality of opportunity for all and promotes high achievement by pupils at all levels of attainment.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make significant progress.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal and social education.

- Pupils are very well prepared for the next the next stage of their education.
- High quality provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Outstanding provision for pupils' participation in sport, recognised by the award of the prestigious Activemark.

#### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to use their increasing mathematical knowledge in everyday situations.
- In the humanities curriculum, insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' enquiry skills.

#### Commentary

- 17 The curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage of their learning, in Nursery and Reception classes, is very well planned, and provides children with a very good start to their education. Strong emphasis is placed on supporting the children's personal, social and emotional development, helping them to settle quickly and work with increasing confidence. The children's development is promoted very successfully in all of the areas of learning, and strong emphasis is placed on helping them to acquire early skills in their language and mathematical development.
- 18 Throughout the school, the curriculum is well planned and structured and very good use is made of assessment information in English and mathematics to set targets for improvements in pupils' learning. The curriculum for these two subjects is based securely on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of national guidance adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, resulting in very good progress being made throughout the school. There are clear policies and schemes of work in place, providing teachers with useful guidance, ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Each subject is given an appropriate amount of time and teachers and support staff work together very effectively to ensure that all pupils are involved and fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported very effectively, enabling most to make rapid progress during their time in the school. Since the last inspection, increasing support and attention has contributed to significant improvement in the performance of higher attaining pupils. A structured and well-planned programme of support contributes towards the good progress of particularly gifted pupils.
- 19 Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was judged to be unsatisfactory. Effective systems have been established for the early identification of specific needs, and provision is monitored on a regular basis. Targets in the pupils' individual education plans are usually specific, realistic and measurable. However, in a minority of the plans, the wording of targets, and the criteria for measuring the pupils' success in achieving them, are not sufficiently clear.
- 20 Provision for personal and social development is very good. Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding of the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse, and promoting an understanding of sex education and relationships. The close attention given to encouraging pupils to take an interest in their health was recognised by The Healthy Schools Award, achieved in 2002. Honesty, fairness and respect for truth are consistently reinforced and good behaviour is encouraged on a daily basis by all staff. The school's values are clearly visible around the school and in the mutual respect shown by adults and pupils alike.
- 21 The curriculum prepares pupils very well for the next stage in their education and teachers work closely with staff in receiving schools in order to ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 6. The excellent provision of opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities contributes significantly towards the development of pupils' confidence and self esteem.

- 22 The overall provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of high quality. Good provision is made for their spiritual development, through assemblies and across the curriculum, where pupils often respond with awe and wonder to aspects of the topics they study. During the inspection, a very good example of this was provided during a Year 6 science lesson, when pupils responded with awe and wonder as they examined the contents of owl pellets, using digital microscopes. High quality provision is made for pupils' social and moral development, through learning activities in and out of the school. This contributes towards very good standards of behaviour throughout the school. The pupils' cultural development is promoted very effectively. The rich variety of cultures and heritage in the area is drawn on very effectively by the school, and this contributes considerably towards pupils' very good progress in developing an awareness and appreciation of other cultures as well as their own.
- 23 Standards in mathematics are improving steadily and the school has prioritised the subject in its development plan. Greater attention now needs to be given to providing pupils with challenges that require them to apply their skills in everyday situations. The teaching of information and communication technology has many strengths, but opportunities to support learning in mathematics are not always used to the full, and aspects of data handling are underdeveloped. Provision in the humanities is generally satisfactory, but there is scope in some classes for the curriculum to include more opportunities for pupils to develop their enquiry skills, so that they play a greater part in their own learning.

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

**The school provides a high level of care of its pupils and provides them with very effective support, advice and guidance.**

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

- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Pupils are provided with very good support, advice and guidance.
- Teachers treat all pupils fairly.

### **Commentary**

- 24 The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils. Child protection procedures are thorough, adhering to clear guidelines provided by the local education authority. The school achieved "Healthy School" status in 2002, for high standards in a number of areas, including personal, social and health education and the school's physical and social environment.
- 25 Very good induction procedures help the youngest children to settle quickly and happily into the Nursery and Reception class routines. Parents are given a wide range of information about the areas of learning for children of this age, and lots of good advice on how to prepare their children for the Foundation Stage of their education. Throughout their time in the school the pupils are provided with very good support and guidance.
- 26 The Christian ethos of the school is central to all of its work. The pupils are taught that they have a responsibility for looking after one another and to treat everyone in the school community with respect, courtesy and fairness. All the adults working in the school provide very good role models for the pupils. They treat them fairly and show great respect for their customs and religious beliefs. In lessons, the pupils are confident in asking and answering questions, secure in the knowledge that their teachers and others will listen to what they say and value their views and ideas.
- 27 The whole school behaviour policy is implemented consistently by teaching and support staff. Emphasis is given, at all times, to rewarding good attitudes and behaviour. A very effective mentoring system exists, to support those pupils who are having difficulties with their

behaviour, their work, relationships, problems at home or poor attendance. The mentors liaise closely with the parents and, where necessary, they work with individual pupils in their homes, for example helping with homework and helping to improve concentration and personal organisation. Where poor attendance is proving to be a barrier to learning, the mentors can arrange transport for the pupils to the school's breakfast club which operates every day before school.

- 28 The "Buddy" system, which pairs Year 3 with Year 6 pupils, is helpful in supporting pupils when they move from the infants to the juniors. The school council is well established and has influenced a number of school improvements, including the provision of better outdoor play facilities. The school won a city wide award last year for a recycling scheme initiated by the school council. All classes, from Year 1 to Year 6, are represented on the council, and two councillors are democratically elected each year to represent the school in Liverpool's schools' parliament.

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

**The school has established a very good partnership with parents, other local schools and the community.**

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

- The school keeps parents very well informed about the life and work of the school and about their children's standards and progress.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning.
- The school has established very good links with the local community.
- The school works in close partnership with other local schools.

#### **Commentary**

- 29 The quality of the information provided for parents is very good. Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report, regular newsletters and general correspondence the parents are kept fully informed with regard to the life and work of the school. The prospectus and the governing body's annual report now comply with statutory requirements.
- 30 A formal parents' evening is held every term, when parents can discuss their children's standards and progress with class teachers. Pupils' annual written reports are helpful and informative and include details of individuals' personal and social development as well as their academic progress. They also contain useful advice for parents as to how they might support their children's learning. In addition to the very detailed annual report, a shorter, interim report is provided for parents half way through the year. This informs parents of their children's progress to date and sets targets for the remainder of the year. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children and are of the view that the school keeps them well informed in relation to their children's progress.
- 31 At the beginning of the school year, parents are provided with helpful information about the curriculum and timetables for the coming year. During the inspection the parents spoke very positively of the way in which this helps them to support their children's learning. During the year, the school arranges numerous curriculum meetings and courses which help to keep parents well informed about changes in the education system, new teaching methods and national tests. During the inspection, as part of a "Pampering Parents" course, a group of parents produced some magnificent art work, under the direction of a visiting artist. Activities such as these help parents to recognise and nurture their own talents and to gain a knowledge and understanding of how they might use them to enrich their children's learning.
- 32 The school has established very good links with the local community. The Toxteth Educational Trust funds a very wide range of visitors who come into school to work with the



pupils. During a recent multi-cultural week, the whole school enjoyed music, dancing, food and cultural activities from many different countries. Events such as these strongly support the pupils' personal, social and cultural development and contribute to the very good relationships that exist throughout the school.

- 33 The school works in close partnership with the secondary schools to which the vast majority of the pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. Various transitional projects are arranged, including a joint residential visit with one of the secondary schools and several other primary schools. A very good scheme has been set up by the Education Action Zone, whereby pupils for whom transfer might prove difficult have the opportunity, before they transfer, to work with pupils from other feeder schools and with secondary school staff.
- 34 As a Beacon school, St Patrick's has many beneficial links with other schools and colleges in the city. Through the Comenius partnership, links have been established with schools in other European countries, including Spain, Italy, Greece, Hungary and Norway. These are extending the pupils' understanding of citizenship and supporting their work in literacy, Spanish, geography and ICT.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre.** This means that the school has built effectively on the good picture apparent at the time of the last inspection. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning have been strengthened, and the role of the governing body in monitoring school performance has been increased significantly. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work very effectively to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are strongly committed to, and very successful in providing, an equitable and inclusive school where every child matters.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality leadership provided by the headteacher.
- Very good leadership by those responsible for key subjects and areas of learning.
- Very effective analysis and use of performance data to identify areas for improvement and take appropriate action.
- Very effective promotion of staff development.
- Knowledgeable and innovative leadership, which draws very effectively on areas of external support.

### Commentary

- 35 The dedicated headteacher co-operates very successfully with the highly committed governing body to provide clear, purposeful leadership. He works hard and very effectively to enable the pupils to achieve high standards and enjoy a rich variety of learning opportunities.
- 36 The very good leadership provided by those responsible for subjects and aspects of the curriculum contributes significantly towards the very good curricular provision made by the school. They play an important part in producing and updating subject policies and schemes of work, which help teachers to set appropriately challenging work for pupils at all levels of attainment. Very good procedures are in place to enable co-ordinators to monitor provision and standards in their subjects, which include regular observation of teaching and learning. Those responsible for leading English, mathematics, science, ICT and the areas of learning at the Foundation Stage have had a particularly positive effect on the pupils' progress and achievement in recent years.
- 37 Highly effective arrangements for analysing performance data from national tests and the school's assessment procedures, produces valuable information about the pupils' potential and their particular needs. This information is used very effectively to set challenging targets for improvements, and to adjust or improve provision of support, according to the needs

identified. Highly effective use is made of information technology to store information and track pupils' progress.

- 38 Very strong emphasis is placed on the professional development of staff. Teachers, support staff and governors are given opportunities to attend relevant training, and there are very effective procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school, including those training to be teachers. The effectiveness of the school's provision for the latter is reflected by its involvement in initial teacher training at a local college, as an element of the Beacon school initiative. Staff, other than those involved in the teaching of pupils, are highly motivated and take considerable pride in their work. The highly efficient administrative staff work very effectively to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control, and the high standard of caretaking and cleaning result in a very high level of school maintenance. The school's strong commitment to its staff and pupils was recognised by the award of Investor in People status in 2001.
- 39 The headteacher's very good knowledge and awareness of current educational initiatives and his determination to make the best possible provision for the pupils, has enabled the school to draw on a wide range of funding and support. The considerable improvements made to the external learning environment and play areas illustrates this very effectively. In addition to the well designed outdoor play area and sensory garden for children at the Foundation Stage, playground facilities for children throughout the school have been improved significantly. As well as providing play and sports facilities, the shaded, grassed and planted areas provide additional starting points for learning and create an environment conducive to pupils' social development. Considerable enrichment of curricular provision has been achieved, with increasing support for the particular needs of pupils, and progressive removal of barriers to learning.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	764 372
Total expenditure	781 858
Expenditure per pupil	3 688

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39 960
Balance carried forward to the next	22 474

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

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

The school makes very good provision for children at the Foundation Stage, having built successfully on the good picture reported at the previous inspection. Starting from a very low baseline on entry to the Nursery, most children make very good progress in all areas of learning during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes, although overall standards remain below those expected by the time pupils enter Year 1. In all areas of learning, the particular needs of children, in terms of gender, race, level of attainment and background are met very effectively. The highly effective leadership and management provided by Foundation Stage co-ordinator contributes very effectively towards the provision in all areas of learning.

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

Provision for pupil' personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

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

- Good induction procedures.
- Very skilful teaching.
- A supportive caring atmosphere.
- Very good progress by children from very low baseline.

#### **Commentary**

40 Good induction procedures enable newly arrived children to settle quickly to the routines of school life. Very skilful teaching in the Nursery gives children a very good start to their education. They make rapid progress in learning how to share and take turns and to co-operate with others. The supportive caring atmosphere helps children to develop confidence. They become increasingly considerate of others, and friendly and open with each other. The high level of support provided by teachers and support staff ensures that all children are included and involved in all aspects of the curriculum. Children with special educational needs are well supported and those for whom English is an additional language receive close attention. Although an increasing number of children are able to work independently for sustained periods, many find this difficult and become distracted without regular input from the teaching staff. The very good provision made for children's personal, social and emotional development, including high quality teaching, enables children to make very good progress from a very low baseline. By the time children enter Year 1, many have achieved appropriately for their age, although overall standards remain just below those expected for the children's age.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

**Very good provision is made for the development of children's communication, language and literacy.**

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

- Very good use of assessment information.
- A learning environment which provides many starting points for language development.
- Very effective co-operation between teachers and support staff.
- Strong emphasis placed on developing a love of books.
- Very effective teaching, particularly in the Nursery.
- Some staff are not entirely confident in supporting children's learning during role-play activities.

## **Commentary**

- 41 From an early stage, assessment information is used very effectively to inform planning, so that work to develop children's language skills is matched appropriately to their needs. A rich learning environment stimulates children's curiosity and provides many useful starting points for discussion between children and adults, which extends their communication skills. Very effective co-operation between teachers and teaching assistants provides a high level of support, which is generally very effective in promoting the early language development of children at different levels of attainment. Strong emphasis is placed on developing children's love of books through skilful story telling and providing comfortable reading areas. By the time they enter Year 1, most children achieve very good standards in relation to their prior attainment. An increasing proportion of children achieve the appropriate learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, but overall standards are clearly below those expected for their age.
- 42 The teaching is very effective, particularly in the Nursery, and is highly successful in developing children's willingness to talk and begin to communicate with others. A weakness in the teaching is that some of the Foundation staff are not entirely effective in supporting and extending children's thinking and learning during role-play activities.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in mathematical development is very effective in supporting children's progress.**

### **Main strengths**

- Children benefit from a variety of practical learning activities.
- Well-planned use of ICT to support learning.
- Very effective teaching.

## **Commentary**

- 43 Many opportunities are created for children to experience two and three-dimensional shapes and to empty and fill containers in the well-resourced sand and water area. These activities help them to consider size, shape and position and help them to extend their mathematical vocabulary. The regular use of plastic money as part of role-play activities enables children to become aware of the value of coins. As children progress, increasing opportunities for them to engage in activities which include matching, sorting, ordering and sequencing various items extend children's understanding of number significantly. Regular, well-planned use of computer programs increases children's ideas about shapes.
- 44 Very effective teaching achieves a good balance between whole-class, group and individual work. Teachers are very successful in meeting the needs of children at different levels of attainment. These are important factors in children's high levels of achievement in relation to their prior attainment. By the time they enter Year 1, an increasing proportion of children achieve the appropriate early learning goals, but overall standards remain below those expected for their age.

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

**Provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.**

### **Main strengths**

- Good opportunities for children to learn about their environment and the community.
- Very effective use of ICT.
- Very effective teaching.

## **Commentary**

- 45 Very good opportunities are created for children to learn about their environment and people within the community. The skilful use of pictures to stimulate interest and discussion in whole-class situations and good use of opportunities in more informal situations, such as outdoor learning, contribute effectively to children's progress. During one outdoor session, for example, the children's attention was drawn to a particularly clear view of the nearby Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, explaining its importance in simple terms. Good use is made of a wide range of construction toys and, as children progress, increasing time is given for them to design and make their own models and find out how things work. Very effective use is made of ICT, helping children to develop early skills in using the mouse to access and move pictures and words on the screen, and to work through well-selected programs. The teaching is very effective. It contributes towards the development of children's language and mathematical skills, as well as extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are on course to achieve appropriate learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in physical development is very effective in promoting children's progress.**

### **Main strengths**

- Indoor and outdoor provision is good.
- Well-planned learning activities to develop manipulative skills.
- Very good co-operation between teachers and support staff.

## **Commentary**

- 46 Indoor and outdoor provision is good, enabling children to make increasing progress in developing good balance and control of their bodies and to use space well. The development of an attractive, well thought out outdoor play area is a significant improvement in provision since the last inspection. Teachers use it effectively to extend children's physical development, through a variety of teacher and child initiated activities. Indoors, well-planned learning activities help children to handle small tools and a variety of materials effectively and safely. Many develop good manipulative skills, using modelling materials and paint brushes effectively, and show increasingly accurate control of the computer mouse.
- 47 Teachers and support staff work together very effectively to meet the needs of all children, most of whom are on course to achieve the appropriate early learning goals before entering Year 1.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Regular opportunities for children to draw, paint and use a variety of materials.
- Good role-play opportunities.
- Many opportunities to sing and explore rhythm.

## **Commentary**

- 48 The very good provision made for children to draw and paint is a strong feature in their learning. During the course of the year children produce art work which is often of very good quality. A good variety of role-play activities enable children to dress up as different characters and make increasingly good use of their imagination. Good opportunities are

provided for children to sing well known songs, and to explore rhythm using percussion instruments. Good provision and very effective teaching promotes very good progress by the children, most of whom are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

#### **The school makes very good provision for the development of the pupils' skills in English.**

High quality teaching, which draws very effectively on the guidance provided by the National Literacy Strategy, enables pupils make very good progress during their time in the school and achieve high standards in relation to their prior attainment. The increasingly good performance of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs reflects the school's very good rate of improvement since the previous inspection.

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

- A well planned curriculum, which places strong emphasis on developing the key skills of literacy, and creates a range of interesting opportunities for pupils to apply and use their increasing skills.
- High quality teaching and very effective co-operation between class teachers, teaching assistants, and other support staff, promote high quality learning and enable pupils, at all levels of attainment, to make good, and often very good progress during their time in the school.
- By the age of seven, a majority of pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age in reading and writing and, by the age of 11, standards in English match those found nationally.
- Close attention given to pupils for whom English is an additional language, which enables pupils to gain confidence and make significant progress.
- Very effective use of homework, extending pupils learning and developing a sense of enjoyment in aspects of work such as reading.
- Very effective subject leadership, which co-ordinates all aspects of provision in English.

#### **Commentary**

- 49 The very well planned curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, and ensures that each individual is included and involved in all aspects of the work. In Years 1 and 2, the strong emphasis placed on developing the key skills of speaking and listening and reading and writing, contributes significantly towards the pupils' increasing confidence in expressing themselves. In classes for older pupils, a carefully structured programme of work in literacy lessons builds very effectively on pupils' earlier learning. The school makes very good use of educational visits and visitors to the school to stimulate pupils' interest, and this often results in good quality written work, where pupils draw effectively on the new skills acquired during literacy lessons. In addition, participation in regular school productions, such as the recent performance of "Bugsy Malone", creates valuable opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills. The teaching of Spanish increases significantly the pupils' awareness of their own language, and regular conversational activities make a valuable contribution towards the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- 50 The teaching of English is of high quality. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. The sharing of targets for learning with pupils is a particularly strong feature in the teaching, which gives them a good understanding of their own learning. Teachers work closely with support staff to meet the needs of all pupils. This is particularly apparent during the guided reading and writing activities, when skilful intervention and support by adults enable pupils to overcome difficulties and extends their thinking. In some instances, highly effective close co-operation between the class teacher and a learning mentor initiates individual counselling for a pupil, which often results in overcoming a problem which had previously been a barrier to learning.

- 51 Although overall standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are below those expected for their age by the time pupils reach the age of seven, a majority of them achieve appropriate standards, and a significant minority exceed the levels expected for their age. By the age of 11, standards match those expected for the pupils' age, and some pupils achieve higher standards. The majority of Year 6 pupils show an ability to adapt talk for various purposes, and make use of a growing vocabulary to convey opinions clearly. They enjoy books, and talk with increasing confidence about their preferences for types of books and different authors. Their handwriting is generally accurate and fluent, and the writing of many pupils indicates a capacity to organise their ideas in an imaginative way, and to make increasing use of adventurous vocabulary.
- 52 The very good provision made for pupils for whom English is an additional language, draws effectively on the valuable support provided by an Arabic speaker. This has a very positive effect on the learning of those benefiting from this attention, who generally make rapid progress in all aspects of English.
- 53 Very good use of homework is a strong feature in the provision for English. Many parents contribute towards their children's learning by hearing them read and taking an interest in the work their children do at home. This motivates pupils, who take a pride in what they have achieved or produced at home.
- 54 Highly effective work by the subject leader contributes significantly towards the very good provision. Whole-school implementation of assessment and monitoring strategies, provide teachers with valuable information which enables them to identify pupils' needs, and plan work in English which challenges and extends pupils appropriately. The positive effect of high quality provision and teaching in English is reflected in the good and often very good progress made by pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. Starting from a very low baseline, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and, by Year 6, overall standards in English are appropriate for the pupils' age.

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

- 55 Strong emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills in work across the curriculum. Teachers are generally very skilful in capturing pupils' interest and initiating discussion during work in other subjects. This helps to promote pupils' confidence in expressing themselves, and acts as a stimulus for writing. During the inspection, particularly good contributions to extending vocabulary and promoting writing skills were seen in science and ICT. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in developing these skills and, by Year 6, achieve standards which are appropriate for their age in literacy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

**The school makes very good provision for mathematics.** It is characterised by high quality teaching that draws extensively on the guidance provided by the National Numeracy Strategy, enabling pupils to make very good progress and achieve high standards in relation to their prior attainment.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good improvement in standards throughout the school.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are fully included and make very good progress.
- Consistently high quality teaching, promoting very good progress.
- Regular monitoring of planning and teaching, and scrutiny of pupils' work have a positive impact on standards.
- A highly structured approach to assessment and rigorous analysis of test results help teachers to identify aspects of the subject that need to be improved.
- Teaching promotes very positive attitudes by pupils towards learning in mathematics.





Areas for development include the need to:

- increase the provision of opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge in everyday situations;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to measure and to collect, record and analyse data;
- extend the use of computers in the teaching and learning of mathematics throughout the school.

## Commentary

- 56 The school has prioritised the teaching of mathematics and has extended the time allocated to it. This has had a positive impact on provision, and is reflected in improving standards throughout the school. Basic skills are taught well, and most pupils have good recall of number facts and have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. The inspection evidence is consistent with the provisional National Curriculum test results for 2003. These indicate a significant improvement in standards achieved by older pupils, with 84 per cent of Year 6 pupils achieving Level 4.
- 57 Pupils requiring additional support make good progress. Class teachers are aware of their needs and provide work that is well matched to their abilities. Much care is taken to vary the difficulty of the questions asked in oral sessions, and teaching assistants make an effective contribution to the good progress made by these pupils.
- 58 The overall quality of teaching is very good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The most successful lessons are characterised by lively introductions that capture pupils' interest and imagination. A sharp pace is maintained throughout, and teachers ask appropriately challenging questions that extend pupils' learning. Work is carefully prepared and is well matched to the abilities of the pupils. In a minority of lessons, insufficient time was allowed to check pupils' learning during the plenary session at the end of the lesson. Regular testing to check pupils' progress is carried out very effectively, and the results are carefully monitored in order to identify areas for further improvements.
- 59 Very effective management of the pupils promotes good standards of behaviour. The relationships between teachers and pupils are constructive and supportive. Pupils show positive attitudes and are often engrossed in their learning and work hard on the tasks provided.
- 60 The school has accurately recognised that, in order to improve further, opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in everyday situations need to be extended, and should include challenging tasks, involving data handling and the use of ICT.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

- 61 Opportunities for pupils to extend their mathematics skills in work across the curriculum, are particularly valuable in science. Investigative and experimental work contribute significantly towards pupils' skills in monitoring and measuring, and in their use of appropriate graphs to represent their findings. By the age of eleven, pupils' numeracy skills are appropriate for their age.

## SCIENCE

**The school makes good provision for science, and the teaching is often of high quality, particularly in Years 5 and 6.** By the age of seven, standards are slightly below the national average, but pupils make good progress. By the age of 11, standards are above the national average and pupils, at all levels of attainment, achieve very well in relation to their prior learning.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is often of high quality, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above the national average.
- Throughout the school, the achievement of pupils, at all levels of attainment, is good and often very good.
- The school provides a very good range of resources for learning.
- Very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour by pupils.
- Very effective use of ICT to enhance learning.

## Commentary

- 62 High quality of teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6 provides the pupils with a very thorough grounding in scientific knowledge and understanding. This contributes considerably towards the pupils' very good progress and above average standards in relation to age, by the end of their time in the school. Throughout the school, the pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject, particularly when learning is set in practical contexts, are a significant factor in the good standards they achieve. An excellent lesson in Year 6 illustrated this very well. In a carefully planned and well organised investigation the pupils dissected owl pellets in order to discover what the owls had eaten. The pupils were completely engrossed in the task, and demonstrated considerable awe and wonder at the contents of the owl pellets. The inspirational teaching was finely attuned to the learning needs of all ability groups. Excellent use was made of a digital microscope linked to an interactive whiteboard so that enlarged images could be seen by the whole class. This enhanced the excitement of the learning, and enabled pupils to make very good progress in extending their understanding of the relationship between predator and prey in food chains. In classes for younger pupils, the teaching is consistently good, enabling the great majority of pupils to achieve well and make good progress in relation to their prior levels of learning.
- 63 Pupils, throughout the school, make good and often very good progress in the development of their scientific knowledge and understanding. In some classes, their progress in extending their scientific enquiry is also very good, although this is not a consistent feature in all classes. The very good level of resourcing is a strong feature in the provision. In addition, the very good co-operation between class teachers and support staff ensure a high level of support for pupils with different needs. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, helping them to make significant progress, and those with English as an additional language receive close attention to support their progress.
- 64 The leadership and management of the subject is very effective in promoting high standards of achievement, in relation to pupils' prior attainment. However, there is scope for achieving greater consistency in providing pupils with opportunities to engage in scientific enquiry activities. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant progress in improving the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6. Its considerable success in this respect has contributed towards the award of Beacon status. Work in science contributes very effectively towards the pupils' progress in ICT, with its imaginative use to support learning. Pupils also extend their mathematical skills, as they measure the outcomes of investigations, and represent their findings in graphical form. The progressive introduction of new scientific terms extends the pupils' vocabulary, contributing effectively towards the development of their literacy skills.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

**The school makes very good provision for the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in ICT.** The pupils make very good progress and achieve standards which are at least appropriate for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents considerable improvement since the last inspection, when provision and standards in ICT were judged to be unsatisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A well thought out programme of work, which meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- High quality teaching and very effective support for pupils by classroom assistants.
- Very good use of external support to extend and enhance pupils' learning.
- The availability of the computer suite and greatly improved resources.
- Very effective subject leadership and good provision of training for teachers and support staff.
- Very effective use of ICT, particularly the interactive whiteboards, to support and enhance teaching in most subjects.

## **Commentary**

- 65 Throughout the school, the curriculum provides pupils with a rich variety of learning opportunities. Pupils engage in well selected activities and make very good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding and developing their skills in the various aspects of ICT.
- 66 High quality teaching promotes very good progress by pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment, and by the age of seven and 11, standards are at least similar to those found nationally. Older pupils exceed the expectations for their age in some aspects of ICT. For example, they are able to use ICT devices with sensors to monitor and measure external events accurately, as part of investigative work in science. In a science lesson observed during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 made excellent use of digital microscopes to examine the bones of small creature within owl pellets. The pupils' ability to use ICT to present their work in ways which meets the requirements of particular purposes and audiences is also a strong feature. They adjust the size, shape and colour of text confidently, and use illustrations and sound to enhance their presentations.
- 67 Teachers and support staff work together very effectively to ensure that all aspects of ICT are accessible to all pupils. Care is taken to check that boys and girls enjoy the same opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Those for whom English is an additional language receive close support, particularly in the early stages of learning English. They benefit greatly from ICT work, and their teachers find that the work of such pupils on the computer provides a good indication of the progress they are making in learning a new language. Opportunities are also created during formal and extra-curricular activities to ensure that higher attainers and those that are particularly gifted are set tasks which challenge and extend them appropriately.
- 68 Very effective subject leadership contributes significantly towards very good provision and high quality teaching. Teachers are provided with clear guidance, and benefit regularly from training in new skills. The computer suite and a good range of ICT learning resources, such as interactive whiteboards, and the imaginative use of external expertise, such as that provided by Merseygrid, all help teachers to capture pupils' interest, challenge their thinking and extend their learning. The increasing expertise of some of the school's staff is recognised by their involvement in a Beacon initiative to share ICT expertise with teachers in other schools.

## **Information technology across the curriculum**

- 69 Having achieved considerable improvements in provision and standards in ICT since the last inspection, the school continues to extend its use in work across the curriculum. For example, the highly effective use of ICT to support work in science, is shared with other schools as part of the Beacon initiative. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards to capture pupils' interest and achieve a high level of participation. The growing expertise of

teachers and increasing knowledge, skills and understanding of the pupils, contributes significantly towards the increasingly effective use of ICT across the curriculum.

## HUMANITIES

**Provision for history and geography is satisfactory.** Standards are slightly below those expected by the age of seven, but similar to the national picture by the age of 11. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement, in relation to prior learning, is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for learning enrichment in history, through visits and visitors.
- Residential visits provide very good opportunities for practical fieldwork in geography.
- ICT makes a good contribution to learning in geography.

Areas for improvement include:

- Insufficient focus on the enquiry skills basic to learning in history and geography.
- Some poor teaching of history.

### Commentary

- 70 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, no lessons were seen in geography. However, samples of pupils' work were examined. Five lessons were seen in history, and pupils' work was sampled. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in both subjects as they move through the school.
- 71 They extend significantly their knowledge of historical events and people in the past, in history, and of different places, in geography. In a good lesson observed in Year 2, for example, pupils showed a good understanding of the events leading up to and during the Great Fire of London. In Year 5, pupils showed good knowledge of factory life, and the demands placed on children, in Victorian Britain. Their learning is enhanced considerably by educational visits and the contributions of visitors to the school, which stimulate and enthuse the pupils. However, in both subjects, the pupils do not make as much progress as they should in developing their study skills in historical and geographical enquiry.
- 72 The overall quality of teaching in history is satisfactory. Some of the teaching is good, enabling pupils to make significant progress in relation to their prior learning. The very good use of ICT to support learning, and the opportunities for pupils to engage in fieldwork, during extra-curricular activities are very good features in the teaching. Most teachers manage the pupils very effectively, promoting good standards of behaviour and a positive learning atmosphere. However, in one of the history lessons observed, the teaching was poor. Weaknesses in pupil management and inappropriate learning activities, resulted in pupils rapidly losing interest, and very little learning took place.
- 73 The management of history and geography is satisfactory overall, but there is scope for achieving greater consistency in the emphasis placed on developing pupils study skills in both subjects. Curriculum enrichment activities, such as visits to places of interest, and the contribution of visitors to the school, are very strong features in both subjects.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

**Provision for art and design, design and technology, music and physical education is good. Some aspects of physical education are outstanding.** It was only possible to observe a relatively small sample of lessons in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. However, examination of curricular planning, work completed previously, and discussion with teachers and pupils indicate that the programme of work in each subject meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teaching and learning observed was of good quality,

and pupils, at all levels of attainment, achieve well in each subject. By the age of seven and 11, standards are at least appropriate for the pupils' age. In physical education, a significant number of pupils exceed the levels expected for their age. In art and design, some of the work produced is of a high quality. All of the subjects are led and managed effectively. The school has built successfully on the last inspection, and made particularly good progress in design and technology, where standards in the last inspection were judged to be unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In art and design, pupils use a wide range of media to produce work of good and sometimes high quality.
- Work in art and design makes a valuable contribution to improving and developing pupils' understanding of other cultures and traditions.
- In design and technology, well planned opportunities are provided for pupils to design, make and evaluate their products.
- In music, pupils benefit from many opportunities to perform for various audiences and from the expertise of key staff and visiting teachers.
- In physical education, pupils have access to a wide range of activities, and the provision made for pupils to participate in extra-curricular sporting activities is outstanding.

### **Area for improvement**

- There is scope for improving further the arrangements for monitoring and recording pupils' progress in art and design and design and technology.

### **Commentary**

- 74 In art and design, pupils benefit from well planned opportunities to explore and develop their own ideas and to use a range of media. They use paint, clay, fabric, dyes, crayon, papier mache, hessian, felt and wax. Visiting artists provide additional support, and inspire pupils to produce work of high quality. Work in art and design, such as the Indian wall hangings produced in Year 3, makes a significant contribution to pupils' appreciation of other cultural traditions.
- 75 In design and technology, by the age of seven, pupils generate their own ideas and plan what they are going to do next. They select appropriate tools, and join and combine materials in a range of ways. This was well illustrated, for example, when Year 2 pupils successfully made hand puppets using a wooden frame and fabric. By the age of 11, the pupils produce appropriate designs to build their own alarm systems. They learn to evaluate their work as it develops, and show good understanding of what is required to ensure designs will be successful. For example, they know that wide bases help to make structures more stable. A long term curricular map helps teachers to plan appropriate activities, and an effective 'traffic light system' has been developed to record pupils' progress.
- 76 In music, the recently appointed deputy headteacher has a high level of expertise in music which is contributing significantly towards improving the quality of provision and teaching in the subject. The wide range of opportunities created for pupils to participate in end of term school productions and contribute towards concerts organised at a city level, help considerably to develop their confidence in performing. Some pupils benefit considerably from the expertise of visiting teachers, who provide tuition for those learning various instruments.
- 77 In physical education, the curriculum is well structured, and pupils acquire knowledge and skills in a planned and organised way. They have a good understanding of fitness and health and know that practice can improve performance. Teaching staff provide their expertise willingly outside normal school hours, promoting high levels of pupil involvement in physical education. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is offered including gymnastics, netball, athletics, football, cross country running, and badminton and the school has recently gained the Activemark award. Expertise from outside school is regularly used to enhance the

quality of experience offered, and a significant proportion of the pupils achieve very high standards in games, particularly football and in gymnastics, athletics and swimming.

### **Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship**

- 78 The school makes very good provision for all of these aspects. The pupils' personal and social development is strongly emphasised throughout the school and, as pupils mature, increasingly specific attention is given to health, sex education and relationships, and the dangers of drug misuse. The high quality of extra-curricular provision contributes significantly towards pupils' social development, and the outstanding provision for competitive sport helps them to develop a healthy lifestyle and pride in their own ability. Well taught lessons focusing on aspects of personal, social and health education, as well as the principles of good citizenship, extend considerably the pupils' all-round development. The work of the school council provides pupils with a good insight into how a democratic process can be of benefit to them and the school as a whole, and there is a growing number of examples of the council's views and ideas resulting in significant improvements in provision.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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