

INSPECTION REPORT

ST THOMAS' C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104919

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Hart

Lead inspector: Eric Jackson

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 March 2004

Inspection number: 257973

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:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	191
School address:	Kenyons Lane Lydiate Liverpool Merseyside
Postcode:	L31 0BP
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Paul Robinson
Date of previous inspection:	9/6/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Thomas' is an average sized primary on the outskirts of Maghull. It has strong links with its parish, and has a strong Christian mission. There are 191 pupils on roll, a smaller than average proportion of whom are from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils learn in English as an additional language and all are at an advanced stage. The number of pupils recognised as having special educational needs is below average, but the number with a statement of need is about average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, and socio-economic circumstances locally in general are slightly above average. Attainment at entry covers a wide range, and is generally slightly above average. The school is part of a local Network Learning Community, and received an Achievement Award in 2003 for its improvement in national test results in 2002. There are close links with the local High School, Deyes, and with Edge Hill University College for initial teacher training. The community is relatively stable and there is very low pupil mobility.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	8
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS in Key Stages 1 and 2	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Thomas' is an **effective school**, with some very good features, that gives good value for money. It is well managed, and provides a rich quality of education.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well overall, and the younger children achieve very well in the reception class.
- The staff ensure that the quality of education is very good, supported by very good teaching.
- The head, staff and governors lead and manage the school well.
- Links with parents are satisfactory, but the school does not communicate with them effectively enough, nor does it consult them sufficiently to take account of their views.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, and behave very well.
- The staff ensure that pupils' care and welfare are generally strong.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good, but the staff do not have a clear enough picture of how they can best help a small minority of identified pupils.

The school has improved well since its last inspection. The key improvement issues have led to good developments in information and communications technology, music and physical education. Standards have also risen well in English and mathematics since falling last year, when there was long-term absence of key staff. Children in the reception class make very good progress, and pupils make good progress in the infants and the juniors. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well, as do almost all those with special educational needs, although a small minority do not. Outdoor provision for reception pupils remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good, including those from minority ethnic groups, and it was very good in the reception class during the inspection. From being generally a little above average at entry to reception, pupils usually achieve high levels by age 11. In 2003, the Year 6 test results were significantly affected by the long-term absence of key staff. Results in mathematics were in the lowest five per cent when compared to those in similar schools. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve levels similar to those before 2003, with a significant number on track to attain at the higher level in English, mathematics and science. They also achieve above average levels in ICT, geography, music (particularly singing) and physical education (particularly games).

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

** In the lowest 5%.*

This year's reception group began school at higher levels of development than usual for the school, and are building well on this to be on track for many of them to achieve well above the levels expected, known as Early Learning Goals, by the time they enter Year 1. By age seven, standards seen during the inspection were above average in reading, writing and science, and well above average in mathematics. Last year's results in national tests for **7 year old pupils** were well above those in similar schools. In the school as a whole, **pupils' personal development is very good**. They respond to the school's high ethos for learning very well, and **make very good progress in**

their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education offered is very good. The **teaching** seen during the inspection was of **very good quality across the school**, with none unsatisfactory, and examples of excellent teaching in the reception class, in English and mathematics in Year 2, and in science in Year 5. This led to very good learning for the pupils, and explains the overall good achievement. The curriculum is very well organised to motivate and involve the pupils, and is enriched very well by visits and visitors, and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Singing is of a very high standard throughout the school. The school cares for its pupils very well, and most parents are very supportive. However, parental consultation is weak, and communication with some parents is unsatisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school effectively, supported well by other key staff. Governors are actively involved, and ensure generally that statutory requirements are met. Best value principles are applied, but consultation of parents and pupils and acting on the views expressed is insufficiently developed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents feel that the teaching is good, staff expect their children to work hard, and that they are making good progress. A significant minority feel that the school does not consult them sufficiently, or communicate with them effectively. The inspection confirms these views. Pupils overwhelmingly support the school, and enjoy their lessons. However, they would like a bigger playground, and to be consulted more.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Consult all parents and pupils regularly about their views of the school, and create systems for taking appropriate action in response to the views expressed;
- Review and improve the system for generating individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs in order to:
 - a. involve all staff and parents effectively in preparing these plans;
 - b. match the plans to each identified pupil's needs, with regular agreed reviews;
 - c. enable the special needs coordinator to monitor and evaluate the individual plans and their impact on pupils' progress more effectively.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required sections.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well across the school, and by age 11 are on track to attain above average standards in English, and well above average standards in mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in the reception class currently leads to well above average levels of attainment in almost all the specified areas of learning.
- Standards achieved in speaking and listening are high throughout the school.
- Pupils' progress and skills in reading are strong.
- Standards achieved in mathematics are high across the school, and pupils with higher attainment are helped to reach particularly high levels.
- Pupils achieve above average standards in science by age seven, and well above average by age 11.
- There has been good improvement in standards achieved in information and communications technology across the school.
- Pupils achieve well in aspects of art and design, geography, music and physical education.
- Although most pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set, a very small number do not achieve as well as they should.

Commentary

1. In 2003, pupils achieved standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 that were average in English, below average in mathematics, and average in science. These results were much lower than in previous years, although the trend over the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend. By age seven, Year 2 pupils achieved above average levels in reading and mathematics, but well above average levels in writing. The trend here is below the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.8 (28.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.7 (30.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Compared to schools in similar socio-economic circumstances, results in national tests in 2003 at age seven were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At age 11, they were average in English and science, but well below average in mathematics. Compared to the results of similar groups of pupils at age 11 based on the evidence of their test results at age seven, these results were well below average in English and science, and in the lowest five per cent nationally in mathematics.
3. The school's explanation as to why these results fell so sharply from the previous year is convincing. The Year 6 teacher was absent from school from June until April, but the school could only appoint a covering teacher for four weeks at a time. Governors decided in the circumstances that it was more important that all the pupils who could should attain the expected level, and the headteacher planned accordingly. This was a successful strategy, as a

higher proportion than nationally achieved the expected Level 4 in the national tests. However, far fewer pupils reached the higher Level 5 than is usual for the school, resulting in the lower comparative achievement. Now that the teacher has returned, the current Year 6 are on track to achieve the same previously higher levels.

4. The overall attainment of children entering the Foundation Stage is just above average, although this attainment covers a wide range. As a result of the very good provision and high quality teaching most children make rapid progress through the recommended 'stepping-stones' towards the Early Learning Goals. They achieve well and make significant gains in their learning. This leads to many of the children meeting or exceeding the nationally expected levels or goals in all six areas of learning before the end of the Foundation Stage.
5. In Key Stage 1, pupils currently achieve standards in reading and writing that are generally above average by age seven. The strongest aspects of their literacy skills are speaking, listening and reading. The improvement of writing is a school priority, reflecting the school's tracking of pupils' progress through evaluating assessment information. Nonetheless, standards achieved in writing are above average levels at seven. Almost all pupils achieve well for their capabilities. Pupils also achieve high standards in mathematics by seven. This has improved since last year, and reflects the challenges that staff pose to the pupils so that they are expected to think about problem-solving, as well as learning number facts. In science, pupils achieve above average standards by Year 2, and develop good investigative skills.
6. High standards by seven are currently built on effectively in English in Years 3 to 6, with good improvement this year compared to that reflected in the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2003. The staff give the pupils many opportunities to discuss their work, giving them specific challenges that encourage them to explore and use language specific to the different subjects they study. Pupils also develop literacy skills effectively to support their work across the curriculum. Standards in mathematics are well above average, particularly in Year 6, because the quality of teaching in the subject is so high. Pupils develop very good numeracy skills, and learn to compute accurately from an early age. In science, Year 6 pupils achieve well above average standards. A much higher proportion of them achieve above average levels than in most primary schools.
7. There has been very good improvement in the pupils' achievements by age 11 in information and communication technology (ICT). This is because there has been good investment in terms of resources and staff training, leading to a greater confidence amongst staff and pupils. Pupils achieve well in art and design at Key Stage 1, and there are examples of high quality pupils' work on display throughout the school. Singing is a real strength, and it is a great pleasure to hear the pupils sing in unison in assembly, or the choir singing two-part harmony. Instrumental work is also of a high standard for those pupils, mainly girls, who learn to play the flute. Good developments are taking place in physical education, and the standards achieved in games by both girls and boys are above average by age 11.
8. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls by age 11 currently, although generally girls attain higher levels than boys. Girls generally achieve higher levels than boys by age seven. These differences are generally in line with the national trend. The school has implemented a number of 'boy-friendly' strategies in an attempt to improve their achievement, but it is too soon to comment on the effectiveness of these measures. Gifted and talented pupils do well because they are identified and given specific tasks to extend their thinking. Those pupils from minority ethnic groups generally achieve similar levels to their classmates.
9. Those pupils with a statement of educational need make good progress and achieve well in the broad range of the curriculum due to very good teaching and learning and effective use of support, including some specialist teaching. As a result they also achieve well in relation to specific targets set. In some lessons pupils achieve close to expected levels for their age, particularly in science.

10. The majority of other pupils identified with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well due to good support and well-planned tasks that enable them to access the full range of the curriculum. A small group makes slower progress, however, and the school's systems do not provide a clear enough picture for the staff currently to identify or explain this effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is **very good**. They respond to the school's high ethos for learning very well, and make very good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is also very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good across the school.
- Children in the reception class make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Behaviour is very good across the school.
- Spiritual, moral and social development are very good.
- The quality of relationships is high, although very occasionally older girls are unkind to one another.

Commentary

11. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy coming to school, and like their lessons. Parents almost unanimously agree that their children like school. This is evident in its day-to-day work, where the pupils display very good attitudes to the staff, each other, and to their lessons. There have been no exclusions.
12. This begins very well in the reception class, where the staff help the children to settle into school superbly. Because there are clear and understood routines to guide their activities, the children learn to work together successfully in a wide variety of social settings. This very good start is built on very well throughout the school as pupils are helped to work together in pairs and groups and to see themselves as an essential part of their class, and the wider school community. Older pupils fulfil specific responsibilities well, and are always polite and friendly to visitors, in line with the school's ethos. A small number of parents reported that older girls are sometimes unkind, isolating and making fun of one or other of the group. This can be hurtful, but the school generally deals with such incidents promptly and effectively. No such incidents occurred during the inspection.
13. The pupils respond very well to the high ethos of endeavour and cooperation promoted in the school's aims, and fostered by the staff. The school runs very smoothly because the pupils know what they should do, and are determined to do as they should. There is a strong moral approach to all the school's work, based in its Christian mission. This is developed very well through assemblies, circle time discussions, and is also promoted by the example set by the staff and visiting governors and parents. For example, the chair of governors, who is also the parish priest, regularly takes whole-school assemblies, and is a well-known and respected visitor. The staff's consistent approach to handling pupils' behaviour constantly reinforces the message of personal responsibility for one's actions, helping the pupils to grow in self-control and understanding.
14. Most pupils with special educational needs sustain interest in their lessons well and display positive attitudes, including those with behavioural difficulties, due to lively teaching, good relationships and well targeted interaction within whole class sessions and group work. This

works very effectively for the other pupils, too. Girls and boys are fully included in all activities, as are pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The school is very inclusive.

15. Spiritual development is fostered very well through many avenues, including assemblies, music, art and design, science and literature. The school's mission is to foster children's understanding of themselves through the message of Christianity. This occurs in religious education lessons, through the study of different faiths and ways of believing. It also occurs in simple play situations, such as those in reception where children question the visiting midwife about caring for new-born babies. There is a sense of divine gift in the quality of the pupils' singing which they share with others in the community in elderly persons' homes, the town square at Christmas, and regularly in the parish church.
16. Cultural development is also good, and is promoted through the study of a range of faiths, as well as through history, geography, literature, games, art and music. The school broadens the pupils' cultural understanding by helping them to explore the locality and its traditions, then wider afield in Liverpool. There are visits out, and an enterprising range of visitors to the school to share their own and other's cultural interests, beliefs and backgrounds with the pupils. A really good link here is through learning something of a variety of different European languages, such as Spanish and French, from visiting native speakers. In a lesson seen, pupils had good command of the accent in repeating and using simple words and phrases in Spanish.
17. Attendance is satisfactory, as it is in line with the national average. Punctuality is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

18. There have been no exclusions.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Black or Black British – African
Chinese

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
184	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The provision is **very good** in teaching and learning, and curricular opportunities are also very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** across the school; day-to-day assessment is **very strong** and effective; assessment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff have very high expectations of pupils' learning and achievement.
- Pupils respond very well in lessons, and try their best to reach the learning objectives set.
- There is effective challenge for almost all groups of learners, including pupils of higher attainment.
- The staff work well as a team to share their knowledge and understanding of subjects and how children best learn.
- The staff know how well the pupils achieve, and plan new learning experiences successfully from this in the main.
- Pupils with special needs generally make good progress, apart from a very small group.

Commentary

19. The staff generally plan interesting and sometimes exciting lessons that catch and hold the pupils' attention. These are skilfully based in the curriculum requirements, and usually matched very well to the needs of the different groups and individuals in the class. The table shows that almost four out of five lessons seen were very good or excellent: the excellent lessons were in reception, English and mathematics in Year 2, and science in Year 5. This is a good spread over important aspects of the school's work, underlining why pupils' achievement is as good as it is. This is further underscored by there having been very good lessons observed in every class.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (12%)	18 (55%)	8 (24%)	3 (9%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

20. There is very good communication between support staff and class teachers with briefing and discussion of what pupils are expected to learn being considered at the beginning of sessions. Support staff are, therefore, clear about learning outcomes and their role. This has the effect of ensuring that the support is well matched to pupils' needs, that progress is accelerated, and that time is used very effectively. Often this benefits those pupils with special educational needs, but also includes other groups such as those identified as gifted or talented. This work is so successful because it is based on effective assessment of what pupils have already achieved. Teachers' marking of pupils' work often gives them pointers for improvement, and regular targets are set for individual pupils in English and mathematics. This helps them to focus effectively on what they should do to improve.
21. Teachers' lesson planning is consistent in including a range of different tasks matched to the range of needs within the class. All staff know pupils well and adapt their questions and forms of presentation to their different needs, using specific resources which support their learning. Support staff are skilled, especially within whole class sessions, in giving discreet support to pupils to enable them to take an active part.

Example of outstanding practice

The common features of the excellent teaching and learning seen are (one of these is described in the mathematics section of the report):

- Excellent management of the pupils, based in high quality learning relationships.
- A lively and exciting introduction that grabbed the pupils' attention.
- Innovative and challenging use of resources, such as puppets, hidden texts, or science resources set out in the hall.
- Very good command of the subject, giving authority, and making pupils confident in their learning.
- Excellent interplay with support staff, so that pupils received appropriate prompts or support when needed.
- Very high expectations of pupils' cooperation and involvement, matched by their eagerness to take part.
- Imaginative methods and strategies to amuse, challenge and engage the pupils.
- Excellent planning that met the pupils' needs precisely and accurately.
- Enjoyment and purposeful pleasure in working hard to learn.

22. Occasionally, parts of lessons were too slow, so that pupils lost interest, or the level of challenge was too low, so that some pupils became bored. These were rare, however. One aspect of weakness relates to a very small group of pupils with special educational needs. In these very few but important cases, the school's systems for reviewing pupils' progress towards the targets set for them have not worked efficiently. This has led to a lack of clarity in planning the next steps in their learning, and in tracking their progress towards targets over time. This is partly a management issue, referred to later in the report, but also relates to how closely class teachers and support staff are involved in drawing up individual education plans for those children with special educational needs with whom they work most closely. In these cases, this has not been close enough.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. Opportunities for enrichment and extra curricular provision are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education promotes secure, confident and thoughtful learners.
- An interesting, motivating and worthwhile range of learning experiences is provided across the school.
- The well planned out-of-school activities enrich pupils' learning.
- Outdoor play facilities for all pupils are in need of improvement.
- Library resources are less than satisfactory.

Commentary

23. The school's Christian values and principles are apparent throughout the school. This is a school which places considerable emphasis on nurturing high quality personal and social skills that have a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their eagerness to learn. As a result, pupils achieve well and reach higher than expected standards. There are agreed policies for health, sex and drugs education and time is made available within lessons to develop these areas in ways which are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils.
24. All subjects of the national curriculum and religious education are taught and the curriculum is well balanced and broad. The curriculum is particularly well planned and considerable effort goes into bringing the teaching and learning alive for pupils by providing a wide range of first hand experiences and interesting resources. Different teaching and learning styles, methods, groupings and activities captivate pupils' interest, ensuring that the needs of both boys and girls and those pupils who learn at different rates are met. Most lessons have provision at different levels of difficulty for lower, average and higher attaining pupils, enabling them to

achieve as well as they can. The needs of pupils new to the school are quickly identified and there are generally very good arrangements in place to provide extra support, which is valued by parents and pupils.

25. Links with other subjects add interest and enrichment to pupils' learning. For example, pupils' knowledge of a different country and way of life is deepened as they produce high quality art work stimulated by their study of the culture of St Lucia. The innovative teaching of three modern foreign languages on a rota basis for all pupils further enhances pupils' skills as well as developing their understanding of what it means to be a citizen of the European Community.
26. In the main, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very inclusive. Specialist teaching is well matched to specific targets in the pupils' education plans and for most these targets help them to make those small steps necessary to make progress within specific skill areas.
27. However, when pupils are placed in year groups below their age level, although they sometimes make progress at that level, they miss the curricular experiences and opportunities that other pupils of their age have. In the long term, this could affect their overall progress. For a small number of pupils with special educational needs, the targets set are not sufficiently challenging and do not reflect the breadth and range of provision available within class, which is helping most of the other pupils to achieve very well in specific areas of the curriculum.
28. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. Emphasis is placed on providing exciting and challenging first hand experiences which stimulate children's interest and imagination, enabling them to make rapid strides towards the Early Learning Goals, the national targets set for children by the end of the reception year.
29. A very good range of clubs covering sport, music, mathematics, craft and ICT enriches the statutory curriculum and enhances personal and social skills. All are very well attended and the demand for places means many of the activities are rotated over the year. Staff and parents give very generously of their time to extend pupils' interests and skills. The local city of Liverpool's rich history and culture are tapped into well by the school. Well-planned visits to museums, wild life parks and zoos, historical sites, exhibitions, art galleries and theatres extend pupils' knowledge and understanding well and play an important part in developing an eagerness to learn.
30. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, and the school is making good use of resources to improve the fabric of the building. However, the school playgrounds are small and this limits pupils' recreational activities. The concern expressed by pupils and parents that there is a lack of interesting activities and resources at break times is justified. Outdoor play facilities for the youngest children in the reception class are unsatisfactory and have not been improved since the last inspection when they were identified as an issue to be addressed. There are plans to improve this situation as funding becomes available. Although resources are good overall, there is room for improvement in the school's library provision. Teaching and support staff work particularly well together for the benefit of the pupils, and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils who learn at a slower rate, and those who are gifted and talented.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. The guidance and support they receive is good. Pupils grow and thrive within the community of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is generally a high standard of care for pupils.
- Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with adults in the school.

- Induction procedures are very good.
- The school takes pupils' views into account.

Commentary

31. Relationships between adults and pupils are caring, constructive, mutually trusting and respectful. Pupils confirm that they feel valued, safe and supported by the way they are treated. The good sense of community, which prevails, demonstrates well the ethos of the school. The procedures for checking safety and for carrying out risk assessments are good. Staff are active in ensuring the health and safety of their pupils through good awareness of the hazards around school, especially during new building works at the time of the inspection. First aid cover is good, although the school does not yet have a quiet place for treating sick or injured children. Child protection procedures are well-established and staff know the correct procedures to follow when a concern is raised. The school has good links with a range of agencies on behalf of pupils and families.
32. Induction arrangements are very effective and enable children to settle quickly into the reception class. They are also very good when pupils join the school part way through the school year. Pupils receive very good personal guidance through the personal and social education lessons as seen when pupils in Year 1 explored aspects of road safety with a visitor from the community. Sex education is taught within the context of the family and with support from the school nurse for pupils in Year 6. There are plans to start a school council but pupils already have a "voice" in the school. For example, they took a petition to the governing body to allow girls to wear trousers as part of their school uniform. The very good personal support which pupils receive is helping them to be mature and responsible, as confirmed by parents during discussions and through the parental questionnaire.
33. The provision of support and guidance based on monitoring is generally good. There is a pupil tracking system recently in place which enables teachers to evaluate the performance of individual pupils and classes and plan their teaching accordingly. During a discussion with pupils in Year 6, they confirmed that teachers help them to improve by giving good advice when marking their work and, from this, they can set targets to make their work better. They also said, "We are like a big team and care for each other." This is in line with the school's aim of encouraging children to relate to others in a caring and sensitive manner.
34. Pupils with special educational needs have their needs reviewed regularly with and involvement from appropriate external agencies, parents, class teachers and support staff. The level of care for pupils with medical needs is good. Pupils themselves are increasingly being involved in their own reviews. However, for a very small minority of pupils, these reviews are not as effective as they should be.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents, good links with the community and very good links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The involvement of parents in children's learning at school and at home is good.
- There are good links with the local church and the community.

- The very good links with other schools and colleges enhance pupils' learning.
- The mechanisms for the transfer of pupils to secondary education are good.
- There are currently no formal procedures for taking parents' views into account.

Commentary

35. The information that parents receive is satisfactory. Parents are kept informed about events in the school through newsletters and other correspondence. Through the school web site, parents can access a range of school documents and information about school procedures. There is helpful information in the prospectus and the annual report of the governing body although there are a few statutory items of information missing from the latter. However, a significant number of parents who responded to the questionnaire do not feel that the school communicates with them effectively or gives them sufficient information on their children's progress. The school offers two consultation evenings each year, but the school newsletter informs them that the autumn meeting is only for those parents who have a concern. This discourages some parents from making an appointment to see their child's teacher. However, the pupils' annual report provides parents not only with good information on the achievement and progress of their children but also sets out what they need to do to improve.
36. Partnership with parents of children identified with special educational needs is good in the main due to the close working relationships formed with class teachers, support staff and the coordinator for special educational needs. There is, however, a small number of parents who rightly perceive that their views concerning the provision for their children are not sufficiently taken into account when decisions are taken by the school concerning them.
37. Parents are interested in the school and the experiences it provides for their children. At least twenty parents help in school regularly and most parents help their children with the work they do at home. There is good guidance from the school on how to help children with homework. A good range of meetings is held during the year, for example, before pupils enter Year 6 and when they transfer from the reception class to Year 1. At present, the school does not have regular formal procedures for consulting parents and seeking their views or suggestions on proposed changes. As a result, some parents feel that there are times when changes have been introduced without consultation and that the school does not seek or value their opinions and ideas sufficiently. However, during the inspection, a number of parents visited the school to express their support for all the school is doing to support and care for their children. There is an active and successful Parent Teachers' Association that raises considerable sums for the school; for example, £2000 towards the proposed cost of the outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.
38. Links with the local community are good and there are strong links with the church. Pupils donate harvest gifts to elderly citizens and sing for residents at the local care home. The Junior Choir sings carols in the Town Square and some pupils engage in drama productions. The school has made links with the wider European community through the Catalunya Government. This has resulted in Spanish lessons for all pupils who are keen to show off their expertise to visitors! There are very good links with local schools through "MADCOS" - the Maghull and District Cluster of Schools. Joint projects are planned, for example, the pairing of Year 6 pupils with pupils in Year 7 at high schools prepares the way for the smooth transfer of Year 6 pupils. The school's partnership with Edge Hill University College for initial teacher training has mutual benefits for all.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good.

The quality of leadership, management and governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong shared vision based in the Christian ethos directs the school's work.
- The headteacher and staff are committed to raising standards.
- Procedures for school self-evaluation are developing well and have a positive impact on school improvement.
- The governors support the school well and have a good understanding of how the school is performing.
- There is a strong commitment to staff development and improving teachers' and support staff's skills in order to raise standards.
- Financial management is good.
- The school development plan and records for pupils with special educational needs are not useful documents for monitoring the impact of actions taken.
- Consultation procedures for parents and pupils are not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

39. The quality of leadership, management and governance is good. The school acts on a clear set of values based on its Christian character and provides a supportive community where children are valued. By her active presence around the school, the headteacher leads staff well in promoting this ethos and all staff, governors and the great majority of parents share her vision. A strength of the school is the very good staff teamwork. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead and work alongside others, sharing their high expectations and giving support and guidance in realising them.
40. The headteacher consults effectively with staff and governors, and with some parents informally, in identifying priorities and in developing plans for school improvement. The procedures for school self evaluation are well established. They have been effective in helping the school identify issues that needed to be addressed in order to raise achievement and improve the quality of education. The increased use of data and other information which is shared with governors is making developmental planning more precise, but the school does not formally consult widely enough in identifying priorities for improvement.
41. Governors are closely involved in the school, and generally support the headteacher and staff well. They are developing a wider understanding of the school's work, and holding the school to account for the pupils' levels of achievement. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, except that the annual report to parents last year had some items missing.
42. Previous school improvement planning has been successful in enabling the school to respond to all the issues raised at the last inspection and to address the dip in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003. This has been achieved by subject leaders and senior management working together to improve teacher's skills through training and support. The successful impact of these on teaching and learning has been carefully monitored through observation in classrooms, and analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and assessment procedures. The implementation of comprehensive systems for staff performance management has supported these initiatives well and has ensured that training has been well matched both to whole school priorities and individual development needs. However, the current school improvement plan is not precise enough in the targets set for improvement, nor does it set out the governors' longer-term strategic vision. The headteacher is aware of this and is to attend further training in effective whole-school planning.

43. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs from support staff is generally very good. This provision is well managed by the lead teacher for special educational needs, and all teaching staff. As a result most pupils with identified needs make good progress and achieve well including those identified with more complex needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the files and documentation for a few pupils identified for additional support do not provide specific enough information regarding the level of support required and progress made. This makes it difficult for them to be closely monitored by senior management or to provide useful information for other staff and parents in setting new targets.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	653,400.20
Total expenditure	504,246.86
Expenditure per pupil	2,740.47

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32,820
Balance carried forward to the next	82,622.34*

*includes £23, 469 capital for building improvements

44. Financial management is good, and the school benefits from the financial expertise of individual governors. Despite extra staffing costs and investment in improving the building, the school has been able to augment its administrative staff and support staff which has helped teachers with their workload and enabled support to be effectively targeted to raise pupils' achievement.

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 Foundation Stage is **very good**, and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, capturing children's imagination and making them eager, confident and well motivated learners.
- The teaching assistant provides very high quality support to enhance learning.
- Activities and tasks are very well planned to enable children to make rapid progress in learning to read, write and count.
- Relationships are excellent and as a result children feel valued, secure, work hard and are very proud of their achievements; they also behave very well.
- The accommodation and resources are very good but the outside area for outdoor play is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

45. The teacher and nursery nurse are very experienced, enthusiastic and have very high expectations of the children. All staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play. They make school an enjoyable experience which promotes a love of learning. Sessions provide a very good balance of teacher directed activities and those children can choose for themselves. There are very well planned, interesting and challenging activities to promote children's literacy and number skills; interesting objects, puppets and natural materials add interest to learning and make it fun. High quality role-play situations provide very good opportunities for children to develop their imagination and use their literacy and number skills in 'real' situations.
46. Elements of the literacy and numeracy strategy are implemented very well for children and this has a very positive effect on their achievement. The sensitive use of praise, encouragement and prompts remind children of previous learning. Clear and precise instructions and support build up children's confidence and skills very well and as a result children are clear about what they are expected to learn, how they should behave and how they can be successful. Staff use their close knowledge of children's progress effectively to plan the next steps in the teaching and learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident, secure and eager learners.
- They behave very well and show kindness and care for each other.

Commentary

47. Children enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers at the start of sessions; they eagerly choose from the wide range of stimulating activities available and are evidently keen to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. Their confidence and care was well exhibited as one child politely asked the visitor to take care of her 'baby' (in the throes of being

bathed in the water tray) to make sure she didn't drown while the child went to the bathroom! Children develop a very good understanding of appropriate behaviour and of what is right and wrong. They share resources and work together well in a variety of situations, such as role-play and outdoor play. The arrival of a child from Zimbabwe stimulated an interest in the life and culture of other places and peoples.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy skills are given a very high priority.
- Children are very confident communicators, readers and writers.

Commentary

48. The curriculum is planned very effectively to link the development of literacy skills with all the areas of learning so that reading and writing become an integral part of children's wider learning. Children respond well to the encouragement of their teachers and use rich vocabulary and increasingly complex sentence structures. This was well illustrated as children confidently asked a visiting midwife thoughtful questions about the care of new babies. Writing materials and equipment that develop writing skills are readily available and the children's efforts are valued and encouraged. Children recognise and write their own names using capital and small letters with increasing confidence. Those children who learn at a slower rate write simple words using initial sounds while older children of higher attainment use their increasing knowledge of sounds to write independently for a variety of purposes; for example, appointments in the 'Clinic' or instructions on how to make a 'pop up' book.
49. Children display a delight in reading and most are reading books with increasing confidence using their knowledge of sounds to work out unfamiliar words. All children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members; this has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read.

Mathematical development

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very confident mathematicians.
- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced at every opportunity.

Commentary

50. Number songs and nursery rhymes reinforce counting skills. In the reception class children know the names of common shapes, add numbers together and count in sequence, some accurately well beyond 20. One higher attaining child confidently counted up to sixty as she tried to beat the minute timer in filling different containers with sand. The staff skilfully stress mathematical vocabulary very strongly during all activities. The children use mathematical ideas and skills to solve problems in practical situations; for example, they work out how many children use numbers when they use the telephone to make appointments. By the end of a very effective mathematics lesson most children were able to identify 'o'clock' using an analogue clock.

51. When playing with two and three-dimensional shapes, small world toys, emptying and filling containers in the very well planned sand and water areas, or exploring the world of 'Elmer the Elephant', children consider carefully size, shape and position. All children are learning to record their investigations in simple graph form.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to be inquisitive about their world.
- The rich curriculum builds on the children's own experiences with well structured and interesting activities.

Commentary

52. The children's natural curiosity is stimulated as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore a wide range of man-made and natural materials. Children show a good sense of time as they explore how they have changed since babyhood. They also work independently with a wide range of construction toys, discovering how things are made and move. They use their skills of cutting, folding, sticking and joining to make a suitable baby carrier. Children are becoming competent users of information and communication technology to support their learning.

Physical Development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children show considerable skill when using small equipment and tools.
- There is a lack of space and resources to extend children's physical skills and provide regular well-planned outdoor play facilities.

Commentary

53. Children's natural exuberance and energy is promoted appropriately by the staff through formal physical education lessons. However, these are sometimes restrictive of free movement, and there is a need to provide more opportunities for children to develop their physical skills in well planned activities out of doors.
54. Well directed support and guidance by adults enable children to handle a variety of tools and materials and small equipment safely and with care showing considerable dexterity when handling pencils, scissors, brushes, construction toys and jigsaws.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities to promote creative development.
- Imaginative play is a central part of the curriculum.

Commentary

55. Children enjoy taking part in the many very good role-play situations using exciting resources provided by the staff; the children develop their imagination and extend their language skills and creativity well as they take the role of family member, nurse, doctor and receptionist. Children develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour; they mix their own paint; already know the primary colours and mix them well to create different shades. Children choose different materials carefully to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. Staff make materials such as paint, sand and water available for children to explore on a daily basis. These activities are exceptionally well planned and extend children's ideas and thinking very effectively.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are high.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good in both key stages.
- Well managed initiatives improve standards in writing and reading.
- The marking of pupil's work is very effective in identifying how pupils can improve their work, especially in writing.
- Standards in handwriting are inconsistent across the school.

Commentary

56. Standards in English currently are in the main above average. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are well above average in both key stages, and in writing above average. Almost all pupils are achieving well with the previous high standards in Key Stage 1 being sustained and with a substantial improvement for the current Year 6 compared to last year's performance in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. Pupils with special educational needs are in the main achieving well due to good provision and support. Higher attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 1 and in upper Key Stage 2, are making good progress, particularly in writing. The slight difference between the achievement of boys and girls is not significant. The improvement in standards in Year 6 both since the last inspection and since 2003 are due to the very good teaching and learning which was observed during the inspection and to the impact of initiatives undertaken.
57. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. This is due to teachers consistently building on pupil's prior language skills throughout the school. Pupils listen very well and engage in lively dialogue, expressing their opinions confidently to teachers and other pupils. Teachers value talk as an integral part of the learning process. As a result, pupils themselves see the value of discussion, sharing ideas and learning co-operatively. There was a buzz of conversation in many of the lessons observed, and this was almost always purposeful and very productive.
58. Standards in reading are well above average. This is due to the early very systematic approach to teaching word recognition and skills in sounding out letters and groups of letters: the adoption of a structured reading programme and extra time being given for pupils to read alone and with others is very helpful here. Pupils use a good range of strategies when reading

independently and apply their skills well in literacy lessons when reading unknown texts. Good questioning and active discussion fostered by the staff reinforce the learning of important words, specialist vocabulary, and reading for understanding using more advanced comprehension skills. Pupils apply their reading skills well in other subjects and have developed good research skills by age 11.

59. Standards in writing are in the main above average. The progress made as a result of the many staff training and support initiatives undertaken to raise standards in writing have resulted in the systematic and effective teaching of literacy skills. This results in the majority of pupils acquiring a good range of writing skills. Teachers model writing well through demonstrating and joining in writing tasks, and specific feedback through marking and assessment helps the pupils to develop and extend their skills and make improvements. Teachers give pupils a range of opportunities to enable them to extend, use and apply their skills in speaking, listening and reading, and directly relate them to their work in different forms of writing. This accounts for the good achievement now being made in this aspect of English. Marking is systematically used to identify how pupils can improve their writing and in the best practice targets set were used by teachers to measure progress and give constructive feedback. This also involved children in evaluating their own work and sometimes the work of others. ICT is used to help pupils redraft and improve their writing very effectively, especially in Years 5 and 6. Achievement in handwriting is as expected at the end of Key Stage 2, but progress varies across the school with insufficient opportunities in some classes to develop and practice their skills.
60. The quality of teaching is very good with some very good and occasionally excellent teaching seen. Teacher's expectations are high, supported by very good working relationships with the pupils. Teachers plan work carefully to meet the differing levels of prior attainment in their class, so that pupils with learning difficulties are well supported: in the majority of lessons all children are sufficiently challenged. Staff choose resources well and use them imaginatively to generate enthusiasm and interest. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to English, are eager to answer questions. In none of the lessons seen was behaviour less than very good. Where teaching was satisfactory there were a few missed opportunities to further challenge the higher attaining pupils, and in some work, targets were not consistently applied nor sufficiently focused on by pupils to help them improve.
61. The joint co-ordinators of English are clear about what they want to achieve in English and have high expectations now and for the future. They have used data and other information to identify strengths and weaknesses and development priorities and have targeted resources well, including the use of support and training. As a result of actions taken there is evidence that the dipping trend in achievement in Key Stage 2 has been reversed, especially in writing. The curriculum is well matched to the children's needs, and has good breadth and balance in the quality and range of what is taught. Target setting and tracking of pupils' progress have been recently introduced in order to monitor progress more carefully, but this is not yet fully established.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Pupils use the full range of their language and literacy skills extensively across the curriculum, especially in speaking and listening. In a key example, pupils in Year 6 used their skills very well in applying what they had learned about persuasive language to write letters to the Governors about issues important to them. They extended their range of vocabulary for formal letter writing and their verbal presentation skills using technology to address different audiences. They used all these skills successfully in putting forward their views.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved are well above average at seven and 11.
- The quality of teaching is high, leading to very good learning for the pupils.
- There is some innovative practice in developing pupils' investigational skills.
- The subject leader manages the subject very well, helping other staff improve and develop their skills.

Commentary

63. This year, standards achieved towards the end of Year 6 are back to the school's usual level, after the drop in results in national tests last year. This maintains the levels achieved at the last inspection. This is because the Year 6 teacher has returned from long-term absence, and has been able again to push many pupils forward to achieve at higher than expected levels. It is clear from this, and the levels already being achieved in Years 3 and 5, that last year's lower than average results were adversely influenced by the teacher's absence for much of the year. Indeed, a higher proportion than the national average achieved the expected Level 4 in 2003, but far fewer achieved at the higher level.
64. Year 2 pupils achieve well above average standards, with a high proportion currently working at higher than expected levels. This is because the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is so high, and shows good improvement since the last inspection.
65. Boys and girls generally achieve similar levels, although this varies from year-to-year. Those pupils with special educational needs generally achieve very well in the subject for their capabilities. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve similar levels to their peers. The school identifies those pupils who are talented in the subject, and they are often given extended and open-ended work that challenges them successfully to achieve high levels.
66. The quality of teaching is very good across the school, and an excellent lesson was observed in Year 2.

Example of outstanding practice

In this outstanding lesson, the teacher's excellent relationship with the pupils, combined with lesson planning that really stretched all the different groups, led to a lesson that absorbed the pupils, and engaged the three supporting adults very effectively. The learning objective was to create and solve 'real-life' problems in working out the time after journeys of different length. In the whole-class mental warm-up, all the pupils wrote on individual whiteboards the new time an hour on or an hour back from that given (higher attaining pupils were challenged to add or subtract 2, 3 or 4 hours). This work was extended, using pupils' recent knowledge of flight times to such places as Fuerteventura, Florida, and Canada, adding on 4, 9 and 12 hours from the start time. This really stretched the pupils, filling in a chart on the teacher's flip chart. The helping adults then worked with groups using dice to create simulated journeys, with start times, length of 'flight', and arrival times entered in a prepared grid. This again made the pupils think and cooperate at high levels. Meanwhile, the teacher gave the pupils of higher attainment a 'Challenge': to calculate independently a return trip duration in hours, then cumulatively over a week. This was an effective challenge, evidenced by the mistakes a number of them made in calculating the final result. The teacher's skilled questioning prompted the pupils to reconsider their results, and their approaches to working this out. Progress and achievement in this lesson were very good.

67. In general, teachers plan very effective lessons that build very well on pupils' prior learning. They have very good subject knowledge and understanding between them, which they use very well to develop and extend pupils' learning and achievement, supported by a very skilled and experienced subject leader. She provides stimulating and innovative practice with her Year 1 pupils. For example, she has fixed whiteboards on cupboard doors at the height for pupils to stand and write. In a lesson learning to write and solve word problems, a group of these five and six year old pupils worked in pairs at these boards, recording their 'number stories' about

an owl feeding its young with worms. This involved adding and subtracting numbers, and searching for a pattern. It was remarkable to see these young pupils working as thinking mathematicians, in discussion with their partner.

68. Similarly, Year 6 pupils were expected by the teacher to use and explain such expressions as 'simplified fraction' as a matter of course. She handled the concept of equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentage skilfully, leading the pupils to make generalisations about ratio through very skilled and direct questioning. In the pupils' books, there were very good examples of how she used marking to stretch and improve pupils' thinking. One pupil wrote next to a piece of work, "I would have found the rest quite hard if you hadn't shown me, but I understand now."
69. The subject leader makes a very good contribution to the successful provision in the subject, and helps her colleagues both to develop their own skills, and use support staff and teaching resources very successfully to support pupils' learning. Staff are beginning to use ICT more effectively, and older pupils confidently handle spreadsheets, for example.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. There are good links developing between the subject and ICT, and teachers take opportunities in science and geography to use and develop numeracy and other skills. In Key Stage 1, themed work creates successful links between the subject and others, such as in measuring and counting. Similarly at Key Stage 2, teachers use music, physical education and history to emphasise pattern, the passage of time, and positional understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average towards the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is consistently of a high quality.
- Pupils are particularly skilful in investigating scientific processes.
- There are good links with information and communication technology.
- Assessment is not used rigorously enough.

Commentary

71. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The number of pupils in Year 6 exceeding the expected level is high and much better than in most primary schools. Standards have improved since the last inspection and progress is consistently good across the school and in each year group.
72. Teaching overall is very good and occasionally excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers explain the work for the pupils in a clear and interesting way. Resources are of a very high quality and pupils are excited by the lessons, often bubbling with enthusiasm. The staff provide a good variety of stimulating and challenging investigations and experiments leading to good levels of attainment in scientific enquiry. Their expertise and enthusiasm motivate pupils to reach the highest standards they can, and they do achieve well. Where additional support is needed, adults provide specific help, resulting in all pupils, whatever their level of attainment, having the same chance to do well.
73. Pupils are carefully directed to ask questions, carry out experiments and record their findings clearly and carefully through tables, charts, diagrams and writing. Year 1 pupils are enthralled

as they observe fibre optic lights and conduct their own experiments using 'peep boxes' to discover more about light sources. In Years 3 to 6 pupils build progressively on this secure foundation of basic skills. They approach practical tasks with considerable confidence, independence and enthusiasm and have a secure understanding of what constitutes a fair test. Older pupils share ideas and have lively discussions with each other and their teachers to confidently express their own ideas about finding solutions to problems. Pupils use their literacy and mathematical skills well in the subject as they tabulate information or write up experiments in their own words.

74. Good use is made of ICT and this adds interest to the teaching and learning. It is used very effectively to enable pupils who learn at a faster rate to work at very high levels. In Year 3, pupils and teachers used a digital microscope and an interactive white board to make more close and detailed observations of rocks and soils. In Year 6 pupils used temperature sensors and a data logging program to extend their investigative and recording skills about the cooling of liquids.
75. The subject is well managed. There is a good grasp of the priorities and needs and this has been instrumental in the school turning round the dip in attainment in the 2003 national tests. Teaching styles and an analysis of data have resulted in a rapid improvement in the quality of the teaching which has accelerated pupils' progress and brought standards almost back to the higher levels they were in 2001 and 2002. There is room to improve the satisfactory assessment systems in place and this could help staff and pupils to raise standards even further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision of equipment in the computer suite and each classroom.
- Staff show high levels of confidence and expertise.
- Basic skills are well taught.
- The pupils are very enthusiastic.
- Effective use is made of ICT in supporting learning in all other subjects.
- There are no effective systems to check on pupils' learning.

Commentary

76. Pupils' achieve well and attainment in Year 6 is above the level expected for pupils of this age. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 so a judgement on standards cannot be made.
77. Teaching is consistently good. Good use is being made of the computer suite and effective whole class teaching strategies help pupils learn the basic skills of the subject effectively. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and provide good support, particularly when working with small groups. Teaching very obviously motivates and encourages pupils to try hard and succeed and as a result pupils are very enthusiastic, confident and skilled users of ICT in subjects such as science, geography, art and music.
78. Pupils use digital cameras, scanners and CD ROMs, listening centres and roamers throughout the curriculum. Older pupils demonstrate high standards as they create their own multi-media presentations, access the internet to research other countries and civilisations, and use a range of programs to create music. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are confident in using spreadsheets, creating formulae, modifying data and creating tables. Pupils also have experience of control technology as they plan and design light sensors as part of their science work on friction.

79. The subject is a school development priority. The many changes since the last inspection have been successfully managed. Leadership and management are good and all members of staff have received training in the subject, developing good personal skills in computing. The curriculum is now broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for pupils to use and extend their skills. Systems to assess pupils' attainment levels and monitor progress are still at an early stage. These need to be implemented across the school to provide a detailed, useful and manageable profile of individual pupils' achievements and national curriculum levels.

ICT across the curriculum

80. Good use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum. It is used effectively to support learning in writing and mathematics, with some good work in art and design and music. There is room to improve the provision through the addition of more classroom computers to further extend the use of ICT in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography, with one lesson seen in both subjects. It is, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work that achievement is good and standards are above average. In the lessons seen teaching was good and standards were higher than those found typically. Pupils achieved well and were interested and well motivated learners.

An interesting and well-planned curriculum promotes pupils' interests in people, places, events and happenings through the ages and across the world. In both subjects, pupils have a range of opportunities to build up a good knowledge base and to develop good geographical and historical skills. Through the use of well planned visits and visitors, teachers bring the subjects alive for pupils and as pupils move through the school they are encouraged to think of themselves as historians and geographers.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were seen in art and design at Key Stage 1, none in design and technology, two in music at Key Stage 2, and one at each key stage in physical education. From work on display, and incidental evidence from choir and flute practice, it is clear that the pupils receive a broad and balanced diet of experiences in these areas. The quality of teaching is generally good, leading in the main to good achievement. Pupils generally make good progress on their prior attainment. From the evidence, only art and design can be judged in detail.

Art and Design

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations in art across the school.
- Above average standards and good achievement towards the end of Key Stage 1.
- Well planned curriculum.
- Very good teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Effective use of support staff.
- Subject well managed.
- Less work in three dimensions evident during the inspection.

Commentary

81. There are consistently high expectations in the quality of work across the school with above average standards in Key Stage 1 and standards in line with those expected in Key Stage 2. There was a good range and quality of work using different media and techniques in both two

dimensions and to a lesser extent in three dimensions on display. In lessons observed in Key Stage 1, pupils used tools well to create form, line and pattern, for example, when working with clay to make shoes. Across the school, pupils are able to draw skilfully from observation, use a range of techniques using textiles and in emulating the designs and techniques of famous artists. Achievement is good in Key Stage 1 but less consistently so across Key Stage 2.

82. The teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is consistently very good which results in very good learning with pupils working confidently, enjoying their art activities, persevering, trying out new materials and techniques and willing to improve on their work. This is brought about by the good planning and organisation of teaching staff and the effective use of support staff and parent helpers who understand what the children are intended to learn and who have appropriate expectations of what children are capable of. When children were drawing owls using different media they were able to develop skills in using line drawing to create texture and pattern and learned how to blend pastels effectively to create depth. This was the direct result of adult support, questioning, demonstration and encouragement.
83. Art and design has been well managed since the last inspection with improvements in the quality and range of the curriculum and in standards particularly at Key Stage 1. ICT is now being used very effectively to support this area of the curriculum.

Design and Technology

There were limited opportunities to observe work in design and technology during the inspection especially in Key Stage 2. This is because work is linked to topic work in Key Stage 1 and taught in blocks in Key Stage 2.

Commentary

84. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected and pupils across the school make good progress in developing skills and techniques which they apply well in their finished work. For example, in Key Stage 2 pupils were learning the techniques of setting up a pneumatic system and had opportunities to experiment and try out what they had learned.
85. The teaching and learning that was observed, particularly in Key Stage 1 was good. This was because of the good planning and preparation by the teacher and a parent helper whose help was used very effectively to enable children to experience the design and making process and to learn new skills. There was a good balance of letting children work independently and teaching them safe techniques with tools.
86. There is some evidence of good curriculum leadership with good progress made in developing the scheme of work for teachers' guidance in planning lessons since the last inspection. There is a good range of resources, which are used well including the use of ICT.

Music

The quality of provision in music has improved since the last inspection. Singing throughout the school is developed well, and the older pupils achieve high standards singing in assembly, and as a choir. The work seen in lessons was in preparation for a joint schools' performance of a work written for children with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in their home venue in Liverpool.

Commentary

87. This included Year 4 and Year 6 pupils developing rhythmic patterns and ostinati in response to Morse Code, led by the music coordinator. She has an effective style, and the pupils respond well to her prompting. Year 6 pupils worked well in groups to create and perform a variety of pieces using a range of instruments, including flutes, and tuned and untuned percussion. They cooperated well in this, and achieved impressive conducted presentations by the end of the

lesson. Year 4 pupils worked out how to clap and beat the rhythm of their own initials, and although they were tired at the end of the day, they made satisfactory progress in this, and achieved average levels for their age.

88. There are also good opportunities to listen to and appreciate music in various styles. Year 5 pupils behaved well in listening to pieces of classical music in preparation for the impending visit to the Liverpool Philharmonic. They recalled how the piece made them feel, commenting sensibly on how the music affected them. This was a good way to ensure that the pupils would gain musically from the visit, as they were being helped to recognise and understand the works they would hear.
89. Pupils have opportunities to learn to play the recorder, flute and clarinet, and many achieve high standards. A group of these pupils accompanied singing in assembly very tunefully, and often play as pupils enter or leave the hall. There have also been themed projects including working with specialist musicians such as 'Backbeat'. The choir also sings in a range of venues, particularly at Christmas.

Physical education

The only aspect of the subject observed was games in Year 2 and Year 6. The whole of the recommended curriculum is taught, however, including swimming and adventurous activities in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching seen was good for Year 2 pupils and very good for Year 6, leading to good achievement for Year 2 and very good achievement for Year 6.

Commentary

90. Year 2 pupils made good progress in foot controlling and passing a ball with their feet. Boys achieved higher levels than girls, with some of the boys at good levels for their age. The teacher managed the lesson well, and ensured that all the pupils had good opportunities to practise their skills in pairs. About one in four of the pupils had difficulty in moving fluently, and this affected their ability to achieve the standard expected for their age.
91. The coordinator, a subject specialist, led the lesson for Year 6. This was in the playground, and the teacher made clear his high expectations for the pupils' involvement, mature behaviour and progress. They responded very well to these high expectations, despite the very cold, damp weather, to develop a range of challenging activities to develop stick skills for hockey. Most of the pupils showed good control, and a high proportion of them achieved above average levels.
92. There has been very good improvement in the quality of provision in the subject. The older pupils say that they are very pleased with recent developments, particularly in games and after-school sporting activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. The school's Christian values and principles form the basis of the staff's approach in this area, where there is very good provision. Pupils achieve well because the staff encourage them to develop high quality social skills, working in pairs and groups successfully throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is reinforced in assemblies as well as circle time sessions, where issues and potential problems are discussed as a class. The agreed policies for health, sex and drugs education are well implemented. There are plans to start a school council to extend the pupils' contribution to school development, and add to ongoing work in developing the pupils' understanding of being a citizen.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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