

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BRIDGET'S CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

West Kirby

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105062

Headteacher: Mr S Powis

Lead inspector: Dr B Blundell

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th February 2004

Inspection number: 258335

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 controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	412
School address:	St Bridget's Lane West Kirby Wirral
Postcode:	CH48 3JT
Telephone number:	(0151) 625 7652
Fax number:	(0151) 625 3160
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr G Francis
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Bridget's C of E Primary School is a school for boys and girls, aged four to 11, situated in West Kirby; it is larger than most primary schools, with 412 on roll. There is an overall gender balance among the pupils, who are mainly white British, with minorities of white pupils with Irish and other backgrounds, and mixed white and black Caribbean, white and Asian, Asian British-Indian and other black backgrounds. A slightly higher than average number of pupils are at early stages in the acquisition of English. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school, at other than normal times in the school year, is low. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is well below the national average; the proportion having statements of special needs is below average. Pupils' special needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties, and speech and communication difficulties. The school, which is situated in a relatively affluent area, has received the Schools Achievement Award in 2001, together with Beacon Status in 2000. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average overall.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23868	B Blundell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Educational inclusion
9002	D Ashton	Lay inspector	
30075	M Duggan	Team inspector	English Physical education Geography History Modern foreign languages
29261	P Ward	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music
22740	M Leah	Team inspector	English as an additional language Foundation Stage Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is **very good**. The school provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards by the age of 11 are consistently well above national averages in English, mathematics and science; pupils achieve very well indeed.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; pupils learn very well throughout the school.
- The school is very well led and very well managed by the recently appointed headteacher and by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work; relationships are very good.
- The school has very good links with parents.
- Assessment is very good in English and mathematics, good in science and information and communication technology (ICT), but is in need of further development in other subjects.
- There is no dedicated outdoor play area for the children under five.

The school is very effective and has made **very good** improvement since the last inspection. The progress of infant and lower junior pupils in English, mathematics and science has improved greatly. The provision for children who are under five has been upgraded appropriately, although there is still no dedicated outdoor play area for their use. Pupils are given more planned opportunities to develop an appreciation of the art, music and literature of cultures other than their own.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. The A grades mean that the results were in the top five per cent of such similar schools; this is classed as being “very high”.*

Pupils achieve **very well** overall; the school's results in 2003 exceeded those found in 19 out of every 20 primaries throughout the country. Pupils' achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage, infant and junior phases. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress, and most are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals, the nationally expected standards, by some distance. Standards for pupils aged seven are well above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science, above average in history, music, and art and design, and average in other subjects. Pupils aged 11 are currently attaining very high standards compared to national expectations in English, mathematics and science, well above average standards in music, and above average standards in history, and art and design. In other subjects, standards match national expectations. Over the last three years averaged together, pupils have left the school a year ahead of pupils nationally in English and science, and four terms ahead in mathematics.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good**. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good**; their cultural development is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes are **very positive**; they are keen and eager to come to school and learn; they behave well. Pupils' attendance exceeds national averages; they want to come to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching is **very good** overall; in the lessons seen during the inspection, it was very good in all three phases of the school, with examples of very good teaching and learning seen in most classes in the school. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and science is very effective throughout the school.

The curriculum is very good, and is well enriched with diverse activities, including French. Care for pupils is very good; pupils are supported well academically. The school works very well in partnership with its parents and with the community. Links with the local church are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team are **very good**. They have a very clear and appropriate vision for the school. The work of the governing body is very good and very effective; the governors bring a considerable range of expertise to the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very satisfied indeed with the school. Parents are especially pleased that their children like school, and that staff expect their children to work hard. The latter is a view backed up by the pupils themselves, who also feel that teachers listen to their ideas.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that assessment in the foundation subjects is developed further; and
- develop a dedicated outdoor play area for children under five.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement through the school is **very good overall**; during the inspection, achievement was very good in the Foundation Stage and in the infant and junior phases. Girls and boys perform at a similar level overall. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science for current 11-year-old pupils are well above national expectations, and in information and communication technology (ICT), they are in line with national expectations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11 are very high compared with those expected nationally. In other subject areas, standards at least meet national expectations by the age of 11, and exceed them in history, art and design, and music.
- By the age of seven, standards are well above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and above expectations in history, music, and art and design.
- Achievement throughout the school in the core subjects is very good; children enter the school with above average levels of attainment, and greatly exceed national levels by the time they leave.

Commentary

1. In the national tests in 2003 for pupils aged seven, standards were very high in reading, writing, and in mathematics, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally. They were very high overall in the teacher assessments in science. Average points scores for 2003 in reading were 18.8, in writing, 16.4 and in mathematics, 17.1. Pupils' performance was very high in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing, when compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools. Table 1, below, shows the 2003 results. Over the last three years averaged together, pupils have left the infant phase just over one year ahead of the national averages in reading, six months ahead in writing and one year ahead in mathematics.

Table 1 Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.8(19.2)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	16.4(16.2)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	19.1(19.4)	16.4 (16.5)

Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Please note that pupils are expected nationally to go up by one point every term. It may be helpful to the reader to think of the mathematics example in the table above. In 2003, pupils nationally averaged 16.4 points but at St Bridget's, they averaged 19.1 points, and pupils were therefore 2.7 terms ahead of pupils nationally.

Table 2 Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.7(30.1)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	30.8(30.2)	27.0 (26.7)
science	31.9(30.9)	28.8 (28.3)

Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In 2003, standards for pupils aged 11 were very high in English, mathematics, and in science, as shown in Table 2, above. These results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with those of schools of a similar type, based on pupils' attainment at the end of the infant phase, standards were well above average in English and science, and very high in mathematics, again being in the top five per cent of such schools.
3. **The school sets pupils in English and mathematics** from Year 3 upwards, and this is having a most positive effect on raising standards.
4. **Pupils achieve very well** by the time they leave at the age of 11. Children enter the school with above average attainment overall, and make good progress through the Foundation Stage. In the inspection, no difference in achievement between boys and girls was noticed.
5. **Over the last three years averaged together, pupils have left the school** one year ahead of the national averages in English and science, and nearly four terms ahead in mathematics.
6. **Standards of attainment in English** have improved since the last inspection and are now very high. Pupils make very good progress in the subject as a result of the very good teaching and very effective leadership by the subject co-ordinator. **In the infant phase and junior phase, reading, writing, speaking and listening** are consistently developed; pupils are given the opportunities to extend their oral skills through annual productions and in the school's very well-conducted assemblies. **In the Foundation Stage, children's literacy skills** are well developed, with children at least reaching the expected standards, known as the Early Learning Goals. Standards of attainment through the school are helped by the use of regular spelling tests and by the dedication of the subject co-ordinators.
7. **Standards of attainment in mathematics** for pupils currently aged 11 exceed those reported at the last inspection; they are very high. The subject is taught very well indeed, and numeracy is very well developed across the curriculum, especially in science, ICT, design and technology, and geography. Standards are helped by the annual "purge" which the school has each March on pupils' times tables; this activity is shared with the parents and carers....there is no escape! **Through the infant phase and on into the juniors**, pupils make very good progress overall in the development of their mathematics, as a result of the high quality of leadership by the two subject co-ordinators. **In the Foundation Stage, children's number work** is well developed as a result of the consistently good teaching.
8. **Standards of attainment in science** exceed those reported at the last inspection and are now very high. Pupils really enjoy their science; teachers have high expectations and the subject is very well led and managed by one of the Year 6 teachers. Pupils' written work is of a high standard, with neatly labelled diagrams. Experiments are written up in a truly scientific manner.
9. **In other subject areas**, standards by the age of 11 at least meet national expectations. In the infant and junior phases, national standards are exceeded in history, and art and design, and are greatly exceeded in music.
10. **Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language** make similar progress in their learning to that of other pupils, as a result of the targeted support that they receive. Early identification of potential problems gets these pupils off to a flying start.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' relationships with others are very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour in the classroom help them to achieve well.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good; this is the result of the very caring ethos of the school and the very good example set by the staff.
- Pupils are very confident and keen to take responsibility because they are given opportunities to do so from the moment they start school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good because the school takes very positive steps to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of activities.
- Provision for multicultural development could be improved.

Commentary

11. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning in most lessons. Nearly all listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This is the result of very good teaching, whereby teachers maintain a high level of interest and set appropriately challenging tasks, which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well. Pupils want to come to school; attendance levels are above average, as shown in Table 3 below.
12. Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school. Pupils discuss and agree class rules, and are fully aware of the high standards expected and insisted upon by all staff. The caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. Few signs of aggressive behaviour were seen, and both parents and pupils confirmed that, when bullying does occur, it is quickly resolved. There have been no exclusions, as shown in Table 4 below.
13. From the day they start school, children are encouraged to become independent, and they willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. This contributes to the childrens' easily exceeding the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Responsibilities range from helping with assemblies and organising equipment to the caring for younger children by Year 6 pupils. Pupils take the responsibility of living in a community seriously and achieve well, showing good levels of maturity as they move through the school.
14. Pupils play harmoniously together and work very well in groups. Older pupils organise games equipment and help look after younger children at playtimes. Staff give a very positive lead in engendering excellent relationships by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity, as well as acting as good role models.
15. The very good ethos of the school helps to promote spiritual development. Many opportunities exist for pupils to encounter traditional activities, such as maypole dancing by the younger children, but the scope for multicultural experience could be broadened.

Table 3 Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Table 4 Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	270	0	0
White-Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	15	0	0
Mixed- White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed- any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Black or Black British	3	0	0
Parent preferred not to say	50	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 quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Strengths include the effective teaching and very good curriculum, coupled with the very wide range of opportunities available to pupils outside the school day.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is very good, with examples of very good teaching throughout the school.
- The school provides very well for equality of opportunity.
- Assessment in English and mathematics is carried out very well throughout the school; assessment in science and ICT is good.
- In other subjects, assessment is sound but could be developed further.

Commentary

16. The school has a caring, committed and capable team of teachers and support staff, who are dedicated to their pupils and work hard on their behalf. This is recognised by pupils and parents alike, who recognise that teaching is a strength here. Pupils feel that teachers are particularly effective in listening to their ideas. The school has a very happy working atmosphere in which the teachers feel free to share ideas and plan together.
17. Table 5, below, shows the quality of teaching observed during the inspection. In over half the lessons seen, teaching was very good or excellent. Excellent lessons were seen in Year 6.

Table 5 Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7(13%)	26 (47%)	18 (31%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

18. Strengths in teaching include the clarity with which learning objectives are shared with pupils, the quality of the planning, the high degree of challenge in the vast majority of lessons, the manner in which teachers encourage their pupils, the provision of extension work for the higher attaining pupils, and the promotion of equality of opportunity.
19. Teachers plan very well and make very effective use of their respective strengths. For example, in Year 6, one of the teachers plans all the literacy and the other reciprocates with the numeracy planning. This works very well indeed; these teachers have been manning the Year 6 fort for many years and the outcome is exemplary. Their approach is fresh and full of pace.
20. In a very good science lesson for pupils in Year 1, the teacher conducted the session at a brisk pace and motivated the pupils very well indeed. There was plenty of challenge and, by the end of the lesson, the pupils could make accurate predictions as to the effect of bending and stretching on the shape of a variety of materials.
21. Year 6 pupils worked very hard in an excellent mathematics lesson in which they rotated a variety of shapes around the point of origin on a graph and calculated the coordinates of the newly positioned shapes in all four areas of the grid. The teacher guided her pupils expertly, making especially effective use of the overhead projector to demonstrate the snags that might arise!
22. In a very small minority of lessons, the pace was a little too slow, and the pupils could have been challenged more.
23. The climate for learning is greatly helped by the cleanliness of the school, which is due to the work of the long-serving caretaker and the cleaners. Midday supervisors ensure that a variety of games are available to provide enjoyable lunchtimes, so that the pupils are refreshed and ready for learning in the afternoons.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Work in sets, in class and in small withdrawal groups is carefully planned to meet individual requirements, so that pupils make very good progress with their individual education plans. Progress is carefully monitored and targets are renewed regularly.
25. Arrangements for the full inclusion of the very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are very good. Their tasks are closely matched to their needs, explanations are clear and individual support from adults or in paired work efficiently promotes very good progress. Ongoing assessment is used effectively to monitor progress and plan new work.
26. Assessment procedures are of a very good standard in English and mathematics; pupils' learning is monitored conscientiously, targets are set and the pupils' work is well tracked in these subjects. In science, assessment is good. In the foundation subjects, assessment and tracking, whilst sound, are less well developed. This is recognised by the school.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **very good**. Provision for extra-curricular activities is **very good**. The accommodation is **good**. The curriculum is supported by resources of **good** range and quality.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with particular strengths in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum is regularly reviewed in the light of the school's performance, so that it continues very successfully to meet the needs of pupils of all ages, abilities and ethnicity.

- Provision to develop musical talent is a strong feature of extra-curricular activities.
- All junior pupils are given the opportunity to learn French.
- The accommodation, including the playground, has been upgraded since the previous inspection.

Commentary

27. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects. The curriculum in English and in mathematics is very well planned to meet the needs of pupils and to promote very good progress. Setting by prior attainment from Year 3 onwards provides suitable challenge for the higher attaining pupils in the higher sets, and allows more individual attention for pupils in the smaller, lower sets. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed and practised particularly well in other subjects across the curriculum.
28. A recent review of the overall curriculum has clarified school priorities and has led to the development of provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship, and a heightened emphasis on writing. The breadth of the curriculum has been improved since the previous inspection and it now provides suitable planned opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of the art, music and literature of other countries.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is correlated closely to the Early Learning Goals and meets the children's needs very effectively. Particular attention is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and opportunities to learn through structured play. There is, however, no dedicated outdoor play area for reception pupils, and this limits the curriculum, especially in the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.
30. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual education plans are carefully drawn up by the class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator, so that they provide very clear targets for learning. All staff are very aware of the children's needs and make sure that work is carefully matched to their abilities. Effective support is provided in class or in withdrawal groups as necessary. Staff know the needs of the very few pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, and liaise closely with parents and with local education authority support staff to ensure that these pupils have full access to an appropriate curriculum.
31. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Musical talents are particularly well developed through a good range of peripatetic instrumental tuition, a large orchestra and two choirs. All pupils from Year 3 learn to play the recorder. The performances of these pupils, in school and for parents, considerably enhance the musical ethos of the school. The curriculum is further broadened by stimulating drama workshops and visiting theatre groups, together with educational visits to museums and places of historical interest like Styal Mill. Pupils are encouraged to join in a variety of competitive sporting or coaching sessions, which include football, fencing, judo, tennis, netball and athletics. There is, however, no school football team. Other activities include chess and computer clubs, and an annual residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6, which promotes independence.
32. There is especially good provision for pupils to learn a modern foreign language. The funding derived from the school's Beacon status is presently used for the teaching of French to all pupils from Year 3 in half-size classes, and providing facilities at St Bridget's for the use of other schools. This is a very popular and worthwhile venture, which is enjoyed by many children and promotes skills very well.
33. The accommodation, including the playground, provides a good base for learning. The new atrium forms useful and attractive additional learning space and the computer suite has

improved information and communication technology resources. Library facilities for infant and junior pupils are good.

34. There is a good match of teachers and teaching assistants to support the curriculum. A particularly strong feature is the employment of a part-time teacher without a class teaching commitment to co-ordinate the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. Her expertise is put to very good use across the school and in liaison with families, as well as outside agencies. The good number of teaching assistants makes a substantial contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with very good support and guidance, and is in the early stages of involving them in the work of the school and its development. Staff know the pupils and their families well, and relationships are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- They achieve well because their progress is closely monitored.
- Special educational needs pupils are very well supported.
- Induction and transition arrangements are very well organised.

Commentary

35. The school provides a happy and friendly environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues, and risk assessments, particularly when planning visits to places of interest. Pupils' healthy and safe living is promoted well through the personal, social and health education programme, which is enhanced by talks from various guest speakers. First aid provision and arrangements for caring for sick children are good. Child protection procedures are good, and there is good liaison with other agencies.
36. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and thus able to provide very good support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. Teachers track the progress and personal development of all pupils, and this contributes significantly to the high standards attained.
37. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because the class teacher and the co-ordinator for special needs liaise closely with families and outside support agencies, ensuring that individual education plans are tailored to the pupil's requirements. The local education authority support for pupils having English as an additional language is well directed in the school.
38. Induction arrangements are very good and ensure that children settle happily into school life. They include home visits where appropriate, several opportunities for parents to visit the school, and an informative booklet. Similarly, pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary education.
39. The school has recognised that there is room for development in the sphere of consultation with pupils and has already commenced election procedures for school councillors. Pupils clearly take their responsibilities very seriously and await the introduction of the school council enthusiastically.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good relations exist with the parents. There are good links with other schools, and the school is well regarded within the local and wider community. The Friends of St. Bridget's provide excellent support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed about the school with regular newsletters and reports on the standards and progress of their children.
- The achievement of their children is greatly enhanced by the good contribution made by the parents.
- Valuable support is provided by the Friends of St. Bridget's.
- The good community links help to enrich the curriculum.
- The good links with other schools ensure that pupils transfer happily to the next stage of their education.

Commentary

40. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and other correspondence. They are also well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings, open days, and detailed annual reports. Parents are also welcome to discuss concerns at any time. Inspectors support parents' wish to see their children's work at consultation evenings, and the school is currently reviewing these arrangements. Home school agreements are in place and reading records are used effectively to enable parents and teachers to monitor progress.
41. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible, and they appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Parents of children entering the reception class receive very good advice on how to help their child to cope with school life.
42. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning by providing assistance in the classroom and on trips and visits. They also raise significant funds for the school through the Friends of St Bridget's. A substantial sum has been raised towards the cost of the new atrium. Many parents support their children with their homework.
43. The very good links with the community include the connection with the Parish Church, where Christian festivals are celebrated. Pupils sing carols at the nearby residential home for the elderly, and take part in local musical events, sporting activities and charity fundraising. Members of the community give talks at the school, and have included church representatives, a doctor and a dentist, and the school has hosted a wildlife project workshop.
44. Good working relationships exist with the local Parish schools, and the resultant collaboration of staff and sharing of resources enhance the teaching and learning of all pupils. The school provides work experience for students from the local college. All these initiatives contribute positively to the progress and achievements of the pupils.
45. The school fully consults parents of pupils with special educational needs in identifying and monitoring their needs. Parents are invited to review meetings, and generally make significant contributions to assessments.
46. Parents of all pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are fully involved by the school in identifying and addressing pupils' individual needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management by the recently appointed headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team are all very effective.
- The governing body is fully involved in the school's initiatives, and fulfils its statutory duties very well; it is pro-active and commands a very wide range of expertise.

Commentary

47. The headteacher has made a very good start over the last year in both his leadership and management of the school. He is a very capable leader who has taken over the helm of a good school, and is sensitively guiding it in a clear educational direction. The deputy headteacher, who is responsible for the induction of new staff, is a most able teacher. The senior management team, which encompasses the two very effective Year 6 teachers and the dedicated infant stage co-ordinator, is providing very good quality leadership for the school and its pupils.
48. The headteacher manages the school's budget well. There is a current under-spend in the budget, which is being eaten into by the effect of a more mature staff, with many near to the top of the main pay scale, and which also reflects the fact that Beacon funding is provided at the end of an academic year, rather than a financial one. The school improvement plan is a most effective working document, which clearly prioritises the school's needs.
49. Performance management is fully on course, with appropriate whole-school targets, including targeted continued professional development. Pupils are included very well; procedures for the induction of new staff are very effective. The school regularly takes in student teachers as part of their training; it is not, however, a centre for initial teacher training.
50. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team regularly monitor and evaluate teaching, formally and informally, throughout the school. They target particular aspects of the curriculum on a regular cycle. Additionally, the headteacher monitors the teaching of the senior management team. Subject co-ordinators monitor planning and marking, but are not yet involved in monitoring teaching.
51. Governors fulfil their duties very well. The chair of governors keeps well abreast of pupils' progress at the school, and meets with the headteacher on a regular basis. The vice-chair of governors, who is the vicar of the adjacent church, takes assemblies fortnightly. Governors liaise well with subject leaders, who report to the governing body annually. They act well as critical friends of the school. The governing body has a particularly wide range of expertise, including professionals from the world of medicine, education and the church.
52. The day-to-day running of the school is greatly helped by the sterling work of the school secretary.
53. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs is very knowledgeable and provides very good leadership. She manages the school's provision very well, and offers very good support for individual pupils and for teachers. Learning support assistants are suitably deployed to meet the requirements of pupils with statements of special educational needs, to work with small focused groups or individuals, in class or in withdrawal.

Table 6 Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	869,503
Total expenditure	870,009
Expenditure per pupil	2,111.67

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,588
Balance carried forward to the next	44,932

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

There are currently 28 children in each of the two reception classes. Standards on entry to school are above average.

There has been considerable improvement in the provision for the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. All aspects of the curriculum are now clearly focused on the Early Learning Goals (the nationally expected levels of attainment), and, as a result of this focused planning and the very good quality of teaching, children achieve very well. Almost all are on target at least to reach, and many to exceed, the goals in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics, many pupils are in line to exceed the Early Learning Goals and to reach well above average standards.

The main strengths of the teaching across all areas of learning are:

- clear and detailed planning of work, which meets children's needs;
- strong supportive relationships, which promote confidence and self-esteem;
- effective teamwork, which makes best use of the individual talents of teachers and teaching assistants; and
- very good provision for children with special educational needs, so that they make very good progress.

Leadership and management are strong, and provide clear vision and effective support in developing the curriculum. Observations of individual pupils are used consistently to monitor progress and plan new work. The accommodation and resources are adequate, with the exception of the lack of a dedicated area for outdoor play. Whilst staff make the best use of the resources available, the lack of permanent access to a secure and stimulating outdoor environment limits learning in some areas.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good. Children achieve very well.
- Very good relationships promote confidence and encourage children to develop positive attitudes to others.
- There are very well planned opportunities for children to become lively, independent learners.

Commentary

54. Staff consistently make their high expectations clear, and use praise and encouragement, reinforced by a 'sticker' reward system, to consolidate positive attitudes. As a result, children are enthusiastic and eager to please. The adults insist on high standards of co-operation and effectively demonstrate consideration for others themselves. Consequently, children quickly learn how to get on with others; they share sensibly at snack time and wait their turn fairly at a dice game. They are co-operative, following the well-established routines at tidy-up time or when changing for physical education. Stories like *Me First* are used particularly well to help

children consider the effect of their own actions. All staff listen to the children with respect. As a result, children grow in confidence, expressing their own point of view and taking account of others'. Children are successfully learning to appreciate their own culture through experiences like maypole dancing and listening to traditional tales. A well-organised topic on *Homes* has greatly raised children's appreciation of the diversity of other cultures. Children respond with pride to the many good opportunities to take responsibility, as when chosen to be monitors or demonstrators in class. Independent learning skills are promoted very successfully across all areas of the curriculum. For instance, children are encouraged to solve problems independently in mathematics, or to select suitable tools and materials for their own specific purpose in a creative activity.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good. Children achieve very well.
- Reading is taught exceptionally well.
- Opportunities are grasped across the curriculum and imaginative play areas are particularly well organised to promote speaking and listening skills.
- Whilst children make overall good progress in writing, opportunities for independent writing are limited.

Commentary

55. Teachers use questions effectively to help children develop their speaking and listening skills. Staff intervene successfully in the well-planned imaginative play areas to help children extend their ideas. For instance, children in the *Three Bears House* are asked, 'What happened next?', 'What did Baby Bear say?' As a result of the very good teaching, many children are already reaching the Early Learning Goal. They use simple language and repeated refrains from the story to recreate the roles of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. They speak clearly, with confidence, and with some awareness of the listener, and interact with others to negotiate plans. Teachers use language carefully to give clear explanations in other learning areas, so that children increase their understanding and vocabulary with practice. The step-by-step teaching of letters and their sounds, and gradual build-up of word recognition skills, is particularly successful. Short, clearly focused class sessions, reinforced by differentiated group work, meet the needs of pupils very well. Support from parents at home, and particularly from a good number of volunteers in school, provides very well organised consolidation of reading skills. This makes a substantial contribution to the children's very good progress. The vast majority read confidently from the first reading books, using sound and picture clues. Lower attaining children know some letters by shape and sound, and are beginning to recognise some high frequency words. Writing skills are successfully nurtured through purposeful activities like writing an invitation to the *Teddy Bears' Picnic*. Most children, with help, choose words from a word bank, and copy clearly on to the invitation. Higher attaining children are just beginning to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write their own message. Work in children's books indicates that insufficient attention has been given to this aspect of independent writing. Teachers frequently scribe the children's ideas, which children copy, without building up spellings for themselves. However, evidence was shown to demonstrate how independent writing was built up later during the academic year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good. Children achieve very well.
- Very clear demonstrations support understanding.
- A good range of well-organised, practical activities promote learning very well.
- Teachers' high expectations encourage children to solve problems for themselves.

Commentary

56. Teachers plan carefully and efficiently to build step-by-step on what children already know, so that they develop secure understanding of concepts. Staff demonstrate clearly, so that children can see and touch when counting, adding or subtracting. Whole-class or group sessions are short and well focused, and children concentrate and learn effectively. Most children achieve accuracy in adding one more or calculating one less by counting forwards or backwards, or by physically adding or removing an object. Effective questioning by the teacher promotes thought, and challenges pupils to explain how they have solved a problem. Play activities in the shop or with a lotto-type game are well organised, and managed in such a way that they consolidate learning very well. The staff's consistent use of mathematical language, such as *two-digit number*, *cube/cuboid*, *longer/shorter*, extends learning and increases understanding successfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well.
- The good emphasis on exploring through the senses reflects the teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of children's needs.
- Integrated topic work is well organised and promotes learning successfully.
- Some group work is not focused sufficiently clearly.

Commentary

57. Teachers build well on the children's own experiences. For instance, understanding of change over time is greatly enhanced when children make relevant comparisons on the subject they know best, themselves, 'When I was young', with, 'Now I am older'. Well-planned topic work on *Homes* builds carefully on the children's own experiences of home and family, before skilfully broadening their knowledge about Inuit or African lifestyles. Interesting experiences like a walk in the grounds are well focused; for example, the purpose of one such walk was to concentrate on listening. Resources are well organised so that children are purposeful in the sorting of materials by touch, smell and taste. Occasionally, group work is not sufficiently focused and children are unclear what they are to learn. Consequently, they do not sustain concentration without adult support, and the pace of learning slows. Staff make best use of the school's grounds, for example, in planting bulbs to study growth, but learning opportunities are limited by the constraints of not having permanent access to a designated outdoor area.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good use is made of the school hall for gymnastics lessons.
- Outdoor play is restricted by the constraints of the building.

Commentary

58. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to plan physical education lessons with clear focus on the development of skills. Pupil demonstrators are used to good effect to encourage the others. Children are generally well managed, but occasionally they lose concentration when waiting for instructions and the pace of learning slows. Many pupils are already attaining aspects of the Early Learning Goals. They recognise changes that happen when their bodies are active by feeling their heartbeat. They show good control and co-ordination, skilfully performing a wide range of jumps. They travel around, over and under benches with confidence. Most children are adept in using tools like scissors and paintbrushes to realise their purpose. Staff make provision for children to use large equipment in the infant playground in a 15-minute reception playtime twice a day, but ongoing access to large wheeled toys or climbing apparatus is severely restricted.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well.
- There are particular strengths in music and role-play.
- Opportunities to collaborate on large projects or develop ideas in three dimensions are not well developed.

Commentary

59. Recent staff training and the improvement of resources have raised the quality of the provision of musical activities. Teachers are now particularly confident and enthusiastic in this area, and plan effective music sessions that promote both skills and enjoyment very well. Children enjoy singing a full repertoire of songs from memory. In percussion, they explore how sounds can be changed, for instance, from loud to soft or from slow to fast. Prompted by careful questioning from the teacher, they consider thoughtfully which instruments are most suitable to create specific effects such as raindrops. Resources are very well prepared to create role-play areas, like *The Three Bears' House* or *The Medical Centre*. These areas stimulate imaginative play very well, and when adults intervene, the children's play is of a high quality. Work on display indicates that children experience a wide range of creative media to develop their own ideas and to practise specific techniques such as paint mixing. The provision to engage in collaborative work on large projects is less well developed. However, there is a dedicated workshop area for pupils to make three-dimensional models in each class.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

The provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is very high in comparison to the national average.
- Progress and achievement are very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- Standards in creative and descriptive writing are very good throughout the school.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Learning support assistants are deployed well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Literacy is used very effectively to promote other subjects.

Commentary

60. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is well above the national average in reading, writing, speaking and listening. By the end of Year 6, it is very high. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There is no appreciable difference in the performance of boys and girls. During the past four years, the results in the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils have been either well above or very high in comparison to the national average. Results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests for the same period are of a similar high quality, and among the top ten per cent in the country. Since 2001, the trend has been upwards.
61. Two factors make a very positive impact on the progress of the pupils; the very good teaching overall, and time invested wisely on support staff. These, combined with the pupils' own eagerness to learn and improve, ensure that all, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well. Learning is enhanced further by the setting system in Years 3 to 6, where work is matched rigorously to the pupils' capabilities. A pleasing feature is the strong promotion of creative and descriptive writing throughout the school generally, resulting in very high standards.
62. The pupils start in Year 1 with skills in communication, language and literacy above expectations for this age group. As a result of the dedicated input of teachers, most become very confident communicators by the end of Year 2. They demonstrate very good listening and speaking skills when using specific language to explain the probable feelings of characters in the text, 'Whistling Thorn', as observed in a very good Year 2 lesson. By Year 6, nearly all pupils discuss their views and opinions in reasoned terms, as was seen to very good effect in a lesson concentrating on the effects of imagery in poetry.
63. The standard of reading throughout the school is very good as a result of its strong promotion. The close liaison between school and parents through reading diaries is an added benefit. Consequently, all pupils acquire a love of books and an enthusiasm for reading at an early stage. For example, the younger pupils are eager to explain character traits and events in such books as 'How the Tiger lost its Stripes', 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' or more advanced texts such as 'The Secret Path'. In Years 5 and 6, pupils read fluently and with expression that reflects the meaning of the text, as was exemplified very well in a Year 6 lesson focusing on formal and informal writing. The average and higher attaining pupils use the context of the story to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, but the lower attaining pupils find this a more difficult task, especially in the younger age groups. Pupils' favourite authors include Anne Fine, Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Morpurgo and J R R Tolkien, and poets such as Roger McGough, Seamus Heaney and Allan Ahlberg.

64. Overall, the quality of pupils' creative and descriptive writing is very high. In the older year groups, a good depth of reading experience is reflected in their written work. By Year 6, most pupils use exciting language to develop ideas, convey meaning and hold the reader's interest. Younger pupils are equally adept at using words well to describe scenes.
65. Throughout the school, the pupils enjoy reading and writing poetry, as observed in a Year 5 lesson studying metaphors, similes and personification in H W Longfellow's narrative 'Hiawatha's Childhood'.
66. The standard of handwriting in all classes is good overall and many pupils write very well. By the time they leave school, most pupils write in a neat, cursive style of which they are proud.
67. In all the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes were very good, and they behaved and learned very well as a result of very good overall teaching. In the best lessons, which always included good pace and challenge –
 - questioning skills helped to extend pupils' understanding, therefore, learning was ongoing;
 - resources were used well to stimulate pupils' interest;
 - learning intentions were shared clearly with pupils, therefore, they knew what was expected, why and how they were to work; and
 - there was very good intervention and assessment by teachers, looking for gaps or gains in knowledge or understanding, and adjusting details of the current task appropriately.
68. The subject is led and managed very well by the joint co-ordinators, which is an appreciable improvement since the last inspection, when management was judged to be good. Pupils' work is assessed rigorously and consistently. Results of frequent tests, including statutory ones, are analysed carefully, and challenging targets are set for the next stage of pupils' learning, which are also reviewed regularly. Although teaching and learning are not monitored formally, whole school moderation of pupils' work ensures that all teachers are aware of pupils' capabilities and the attainment targets that they should reach. Both co-ordinators are dedicated advocates of the subject and determined to maintain the very high standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. Throughout the school, the pupils' literacy and language skills are being used very effectively and improved constantly in other subjects. Examples include listening to and carrying out instructions in physical education, and the use of specific vocabulary and layout in writing up science experiments, as evidenced in a sample of Year 5 and 6 work. In history and geography, good opportunities are exploited to develop skimming and scanning skills during research, while mathematical problem-solving fully engages thinking processes, seen to good effect in a Year 6 lesson on doubling three and four digit numbers. Computer programs are used effectively to access word banks and to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words, as observed in a Year 1 ~~2~~ geography lesson.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well by the age of 11, and attainment is consistently very high, being in the top five per cent of schools.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school.
- Multiplication tables are practised in all classes, most especially in the month of March, and certificates awarded for success; this is an important contributory factor to the high standards that pupils achieve in mathematics.

- The subject is very well led and managed by two dedicated co-ordinators; assessment procedures are very effective.

Commentary

70. Children enter the school with standards that are generally above average in mathematics; they are on course to leave in 2004 with standards that are very high when compared with results nationally. Over the years from 2001 to 2003 taken together, pupils have left the school with attainment around four terms ahead of that of pupils nationally. National test results in 2003 for pupils aged 11 show standards to be very high compared with the national average, and very high compared to those of similar schools. In both cases, results were in the top five per cent. The school is on course to meet its target for 2004. Between 2001 and 2003, girls and boys performed at a similar level and no discernible difference in performance between the genders was seen during the inspection. Pupils' achievement is very good indeed.
71. Pupils' learning is very good as a result of the high quality teaching. In the seven lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was excellent in two lessons, very good in four lessons and good in the remaining one. No differences were observed between the learning of boys and girls. Mathematics teaching is a real strength of the school.
72. In the excellent lessons, the pace was brisk and appropriate, with pupils given short time slots to complete each task. The degree of challenge was high, and the pupils were very well managed. In one excellent lesson, which was for Year 6 pupils on the coordinates of rotated shapes, pupils were thoroughly instructed in the possible pitfalls they might encounter by the teacher's judicious use of the overhead projector (OHP). Many lessons featured the use of OHPs to very good effect indeed.
73. Year 2 pupils are provided with plenty of challenging extension work; having completed a very challenging exercise on "tiddlywink" Roamer, they moved on to finding buried treasure, moving their "tiddly" through the necessary twists and turns!
74. A great strength in mathematics provision is the emphasis the school puts on pupils learning their multiplication tables, and on rewarding pupils with certificates for so doing. The school has a particularly big push on tables every March, with teachers, parents and carers alike blitzing the topic. This greatly helps pupils' competence and confidence in other areas of mathematics. ICT is used appropriately to support learning.
75. The subject is well led and managed by two enthusiastic and skilful subject co-ordinators. They are very good mathematics teachers and can lead by example. They monitor the planning and marking, providing colleagues with helpful feedback. Assessment procedures are very good throughout the school, and standards of attainment now exceed those reported at the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Mathematics is developed very well across the curriculum in subjects such as geography, ICT, design and technology and science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the age of seven are well above national expectations, and very high by the age of 11.

- Pupils' achievement in science is very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- The subject is very effectively led and managed.

Commentary

76. In the 2003 national teacher assessments for seven-year-old pupils, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 and the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. In the 2003 National tests, the 11-year-old pupils reached very high standards. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Over the three years from 2001 to 2003 taken together, pupils' performance in science exceeded the National average.
77. Inspection findings are that pupils throughout the school make very good progress in their scientific knowledge and skills. By the end of the summer term 2004, standards at the age of seven are likely to exceed those usually expected. At the age of 11, the percentage of pupils expected to achieve the higher Level 5 may be slightly lower than in the 2003 National tests. However, standards are still likely to be very high, in comparison to those usually seen for pupils of this age.
78. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well because of the wealth of opportunities they are given to use their observation skills. Year 1 pupils successfully investigate which objects can be changed by bending and stretching. When identifying sources of sound, Year 2 pupils quickly record what they hear, and in discussion, show very good understanding that a movement has to occur to produce a sound. During their investigations of the difference between living and non-living things, Year 3 pupils' use of scientific language is impressive. They also have good knowledge of factors needed for plant growth. Year 4 pupils, when carrying out a sound-proofing experiment, are firm in their understanding of the factors that make it a fair test. Year 5 pupils discover that most food chains start with a green plant.
79. By Year 6, pupils have covered a wide field of scientific enquiry, including an experiment for separating solutions and an investigation of reversible and irreversible change. They have tested air resistance and made quite complicated electrical circuits. Pupils make thoughtful predictions, and describe their methods, results and conclusions in appropriate technical terms. Very good use is made of graphs, tables, charts and measurements. Pupils are also making more use of information and computer technology to communicate their findings. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A small number of pupils who have more difficulty in recording their results are very confident in talking about their work. All pupils in Year 6 use appropriate scientific terms and language, and articulate their findings in a most mature manner.
80. Teaching across all classes is strong. Teachers adopt a practical approach to teaching science and make learning fun. This stimulates pupils' learning, resulting in very good achievement. Lessons are planned in very good detail, providing additional support for pupils identified as lower attaining and challenge for higher attaining pupils. In Year 6, when assessing pupils' knowledge of their work on friction and forces, the excellent use of probing questions makes pupils think and provide explanations for their views. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject and his use of humour enhance enjoyment of the session. Resources are used imaginatively to increase pupils' understanding, one example being through the excellent use of a sound-proofing box connected to a sound sensor. This enabled pupils to respond to the high challenge of taking sensor readings for the purpose of analysis. Pupils who are at an early stage of acquisition of English as an additional language are helped to succeed in science by being given extra explanations and especially prepared work sheets and apparatus. The teaching assistants provide very good support to ensure that pupils are fully included in discussion about the scientific activities. Very good relations exist between pupils, their teachers and teaching assistants. Because pupils are treated as young scientists, they make very good progress in their learning.

81. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. Assessment, which is practically based, is of a good standard. Well-planned educational visits, such as those to the science museum and attendance at a science club in a secondary school, enable pupils to participate in additional scientific experiences, thus extending their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment match national expectations; pupils' achievement is good.
- The subject leader is very committed and capable.
- There is a state-of-the-art ICT suite that is used well.

Commentary

82. Standards in all areas of ICT match national expectations. The suite for ICT houses 18 computers and is well used; there are additional computers in each classroom, but, unlike the suite, they are not networked.
83. Pupils usually take part in two ICT lessons each week. One of these involves the direct teaching of ICT skills, whilst the other is used appropriately to practise them. ICT is increasingly used to support other subjects across the curriculum; this represents good practice.
84. Pupils want to learn because they really enjoy their ICT lessons. In the four lessons observed, the teaching was very good. Pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets competently to input data and formulae, in order to perform calculations accurately. They program robots to blink, wink or smile, and devise methods to control house security. Year 2 pupils interrogate data-bases on CD-Roms to research topics they are interested in, such as farms and trains. They save and retrieve their work, and routinely use ICT to support learning in other subject areas.
85. The subject is very well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator, who **ALONG WITH THE TEACHERS**, has produced a very useful and detailed portfolio of assessed work, against which teachers check the levels at which their own pupils are performing. Assessment and tracking procedures are good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. ICT is used well to support pupils' work across the curriculum, in areas such as science, English and mathematics.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

Only a small part of one geography lesson was observed due to timetabling, as the subject is taught on a rolling basis. However, discussions with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils, and an analysis of past work, indicate satisfactory provision.

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is above national expectations.

- Teaching and learning in history are good overall.
- Good use is made of primary and secondary source materials.
- Information and communication skills are used effectively for research.
- History makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

87. Attainment in history by the end of Years 2 and 6 is above national expectations, which is a slight improvement since the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, learn well. They also achieve well, due to good overall teaching and effective use of primary and secondary source materials, which stimulate interest. A prime example was observed in a Year 5 lesson, where pupils fathomed out how people lived in Ancient Greece by interpreting engravings on replica Greek vases and plates.
88. The pupils begin to build their sense of chronology from an early age. Starting in Year 1, they compare photographs of themselves now with photographs taken when they were babies, and they learn how people's dress and dwellings have changed, from cavemen to the present time. Constant reference to time lines enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding of chronology throughout Year 2.
89. Before leaving school, most pupils have mastered the skills of historical interpretation and enquiry, and understand how past individuals or civilisations have influenced the present. This was seen to good effect in a Year 6 lesson researching the diverse living styles of rich and poor in Victorian times, and the working conditions of children. In their writing, pupils show a good understanding of how people like Lord Shaftesbury and Doctor Barnardo effected change for the better, especially in relation to improved education and shorter working hours for youngsters. Pupils' moral and cultural development is enhanced as they study aspects of Ancient Greek, Egyptian and Roman life. For example, they learn about power as the Romans expanded their empire and how people like Cleisthenes introduced a form of democracy to Athens. Their study of history is enriched by frequent educational outings and by visitors to school; for example –
- The visit for Years 1 and 2 to Birkenhead Museum to study transport through the ages.
 - The visit for Year 6 to Quarry Bank Mill while researching the Victorian era.
 - The visit for Year 3 to the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, and Liverpool Museum in conjunction with Roman and Ancient Egyptian studies respectively.
 - Members from Liverpool Outreach Centre visit the school to organise Ancient Egyptian artefact workshops.
90. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, keen and committed to raising standards further. She reviews teachers' plans and monitors pupils' work. She ensures that all aspects of the humanities are covered and supports colleagues well. Particularly good use is made of the pupils' ICT skills as they do research in history. Leadership and management in the humanities is good overall.

Religious education

This is carried out in a separate inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision is **good**.

As only two lessons were seen, one in Year 1 and one in Year 6, discussion with teachers and the pupils about their work as well as samples of work in displays and sketch books have also been taken into account in the judgements made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the age of seven and 11 are good.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the work of other artists.
- The programme of study supports work across the curriculum.
- Three-dimensional work needs extending.

Commentary

91. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above those expected nationally. In Year 2, pupils' collage work, based on their earlier colour mixing, shows good use of shape and gives the effect of light and shade. In Years 3, 4 and 5, there is well-developed use of shading and texture in pupils' work. Year 4 work clearly demonstrates the good progression in pupils' painting skills. Pupils have learnt how to create shades of colour, and used them to good effect in their landscapes and seascapes. Pupils throughout the school show growing knowledge of the work of other artists. Year 6 pupils have studied the work of Lemony Snicket, to see how texture and shade are created using lines. They are also inspired by the work of William Morris, and use knowledge of his style to develop their own individual and precise repeat patterns. Year 1 pupils listen intently to information about the life of Monet. They produce work in his style, achieving effective representations of shades of water.
92. Art is used well in many other areas of the curriculum, an example being in Year 2 where pupils have designed tartans. These were completed to link in with their work in English lessons about Kate Morag's Scotland. Older pupils' intricately decorated Egyptian head-dresses are effectively displayed to illustrate their history research. There are also examples of computer generated art being used to good effect.
93. Teaching overall is very good. Imaginative resources are used to challenge pupils and to enhance their theoretical knowledge of artists and their practical skills in the use of pencils and paint. In the Year 1 lesson observed, the teacher demonstrated skilful questioning techniques, asking, for example, "Which time of the day do you think Monet painted these pictures?" The excellent demonstration of skills and imparting of interesting information about the artist's life enabled very high achievement on the part of pupils. In a Year 6 lesson, because the teacher circulated, encouraging pupils to evaluate and develop their work, pupils made very good progress in their drawing skills. Teacher's displays are often accompanied by informative literature to extend learning further.
94. The co-ordinator for the area provides very good leadership. Her detailed action plan for the subject includes the further development of art from other cultures, and more opportunities for pupils to experience three-dimensional work. Assessment of work is also an area that needs developing, in order to track individual pupils' progress.

Design and technology

95. Owing to timetable constraints, it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in this subject. Nonetheless, an analysis of pupils' work shows that they learn well, and that their skills in designing, making and evaluating their work meet national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Recent Year 6 work on slippers and fairground rides was of a good standard.

MUSIC

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are well above national expectations in Year 2, and by Year 6, are very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- Pupils perform and become actively involved in creating music.
- Assessment needs developing further.

Commentary

96. Standards in Year 2 are good, and by Year 6, are well above national expectations. Pupils make very good progress in their musical knowledge and skills, and achieve very well. When listening attentively to taped music created by an older class, Year 2 pupils recognise quiet and loud sounds. They also identify the instruments being played and imitate rhythms. Pupils in Year 6 listen to and appreciate the opening of 'The Iron Foundry', a piece of music prepared by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra to stimulate performance. They identify the pulse of the music, conduct with the correct movement and go on to perform repeating rhythms. They follow a complicated graphic score successfully, while devising physical movements to reflect the diversity of the machine, rising well to the high challenge of this very demanding task. When singing in assemblies, children throughout the school show good control of breathing, diction, pitch, dynamics and rhythm. The choir demonstrate confidence in performance and achieve very good standards. When singing 'Make me a channel of your peace', they place emphasis and accents sensitively to create the intended spiritual effects. A large number of pupils play the recorder. Those heard playing showed very good musical and technical skills. A high number of pupils receive additional tuition in a musical instrument of their choice. Many pupils in the school are competent in following a musical score, and demonstrate very good understanding of the value of musical notation. Throughout the school, older and younger pupils help each other. The very good quality of their relationships with each other and with their teachers has a significant impact on the very good quality of learning.
97. Teaching is of a very good standard and enables pupils to make very good progress in their musical knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language receive additional help to enable them to participate fully. Teachers provide a wide range of musical activities, which integrate performing, composing and appraising. Music is often linked to other subjects; for example, when studying St Lucia, pupils learnt Caribbean songs, and when learning about the Victorians, Year 6 pupils created graphic scores inspired by Victorian street cries. In science, Year 4 pupils responded very well to the challenge of creating and evaluating their own musical instruments. The opportunities for pupils to perform in the nativity production and participate in summer productions such as 'The Jungle Book' and 'The Pied Piper' support and extend pupils' musical skills, and also their spiritual, social and cultural development.

98. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. Many of the teachers are also musically talented. Assessment, which is satisfactory, needs developing further in order to track the progress of individual pupils.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall.
- Pupils are enthusiastic.
- Coaches from local judo and football academies make a good contribution to learning.
- Leadership and management in the subject are good.
- School performs well in netball rallies.
- There are limited opportunities for competitive football.

Commentary

99. Attainment in physical education by the end of Years 2 and 6 is satisfactory, a finding which is similar to that of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an extra language, make good progress. When the level of prior skills is considered, they also achieve well, as a result of overall good teaching and their own enthusiasm for learning. Two pleasing aspects of the physical education programme are the high standard of movement to music in the younger classes, and the strong promotion of netball skills.
100. By Year 2, pupils display imaginative ideas in movement as they travel around the hall and change shape, speed and direction. For example, in a Year 1 gymnastic lesson, pupils executed a sequence of high and low-level shape movements, and demonstrated good control on take-off and landing. More talented pupils added poise and tension as extra dimensions. By Year 6, pupils are beginning to evaluate and compare their own and others' performances, as observed in rugby, netball, gymnastics and hockey lessons. Pupils are becoming more aware of the importance of pace and accuracy as they develop passing, catching and controlling skills in all ball games. By the time they leave school, all pupils can swim the desired 25 metres unaided, with many swimming 400 metres or more.
101. The pupils enjoy physical education, even outside in the snow, and adopt a positive and enthusiastic approach. They work energetically and are keen to succeed, as was amply illustrated during a judo club lesson and a Tai-kwon-do exhibition during an assembly, activities which broaden pupils' cultural experiences. Their self-discipline is good and they respond well to instructions.
102. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and an expert in her own field of martial arts. She has worked successfully to raise the profile of physical education and is supported well by a dedicated team of teachers. She organises netball, rugby, dancing, and athletics clubs. As a result, the school netball team recently became Wirral Primary Schools champions, and represented Wirral at the Merseyside Games. The school football team has become defunct, but plans are in place to re-organise it in the near future. Basic assessment procedures are in place and detailed documentation guides staff in their planning. This year, 5 children from the athletics team were selected to represent the Wirral at the Northwest championships.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

103. Due to timetable constraints, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in this area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
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

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
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).