## **INSPECTION REPORT**

# **STANLEY SCHOOL**

Thingwall

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105138

Headteacher: Mr A Newman

Lead inspector: Alastair Younger

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 260358

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special

School category: Community Special

Age range of pupils: 2-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 89

School address: Pensby Road

Thingwall Wirral

Merseyside

Postcode: CH61 7UG

Telephone number: 0151 648 3171 Fax number: 0151 648 6887

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Dr Jane Seymour

Date of previous inspection: 12/10/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stanley is a day school for up to 90 boys and girls aged 2 -11 from the Wirral peninsula. All pupils have statements of special educational need which recognise the degree and complexity of their severe learning difficulties. About one third of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders in addition to severe learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is usually very low. Five pupils are in the care of the local authority. Nearly all pupils are white. No pupils have English as an additional language. There are no travellers or refugee pupils. There are currently 60 boys on roll and 28 girls. Eleven pupils are under the age of five. The school's success has been acknowledged by Investors in People, the Local Authority and the Autistic Society. It has received a School Achievement Award for improvement.

# **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

Members of the inspection team		Subject responsibilities	
23587	Alastair Younger	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, geography, history
14066	Gill Hoggard	Lay inspector	
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Foundation stage, design and technology, personal, social and health education
27429	Margaret Smith	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, citizenship, religious education
17546	Chris Wonfor	Team Inspector	Mathematics, music, physical education, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

#### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**This is a very effective school.** Teaching, learning and achievement are of a very high standard, as are leadership, management and governance. The school is loved by its pupils and held in high esteem by their parents. The school is giving very good value for money

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

- Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement in all of the most important subjects and areas of learning are very good
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent
- Exceptional monitoring, evaluation and assessment of standards contribute to the very strong leadership and management of the school
- The care, support and guidance of pupils is excellent, as are links with parents
- There is a very good curriculum.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Many strengths have been consolidated and all areas of weakness that were identified were quickly and effectively addressed. The school moves on, ahead of the game, seeking relentless improvement by taking on national issues identified by many influential organisations including Her Majesties Chief Inspector, the Local Education Authority and the Autistic Society and incorporating them into its excellent improvement plan.

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end	in relation to individual targets in:		
of:	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education	
Year 2	Very good	Very good	
Year 6	Very good	Very good	

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

The achievement of all pupils is very good. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their age or disability achieve to the best of their ability. Challenging targets are set for the school as a whole and for individuals. Nearly all are met. The school knows what can be realistically achieved because its own monitoring and assessment are so thorough. Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage, with pupils making very good progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. For pupils in Years 1 to 6 achievement is very good in English, mathematics, science, religious education, personal, social and health education and information and communication technology. Through its own, exceptional, monitoring the school can prove its success in helping pupils to achieve most of the personal targets stated in their education and behaviour plans.

**Pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils are eager to come to school and from the moment they arrive they involve themselves wholeheartedly in activities. Their behaviour and attitudes are excellent and attendance is very good. There have been no exclusions in recent years and the school is a very happy, settled place in which pupils learn, free from any form of worry. Pupils learn how they are expected to behave, not only in the school, but also in society. They are helped to feel good about themselves and enjoy life. They understand that, whatever their own problems, there is still a lot to be thankful for. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to learn about other cultures and to immerse themselves in their values, beliefs and experiences.

#### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Anything less than good teaching is a rarity. Teachers pay excellent attention to the needs of individuals, helped by exceptionally thorough assessment procedures. Classroom support assistants play an invaluable role here, often being very carefully deployed to record pupils' responses to teaching and the thoroughness of their learning. Teachers pay very close attention to how they can contribute to pupils' learning in other subjects, especially English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The curriculum is very good; it focuses strongly on helping pupils to communicate and helps them to achieve very well in all of the most important subjects. Because staff have such a well-informed picture of pupils' potential and real achievement they are in an exceptional position to offer them an exceptional degree of support. Procedures to ensure pupils learn in an environment free of stress are exceptionally thorough. There is excellent communication with, and involvement of parents in their children's learning.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are very good. The headteacher is hugely instrumental in raising standards. He works with extreme efficiency and focus to ensure that staff work to the very best of their potential; helping them to do this by making sure that they are listened to and empowered to fulfil their duties. He is totally dedicated, admired by parents and staff, and knows exactly what he wants of the school. Parents and children come first and this is an outstanding feature of the school. The views of outside authorities are actively sought, and acted upon, with enthusiasm rather than reluctance. There is exceptionally accurate self-evaluation, aided by the very good senior management team and subject coordinators. At every stage, the governing body is involved in raising standards, taking care of the finances, involving itself in the work of the school and ensuring that statutory requirement are met.

#### PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE CENTRE

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel that it is helping their children to learn and to behave better. Many comment that what they like most is that staff are easily approachable and helpful. Pupils love coming to the school and many are sorry when the end of term comes. In a school such as this, who could be surprised?

#### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school is very good at identifying its own weaknesses before others point them out. It has an excellent improvement plan that already addresses minor weaknesses identified by the inspection and has a proven record in bringing about improvement. There are no major areas in need of improvement.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

# Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good** overall for all pupils, irrespective of age, special educational needs, ethnicity or gender.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils make rapid progress, often from a very unpromising start
- Very high achievement is sustained throughout the school, with very good extra support being given to those who need it most
- Excellent assessment has facilitated the setting of individual targets against which pupils' achievements can be put in context.

- 1. The youngest pupils, whether in Year 1 or reception, often arrive with virtually no understanding of literacy and numeracy skills and very limited personal and social development. These pupils get off to a flying start because they are very well taught and supported to improve their personal and social skills. Their curriculum very effectively combines early learning goals, appropriate to the stage of their development, with National Curriculum subjects so that each pupil is presented with work that matches their age and ability. As a result, they achieve very well in everything they do.
- 2. The overall strength of teaching and learning for pupils of all ages and in all subjects ensures that pupils are able to build upon their previous learning. Throughout their time in school they continue to achieve very well. Pupils with the greatest degree of difficulty receive very effective extra support to help them improve their reading and language skills through the use of symbols and individual and group speech and language sessions. This helps them to achieve very well in relation to the difficulties they face.
- 3. Expert assessment of pupils' needs and progress is enabling teachers to address individual needs very well. It results in teachers being able to set individual targets for pupils in every subject then plan and present work that is always very carefully matched to their needs. This means that, whilst pupils learn at different rates and at different levels, each pupil can be seen to be achieving at the same, very good, standard when all factors and barriers to learning and development are taken into account. There are no differences in the overall achievements of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or degree of learning difficulty. Nearly all parents appreciate the fact that their children are making the best possible progress and the pupils themselves are very proud of their achievements.
- 4. The end result of sustained, high achievement is that pupils gain a high degree of success in subjects including English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education by the time they leave. Whole-school targets for improvement are notoriously difficult to set in a school such as this because the numbers of pupils in any single group is small and the progress of an individual pupil can distort statistics significantly. Nevertheless, the school keeps a close track of its effectiveness through meticulous assessment procedures, which include measuring pupils' achievement using nationally recognised 'P' scales. These show that there has been steady improvement in pupils' achievement over the past five years and that the targets the school has set have been exceeded. Pupils' achievement related to their individual targets is very good. In most cases over three quarters of all learning and behavioural targets are met. The targets are often exacting, reflecting the school's high aspirations. As a result, it is clear that pupils are continuing to make very good progress throughout the school.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and personal development, including spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, are excellent. Attendance is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work, and behave in an exemplary way, in lessons, around the school and on visits
- Pupils respond to the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by a rapid growth in maturity and an awareness of others.

#### Commentary

6. There have been many improvements since the previous inspection, mainly coming from the school's effective promotion of pupils' self-confidence, independence and sense of responsibility. Relationships are excellent and pupils are aware that they are valued. This gives them the confidence to meet the challenges presented to them daily in their work and in their responsibility to the school community. Pupils enthusiastically celebrate the success of others and help those who need support. Behaviour in lessons is often excellent. Pupils are polite to staff, visitors and each other. All pupils take part in visits to other schools and places of interest and can be relied upon to behave appropriately. This is a major achievement for those pupils with autism. Minor, infrequent, behaviour problems are almost always linked to the specific learning difficulties of individual pupils. There have been no exclusions in the past ten years. Pupils look forward to coming to school and working hard and their attendance is very good.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

## Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White - British
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British - African

No of pupils on roll
88
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

7. Pupils learn to appreciate a wide variety of faiths, cultures and traditions through religious education lessons and by participating in the celebration of feasts linked to the major belief systems. A multi-sensory approach provides insight and helps pupils to understand their own culture, and the traditions and beliefs of others. Very good resources include a range of 'Big Books' and large number of artefacts help teachers to create memorable experiences for pupils. A sense of self-worth is strongly promoted through the acceptance and valuing of pupils' views. The morning routine encourages pupils to feel welcomed and appreciated, and helps them to welcome others. The extensive allocation of tasks and responsibilities is taken very seriously and pupils are warmly praised for their efforts. Occasionally, pupils are expected to carry out these duties in pairs and to negotiate the sharing of responsibility. In lessons, paired or group work provides many opportunities for pupils to share equipment happily and work productively together. In a Year 5 English lesson, involving learning about how to take messages, pupils visibly blossomed as they worked in pairs to ask for items and carry out simple errands. Pupils develop an exceptionally clear sense of right and wrong, with very strong moral values being promoted in and out of lessons.

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

Authorised absence		
School data 5		
National data	N/A	

Unauthorised absence		
School data 0		
National data	N/A	

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

#### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

8. The quality of education is very good. It is underpinned by very good teaching, a strong curriculum and excellent support and guidance for pupils, very well informed by listening closely to their views.

## Teaching and learning

9. Teaching and learning are very good for pupils of all ages. The assessment of pupils' progress is excellent.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very aware of the individual needs of pupils and present them with work that is suitably challenging.
- Support assistants play an invaluable role in the classroom.
- Teachers miss very few opportunities to spread pupils' learning across as many other subjects in each lesson. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are very well promoted in many lessons.

- 10. Excellent assessment underpins much of the success of teaching. Because it is so thorough, teachers are able to ensure that the work they give pupils is well matched to their individual abilities and builds carefully on their existing learning. Work is very carefully, and promptly, marked, usually with informative comments to encourage pupils and to provide an accurate record of what pupils have achieved and with what degree of support. These records in pupils' books are invaluable when it comes to evaluating and reporting progress. Teachers also keep exceptionally detailed and informative records of what pupils have learned and they are using these records with considerable precision to adapt tasks and lessons to meet the needs of all individuals. The success of a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for instance, led to very good learning because planning referred very closely to precise targets set in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils are encouraged to record as much as they are able to in their books and on worksheets that are often carefully varied to allow pupils to work with as much independence as possible
- 11. Support assistants play a major role in helping pupils to learn. They undertake many duties; supporting individual pupils and small groups and also observing and recording how pupils are learning and behaving, such as in a Year 2 and 3 mathematics lesson, where extra support is regularly allocated to the class teacher to reflect the particularly wide range of learning and behavioural needs. In an excellent Year 6 English lesson, pupils' learning was greatly facilitated by the support they were given to help them use computers, visit the library and practice their reading one-to-one with the extra staff. The confidence with which assistants help pupils who are experiencing problems makes a significant contribution to the excellent behaviour observed in most lessons.

12. When planning lessons, teachers take great care to identify as many possibilities as possible to extend pupils' learning beyond the subject being taught. Nearly all lessons contribute very well to helping pupils to improve their literacy skills and computers are frequently, and very effectively, used to help pupils to communicate, record their work and find out information. Teachers recognise that computers also provide opportunities for pupils to work increasingly independently, thus promoting their personal development very well. Work in lessons such as music, art and science is often carefully planned to help pupils to improve their understanding of number. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection with the eradication of almost any less than good teaching and more than doubling of teaching which is very good or better.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
4 (8%)	30 (62%)	13 (26%)	2 (4%)	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.

#### The curriculum

13. There is a very good curriculum. It is strongly enhanced by many activities out of the classroom that make learning memorable for the pupils. Accommodation and resources are very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good focus on English, mathematics and science
- Many subjects are extremely well planned so they have links with other subjects
- All pupils are extremely well supported in their learning on an individual basis
- A very good range of curriculum resources is used to meet pupils' needs by staff who have a
  wide range of skills across all subjects.

- 14. The central subjects are very well planned to have a particularly good balance of the essential elements needed for pupils to gain a good range of skills. These include a very good breadth of writing and reading in English, practical learning in mathematics, and relevant investigations in science. The very good curriculum for personal and social education is the foundation of pupils' maturity and independence by the time they are ready to leave the school. Less emphasis is placed on some other subjects such as design and technology, art and music. Occasionally these take a second place to the central subjects in the cycle of curriculum planning and teaching. Very good opportunities are offered for enrichment, such as the after-school club, lunchtime yoga, football and Cubs (run jointly with Thingwall primary). These activities make a clear contribution to pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- 15. Planning often includes very good links between different subjects. Thus, a short series of lessons within a topic might include geography, history and English, with art to follow, and perhaps some work on the computers when the more able pupils come to write about what they have learned. Language and communication skills are very well promoted in lessons in all subjects, whether writing about a science experiment or a visit to an art gallery. Activities also include discussing work with pupils, and encouraging them to explain what they have been doing, or what they think. Mathematics skills are also much advanced through teachers planning which ensures the inclusion of many references to counting, numbers, comparisons in size or shape, and how objects stand in relation to each other such as, in front, above, underneath, next to, and so on. Similarly, teachers frequently build the use of computers and related equipment into their lessons in order to

help pupils' communication skills. This also makes the learning more interesting, as well as increasing pupils' skills with the high technology equipment.

- 16. The information teachers gather about pupils' progress is used very well in planning the work for individual pupils, especially in the major subjects such as English, mathematics and personal and social skills. This ensures that subjects are taught at a very appropriate level for each individual pupil, whilst still remaining within the major guidelines and areas of each subject. Whether pupils are the least or most able, or have autism, the planning for their learning is very well suited to their individual needs in the long term as well as in individual lessons. For instance, all pupils, including those with autism, join in the visits to places of interest such as art galleries and the nearby beach.
- 17. Teachers demonstrate the necessary skills for planning and teaching a broad curriculum. They have good knowledge of the national guidelines for literacy and numeracy, and are very well supported in delivering the lessons by very capable support assistants. Staff use a very good range of resources to make the subjects come more alive for pupils.
- 18. Pupils' introduction to the school is extremely well managed, whether in the Foundation Stage, or later in the school, with a great deal of information being passed on from previous schools and children's homes. Similarly, when pupils come to leave the school, the transfer to their next school is also managed extremely well so that the disruption to their learning is minimised.

# Care, guidance and support

19. The care and welfare of pupils is **excellent**, as is the provision of support and advice to pupils. Pupils' views are actively sought and their responses valued.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very strong unified approach to the health, safety and welfare of pupils
- High expectations, and closely focussed support is given to all pupils, based on excellent monitoring of their progress.
- Pupils' views, are always listened to and often acted on.

- 20. Staff work as a strong, flexible team, focussing entirely on the education and well-being of the pupils in their care. Each child is warmly supported and encouraged to do their best. The school nurse is a dynamic and integral part of the school. She does home visits, helps parents liaise with the authorities, offers advice on practical problems and administers day-to-day medical care. All pupils with the potential for challenging behaviour have individual risk assessments and care plans, produced with input from all staff who have dealings with them so treatment is consistent. In every daily contact with pupils staff unobtrusively take note of health and safety concerns. Child protection procedures are tight and well managed.
- 21. The school has first-class arrangements for noting and recording pupils' progress. As a result of this, and an open, dynamic determination to do the best for each child, staff offer helpful suggestions and concrete plans to challenge each pupil to do their best. This is particularly evident, and correspondingly valued, by parents in the practical workshops offered to help with behaviour or communication. Small but clearly defined targets are set in areas such as communication, toileting or behaviour and success noted and celebrated.
- 22. Pupils are clearly highly valued and supported and their views sought in whichever ways are practicable. Pupils' individual quirks and preferences are very well known to the staff, which in turn helps pupils to enjoy school life as they feel guided, supported and enabled to build confidence and self esteem. Weekly celebration assemblies include 'special claps' for pupils who have achieved notable success in anything from their work to their care of themselves. There has been sustained

improvement since the previous inspection, which identified the support and guidance of pupils as a strength of the school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

23. The partnership with parents is **excellent**. Relationships with other schools and the local community are **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents and carers are hugely positive about the school
- The school uses a terrific range of ways to communicate with parents and carers
- Especially good use is made of the adjoining primary school for integration visits.

## Commentary

- Partnership with parents is excellent. It is a major strength of the school. Parents are involved 24. and welcomed from the earliest contact; they are offered home visits and detailed individual attention. Each pupil in nursery and reception classes is carefully observed and a draft individual education plan drawn up: this is then discussed and refined with parents. There are regular meetings for parents with staff, both formal and informal. Parents feel strongly that the school is open and approachable and staff work with them to secure the best possible future for their children. Communications from the school are extremely good. There are regular lively and interesting newsletters, daily 'chat books' and excellent annual reports, which tell parents exactly what their children have achieved. Best of all is the copious use of digital photographs for displays and record books. This means that parents have an easily accessible record of what their children have been doing which is essential when many of them struggle to communicate. The school has a particular strength in dealing with pupils on the autistic spectrum and parents are extremely positive about the way they are involved and consulted. For example, the school offers a variety of workshops for parents focussing on particular areas of need such as behaviour or communication; this may be one-to-one if necessary. Detailed records are kept which show that pupils benefit significantly from the consistency between home and school. Annual reviews are well-attended. Regular parents' meetings also take place, both to offer support and some much-needed social time. Parents are tremendously positive about the school and describe its strengths in glowing terms.
- 25. There are also very good links with other schools and the local community, all of which are carefully planned to benefit pupils' development. The proximity of the local primary school is exploited very well. Pupils frequently visit each other, for example to take part in the Cub Scout activities such as decorating baskets for St David's Day; to join in the choral assembly with maracas and tambourines or to take part in joint playtimes or physical education sessions. Several staff at Stanley have children at the local school which further helps natural integration. It is considered important enough for the school to have appointed a co-ordinator, who is always looking for new opportunities to work together. It is clear that both sides benefit from the arrangement; Stanley pupils in particular grow in confidence and self-esteem. A number of other community links such as those with the Merseyside consortium of schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties and visits to local institutions help staff and pupils grow and learn. As a result of their sterling work on autism, the school is increasingly offering help and support to other schools in dealing with such pupils.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

26. Leadership, management and governance are very good overall. The headteacher offers outstanding leadership. The school is very well managed and governed. Key staff play a very good role in the leadership and management of the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, supported by governors, has a very clear sense of purpose to ensure that all
  pupils achieve to the best of their ability.
- The school's procedures for collating data on pupils' achievements and planning for further improvement are excellent.
- Staff are very well supported in their professional development
- Finances are managed very effectively to support clear educational priorities.

- 27. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection and the headteacher has worked effectively to ensure that leadership and management systems are extremely secure and focus on pupils' achievements and raising standards. The school's aim that 'parents and children come first' is an outstanding feature of the school. It clearly sets the tone for the search for excellence. The headteacher is very well supported by a very good governing body who fully understand how the school functions and what needs to be done in the search for further improvement. This has been achieved through regular visits by governors to discuss developments with subject leaders and visits to classrooms to look at what is happening. At every stage, the governing body is involved in raising standards, taking care of finances, and involving itself in the work of the school ensuring that statutory requirements are met and pupils achieve well.
- 28. The headteacher is a highly successful leader and manager. He strives to raise standards by clearly communicated and highly effective procedures, aided by the very good senior management team and subject co-ordinators. For example, the school's self-evaluation is exceptionally accurate and detailed and fully takes account of both national and local issues. As the school has not been inspected for six years, and the issues to be addressed from the first inspection were completed some time ago, the headteacher uses HMCl's annual report to compare the school with national trends. Data for pupils' achievement has been carefully collated and analysed for the last three years and a very detailed Annual Pupil Performance report has been produced that clearly shows how pupils' standards have improved during this time. This supports teachers' planning and is highly motivating for parents and staff.
- 29. Teachers and support staff are fully committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve to their very best potential. They are very well supported by the headteacher who makes sure staff are happy and secure and that they can focus on working to their very best. Staff know they are able to talk to the headteacher, deputy or any subject leaders for advice and support enabling them to fulfil their duties to the best of their abilities. The very secure and stable workforce is a clear indication of the commitment of teachers and support staff to the work of the school. The headteacher is admired by his staff, parents and pupils, he is totally dedicated to the school and fully understands what more needs to be completed to improve still further. All staff are involved in high quality performance management which gives them the confidence to work with the various special needs of pupils in each class. Despite very few new staff arriving in recent years there are very good induction procedures. These are mainly used for new supply staff and they do show the care and consideration the headteacher and his staff give to new teachers and support staff when they first join the school. This makes sure that all new staff feel welcome, know what is expected of them and are able to give of their best to pupils.
- 30. Staff development is a high priority and is linked to highly effective subject development plans which in turn support the school's improvement plan. A fully inclusive environment is an aim of the school. For example, to ensure pupils' with autism receive the very best teaching and support they can, the school produced a five year development plan that culminated in a high quality audit and accreditation. The monitoring of teaching is extremely good by the headteacher, and class teachers have the opportunity to observe best practice by visiting subject leaders' lessons. However, opportunities for subject leaders to monitor colleagues' teaching are not yet secure.
- 31. The use of school finances is very efficient. There is clear delegation to subject leaders and senior managers and governors check the educational impact of how money is spent. For example, the use of new learning resources in numeracy has been carefully evaluated and is being expanded

to all classes. Staffing is constantly evaluated and additional teachers are employed to support pupils' learning, for example a part-time physical education specialist.

# **Financial information**

# Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		
Total income	1052795	
Total expenditure	1035905	
Expenditure per pupil	11907	

Balances (£)		
Balance from previous year	54762	
Balance carried forward to the next	43000	

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

#### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. The provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

#### Commentary

- 33. On entry, children's standards are well below average compared to those of the same age in mainstream schools. Children make very good progress in their learning, and are achieving very well in all areas of learning by the time they are ready to leave the unit. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when most aspects of the unit were considered to be good.
- 34. The leadership and management of the unit are excellent and have contributed to the creation of a very good team of teachers and support staff. The curriculum is very well planned and balanced, with many very good opportunities for learning in individual lessons.
- 35. Teaching is very good in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers often combine the different areas of learning so that each lesson is a very good mixture of additional learning activities and targets to support the main aims of each lesson. Children's targets are very closely based on the accurate checking of their levels and progress. Staff begin this when children first come to the unit, and make checks on a day-to-day basis. Children who have the most severe learning difficulties, or who are autistic, or have other very challenging behaviours, all benefit equally from the very good targeting of individual and group activities, and the high quality of the teaching. All staff are very capable, and have excellent relationships with the children. They also have excellent relationships with parents from the start, and links are very close throughout the children's time in the unit. When children are ready to leave, their transfer into the main part of the school is managed extremely positively. The whole feeling in the unit is one of eager and joyful learning.

#### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

36. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

 The teaching of basic social and self-help skills is very good because this aspect underlies all other learning in the unit.

## Commentary

37. Teaching is based very well on the continuous checks of children's progress, with all staff knowing very clearly what each child's next learning step is. Children's behaviour is very well managed and they learn how to pay attention. Staff create many opportunities throughout a day to reinforce children's learning of how to behave, and how to start to do things independently. Children hang their coats up, find a toy or book to look at, and take the register to the school office. They sit together very amicably, and join in games and snacks together. Teachers make very good efforts to have children learning why they need to behave well and not simply be obedient.

## Communication, language and literacy

38. The provision for children's communication, language and literacy development is **very good.** 

## Main strengths and weaknesses

• Children's very good progress is seen most especially in their speaking and listening skills.

## Commentary

39. Some children enter the unit with no ability to speak, and little idea of how to listen to anyone. Teaching focuses clearly on developing children's ability to listen to what is being said to them, and to express their own wants, needs and thoughts. Staff create many opportunities to develop these skills throughout each day. These are partly in very well planned lessons directly aimed at speaking and listening, such as talking with the adults about the weekend, or a book, or a set of pictures. Learning also includes activities in which staff and children are communicating together throughout the day, such as talking about the snack they are having, or singing action songs, or saying number rhymes. All of these combine to encourage children's learning very well. The more able children chat with each other and with adults around them. Staff also give very good encouragement for children to begin to read single words such as their names, or familiar toys and pets that they know. Often, they will turn over the pages of books and talk together about the pictures, or what they imagine the words to say. These may be story books, books about simple moral or spiritual ideas, or farms and zoos. The most able children begin to make marks on paper or in sand, and eventually learn to write their name, and other small words they know.

## **Mathematical development**

40. The provision for children's mathematical development is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

Counting, position words, shapes and other mathematical words are brought into many activities.

#### Commentary

41. Lessons are very well-focused, and are well based on accurate assessment of how well children understand numbers, counting and related skills. Many lessons are directly aimed at improving children's awareness of what numbers are, and what 3 or 4, for instance, mean in real terms. A very effective daily activity is counting songs and rhymes, usually using a very good selection of toys to reinforce the idea of what a number is "worth", such as currant buns, speckled frogs and little fish. Learning is also very well reinforced in other mathematical activities such as recognising and matching shapes and colours, deciding which toy is big or small, or saying which item is in front, inside, on top, or behind. This is an area in which many autistic children in the unit make especially good progress.

## Knowledge of the world

42. The provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievements span a broad range of activities.
- The teaching is imaginative and enthusiastic.

## Commentary

43. Learning is based on a very good range of activities that teachers plan very well, and that support staff take a great and keen part in leading. The more able children learn to use computers to

move objects round the screen, to make simple patterns and pictures, and to activate voices and sounds. The computers are very popular with many children. Children learn that there are many different animals, vehicles, toys, and people in different jobs. They are shown that different places have different uses, whether rooms in the school, or the park, shops and the beach. These creative lessons often form a very good basis for extensive speaking and listening opportunities between adults and children. The improvement in this area has been very good since the previous inspection, with standards having risen from being satisfactory to very good.

## Physical development

44. The provision for children's physical development is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is encouraged in adventurous and varied ways.
- Teaching is very well focused and has very high expectations for children's enjoyment, exercise and cooperation.

#### Commentary

45. Children take a very active part in a particularly good variety of activities that are challenging and purposeful. They very much enjoy playing team games with balls or a large parachute in the hall. They compete against each other, as well as cooperating with each other very well. Children are delighted and energetic when using large apparatus, climbing over high stools, up ramps and along beams, or rolling and jumping over mats. They are taught to listen to instructions, and to follow them carefully. Lessons are very well planned, and are taught with enthusiasm and skill by teachers and support staff alike. Other activities that broaden children's learning take pace in the soft play area, the splash pool, and in the outdoor play area. In each of these, children gain much pleasure, as well as exercise. Often, they will "let off steam" excitedly, and play in pairs very well.

## **Creative development**

46. The provision for children's creative development is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The more able children make particularly good progress.
- Staff are especially good at giving very well focused individual teaching to the needs of the children with autism.

## Commentary

47. Children's very good progress is across a wide range of creative activities, many of which are part of other lessons, such as singing number songs, saying rhymes, and playing games in physical activities. Teachers also plan very well for children to enjoy and develop their skills in special painting lessons, or singing and musical lessons. Children are very well encouraged to be imaginative when taking part in action songs, or when painting pictures of each other, or making models of their favourite meal. Children with autism tend not to develop higher skills in creative areas, often finding it difficult to understand what the activity is about. Teachers and support staff make great efforts to overcome this difficulty, being very patient and persistent, for instance when encouraging children to handle and use different materials and tools.

#### SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

## **English**

48. Provision for English is **very good** 

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in speaking and listening, reading and writing, because excellent assessment leads to accurate target setting.
- Very good teaching is supported by the significant contribution of learning assistants
- The management of the subject is very good, with some excellent features, and is a significant factor in the improvement made since the previous inspection
- Literacy is very well promoted across the curriculum

- 49. All classes cover a wide ability range, so it is not possible to judge progress by year groups. However, because assessment, and its use throughout the school, to provide challenging individual, work are excellent, individual very good progress is very clearly seen.
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in discussions from an early age, using signing and symbols for support, where necessary. They recall stories, anticipate the next event and relate to their own experience. The very good use of resources promotes understanding and stimulates enthusiasm. In a Year 2. Big Book session, pupils handled cooking equipment, squeezed oranges, could talk about how utensils were used, and what they had at home. Use of correct terms is encouraged and pupils' vocabulary is expanded in most lessons. Assessment for speaking and listening, support for class teachers and for parents, is provided by speech therapists and a specialist teacher. A combination of drama sessions, a social use of language programme, and one to one work with pupils, enhances the work of the class teachers. Reading and writing are very well promoted through a combination of group sessions with the Big Books, and individual work with adult support. Older, more able pupils in Year 6 can use a variety of sources, including the internet, to access information. The welcoming, and very well organised, library promotes a love of books, and is rarely empty. Strategies for encouraging creative writing include retelling stories using word or symbol banks, the communication of news, and some very good shared writing. Very good emphasis is placed on good sentence structure and the higher attaining pupils write well, using capital letters and full stops correctly. Handwriting skills range from overwriting, through underwriting to copying from a book or board.
- 50. Teaching and learning are very good and very good attention is paid to the principles of the National Literacy Strategy. The learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching in English. Their participation enables teachers to make best use of the excellent assessment procedures to set and achieve targets. Support assistants work with individuals or small groups, motivate easily distracted pupils in class sessions, provide very good ongoing recording of progress and manage behaviour very well. They are fully involved in planning and evaluation.
- 51. The subject is very well managed by a dedicated co-ordinator who has produced a curriculum and schemes of work which answer the specific needs of this school community. This has had a significant impact on the improvement in the provision for English since the previous inspection, which was itself an improvement on the one before. This steady development of a core subject is very commendable. The detailed planning removes the risk of repetition, or of missing out important steps, enables building on previous learning, and provides class teachers with the resources needed to ensure very good individual progress. Some excellent work has been done to ensure that all pupils have access to a wide range of literature, including fiction, and non-fiction books, and poetry. The cross curricular provision of texts is outstanding. Information technology is

used well to enhance teaching and learning, through the production of symbol resources, and worksheets, and the use of word processing by older pupils.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Communication, whether spoken, signed, or supported by symbols, is encouraged in all lessons. The expanding of pupils' vocabulary including subject specific words, is included in lesson plans. The use of word and symbol banks to construct sentences is common practice for the more able pupils, and well designed, differentiated worksheets encourage reading and writing for all.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

53. Provision in mathematics is **very good.** 

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effect of implementing the National Numeracy Strategy can be seen in the very good quality
  of teaching and learning which results in pupils achieving very well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The assessment and recording procedures showing pupil progress is excellent.

- 54. Standards in mathematics have improved considerably since the previous inspection and these improvements are fully supported through an excellent annual report on pupils' performance. This is in large part due to the highly efficient, yet simple way, the school has adopted and adapted the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. All teachers firmly believe in this approach and have put these principles into practice. Lessons are highly structured and include an oral and mental starter and a plenary session for pupils to share what they have learnt. Activities are stimulating, exceptionally focused to meet pupils' individual learning needs and fully supported by individualised learning resources, including excellent teacher made resources. The quality of learning is further enhanced by specific references in teachers' planning to targets in pupils' individual education plans.
- 55. Teachers are very confident, have very secure subject knowledge and teach with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Lessons for pupils are challenging yet supportive, especially as support assistants provide excellent additional support for pupils who they know extremely well. Where necessary, signing is used to fully involve all pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and behave extremely well. Pupils are confident learners who will ask for assistance if they need it. Teachers plan activities that are stimulating, enjoyable and make the best use of time and resources. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils incorporated break time into a lesson on data handling. The teacher and her staff offered pupils a choice of four different fruits. The results of their choices were recorded onto a bar graph and the teacher used highly effective questions to assess pupils' understanding. These activities also enhance pupils' personal development very well.
- 56. Mathematics is extremely well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator. She offers high quality support to colleagues and leads by example, offering all staff the opportunity to observe her teaching. She, like all staff, is fully committed to raising standards further by evaluating teaching and learning throughout the school. There is a great deal of data available for analysis and this helps senior staff set suitable targets for further improvements. The co-ordinator regularly monitors teachers' planning and pupils' learning, although opportunities to observe colleagues teaching have yet to be established.
- 57. The quality of assessment and recording procedures are outstanding. All staff collate pupils' work in a very succinct and informative way. Pupils' books are extremely neat and clearly show what pupils are learning and how they achieve. For example, the use of digital photography is highly effective to show pupils' work in a variety of settings which would make it very difficult to record

otherwise. For example, grouping large objects together according to their colour, shape and size, such as balls and hoops. All work is fully annotated and dated, with very helpful and supportive comments. The use of ICT programs to match shapes is printed and meticulously mounted in pupils' books, again fully annotated to assist further detailed planning. LSAs regularly record pupils' achievements by completing record cards which relate to learning targets in their IEPs. Electronic planning proformas have been introduced for all staff and annual plans are regularly reviewed to ensure teachers have time to complete the work, for example, the teaching of *time* has been moved from the summer to spring term.

#### Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Numeracy is extremely well taught across the curriculum and numerous examples were seen during the inspection. Music and many other subjects make effective use of number songs to reinforce pupils' learning. In physical education every opportunity is taken to count, sort and group games and teams according to colour; in art fruit and vegetable prints are used to help pupils understand patterns, sequences and tessellation; while science lessons include opportunities for pupils to count the number of eyes and their colour.

#### SCIENCE

59. Provision in science is **very good** 

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science is very well taught and as a result, pupils make very good progress
- The subject is very well led and managed
- A strong focus on practical work enthuses pupils

- 60. The very high quality of teaching is clearly evident in pupils' work, which shows that they are achieving very well in a wide range of topics. Pupils' work is immaculately presented and where it is not immediately clear what pupils have achieved through their own recording, teachers have taken huge care to add their own observations. This ensures that they keep a very good record of what each pupil has achieved and with what degree of support. All work is sensitively and accurately marked. The tasks pupils are set are imaginative and excite pupils, ensuring that they will remember what they have done long after the lesson has finished. Teachers' records and lesson observations show that pupils are hugely enjoying their learning, increasingly asking perceptive questions, making valid observations and improving their ability to make predictions, such as which materials will make the strongest bridge. The most able pupils are recording the findings of their experiments with increasing detail and confidence. Teachers are using the subject very well to improve pupils' understanding in other subjects. For instance, pupils in Years 3 and 4 count features such as eyes and legs then transfer their findings on to bar-charts; this is helping them with their mathematics. Pupils are increasing their scientific vocabulary, thus adding to their English skills.
- 61. Every class has been monitored by the co-ordinator in the past year. This monitoring is extremely well focussed on a few main issues, such as how pupils' work is recorded, how work is varied for pupils of different ability, and how effectively the experimental and investigative side of the subject is taught. Each teacher receives a written account of strengths and weaknesses and those that are common to several teachers are identified as main points for improvement across the whole school. In this way, improvements have continued apace since the previous inspection.
- 62. Teachers recognise that pupils love doing experiments. These vary from very simple sorting; for instance of clothes for hot and cold weather, or materials with different properties, such as rough and smooth to more advanced experiments where older pupils observe items of food over several days to see how they change. Here they learn new words such as *mould* and *bacteria* and use

simple apparatus such as magnifying glasses to help them observe. Significantly, pupils are motivated to learn the important skill of predicting what might happen before they conduct their experiments. They are also recording their results systematically and with growing independence and thoroughness. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

63. Provision for information technology is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, making very good progress through a detailed, skill based programme
- Teaching is very good because staff are confident and knowledgeable
- Information technology is used very well to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum; literacy and numeracy are particularly well supported by information and communication technology

## Commentary

- 64. Information technology is fully integrated into classroom activities. Provision has significantly improved since the previous inspection, due mainly to an improved curriculum, more confident trained staff who understand how to teach these skills incrementally, and an increase in resources. Computer skills are learned in individual sessions with teachers and support assistants. Pupils' progress is carefully recorded, and skills regularly assessed. As a result pupils achieve very well at the most appropriate level for their ability. They move from a recognition of cause and effect using the touch screen, through using the mouse to produce specific responses by clicking on icons, to keyboard and word processing skills, including use of pictures. Independence is encouraged at every stage, and by Year 6, higher attaining pupils can access programmes independently, recognising icons on the desktop.
- 65. Teaching is very good, by the class teachers, and support assistants, as well as by the specialist teacher. By making use of the excellent assessment procedures which present a clear picture of the whole child, they know what to teach next and pupils are challenged, but always at a level which ensures that they can succeed. Pupils grow in confidence and perform at times beyond the expectations of the teacher. Staff are very quick to adapt plans to reinforce and consolidate achievement.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 66. Resources are provided to encourage use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, and teachers take advantage of these to enhance their teaching. The subject is very well co-ordinated and the curriculum includes very good cross referencing to all subjects. All teachers are provided with a CD Rom and hard copy version of the information and communication technology curriculum, schemes of work, recording sheets and achievement certificates. Parental involvement in the production of the CD Rom has resulted in a very professional, easily accessed resource for all teachers.
- 67. Information technology resources have been well chosen to support literacy and numeracy, including a well used number programme, and a good range of story CDs including nursery rhymes, traditional stories for very young children, humorous tales as well as support for the reading scheme.

## **HUMANITIES**

68. Insufficient geography or history lessons were observed to allow judgements to be made on provision in these subjects but a good selection of pupils' work was sampled and teachers' records were looked at.

## Geography

69. Learning in geography is very well enhanced by many outings, which are carefully planned to help pupils learn about the locality of the school and surrounding areas. Pupils have recorded their own addresses and learned the names of many local places. Following a trip to Liverpool, Year 6 pupils identified different ways it is possible to cross the River Mersey. By walking round the local village they have observed the wide range of uses building can be put to. Year 1 pupils have recorded how they get from their classroom to the hall. From this simple start, older pupils have built up a basic understanding of maps, looking at those of different scale and drawing their own, for instance to show the Wirral and where its towns and villages are situated. Pupils' work is beautifully presented, creating a record of which they are justly proud. This helps them to want to work hard and achieve success in the subject. Pupils work to a three-year plan, which ensures that they experience a wide, well-balanced, range of topics which include the study of other countries such as Italy, Japan and India. This is making a significant contribution to their understanding of other cultures. Pupils' progress and the work of teachers is very thoroughly monitored by the co-ordinator, who visits lessons and produces very good reports to help teachers to continue to make improvements.

## **History**

In history, all pupils have been involved in visits to a widespread range of destinations to 70. support their learning, making it more relevant and memorable. These have included trips to Liverpool to look at the Museum of Liverpool Life and to allow pupils to see old and new buildings and how life has changed since Victorian times. Pupils have dressed up in Victorian clothes and made perceptive comparisons between those and their own. To reinforce their understanding of the passage of time, Year 5 and 6 pupils have recorded their birthdays and commented on changes in themselves and family members over the years. They have visited Port Sunlight Village, making the observation that it is 'very old'. Computers are well used, for instance when visiting the web site of a well-known frozen food chain and commenting on how shopping has changed over the last hundred years. In one, very well taught lesson, Year 3 pupils handled a wide range of household appliances, including irons and kettles from different periods, making observations as to how they have changed. The lesson was particularly successful because it involved all the pupils and each was able to record their observations with the maximum degree of independence because the teacher had prepared different worksheets to help them. Thus, more able pupils wrote down their observations whilst less able ones stuck photographs to the sheet to create their own record. Pupils' progress and the work of teachers is very thoroughly monitored by the co-ordinator, who visits lessons and produces very good reports to help teachers to continue to make improvements.

## **Religious Education**

71. Provision for religious education is very good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good multi sensory approach to the very good teaching of the subject promotes very good achievement
- A very well adapted curriculum is supported by very good resources
- The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development

## Commentary

72. The multi-sensory approach to the teaching of religious education not only creates a very stimulating atmosphere, but encourages good recall, enabling pupils to compare and contrast the rich diversity of beliefs they encounter. Pupils show interest, enjoyment and curiosity as they experience new sounds, smells, tastes and images. Teachers show very good knowledge of the

subject and make lessons exciting. As a result, pupils make very good progress and are able to relate what they learn to their own experiences. Written work is very well presented, well marked and annotated, and gives clear evidence of very good achievement at an appropriate level. Worksheets are well thought out and all work is graded. Pupils visit places of worship to enhance their understanding and experience of a variety of traditions.

- 73. The subject is very well managed and the co-ordinator has adapted the Wirral Agreed Syllabus, to meet the needs of the pupils, providing schemes of work and suggested lesson plans for teachers. Work is well differentiated to enable all pupils to be included, for example the expectation of recording ranges from photographic evidence of experience, to adding a missing word, to sentence sequencing and, for the higher attaining pupils, a written report. Resources, including Big Books, information technology, and artefacts cover Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Chinese culture and beliefs. In addition, teacher made resources, including books, are of a very high standard. Cross curricular links, and suggested activities form a useful part of the curriculum planning.
- 74. Provision for the subject shows very good improvement since the previous inspection and all criticisms have been effectively met. Religious education makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils look at the implications of belief. Topics include faith in action, responsibilities, promises, celebrations, choices, care and concern, feelings, and families and friends. The ethos of the school is based on the living out of all these topics, and together with the excellent relationships, creates an environment in which pupils learn very well and grow in maturity.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

## **Art and Design**

Insufficient lessons could be observed to make judgements on provision in art and design. 75. Planning for the subject shares very close links with design and technology. It would benefit from clearer identification of the different skills being taught in the two subjects because at present, more emphasis is placed on making things, such as greetings cards, than developing pupils' artistic skills for decorating them. Nevertheless, many pupils are showing an increasing ability to mix colours to make a different one and to lighten or darken the appearance of a colour by adding black or white. A few of the younger, less able, pupils are improving their accuracy in making marks that represent objects such as boats or houses, whilst more able pupils are drawing recognisable faces, with all the features in the correct place. Art is frequently used for illustration in other subjects, with pupils helping to create vivid wall displays, often using collage. Many pupils have produced sponge and fruit prints, showing a growing awareness of simple printing methods. A strong feature of art and design is the range of visits in which pupils have been able to appreciate the work of famous artists. Pupils have visited the Liverpool Tate to look at modern art and the Lady Lever collection at Port Sunlight, to look at Pre-Raphaelite paintings. In a very strong link to literacy, pupils have also visited the Shirley Hughes exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery to view the illustrations from one of their favourite reading books

## **Design and Technology**

76. It is not possible to judge overall provision in design and technology, as no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, an examination of planning, photographs and samples of pupils' work shows that pupils are achieving satisfactorily by the time they reach Year 6. Mostly, lessons are combined with art activities rather than being distinctly design and technology, and are frequently linked with a termly topic, such as transport or food. Many pupils learn how to use scissors, glue sticks and brushes. The more able pupils understand how to plan a simple project, and how to test how well they have done afterwards. Many pupils need a lot of help when doing this work. The management and leadership are satisfactory, although the coordinator does not observe other teachers teaching this subject in order to see how high the standards of teaching and learning are.

#### Music

77. No music lessons were observed so no judgement is made of provision for music. Nevertheless, teachers' planning is progressive throughout the school and young children have an opportunity to play tuned and untuned instruments. By the time pupils reach the oldest classes, some recognise different classifications of instruments from an orchestra when played by pointing or naming the woodwind, percussion or string section. The oldest pupils are learning to recognise classical music such as *Greig* and *Beethoven* as part of their proposed visit to the Royal Philharmonic Society's schools' concerts in Liverpool later this month. Pupils of all ages experience music throughout the curriculum. They are greeted with the *hello song* and staff vary this to show changes in pace, volume and pitch. Assemblies, including joint assemblies, provide further opportunities for pupils to experience a variety of music and they sing a variety of songs with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Dance lessons enable pupils to experience hand and body actions, such as hand jive actions to jazz music. Teachers are very enthusiastic and this promotes considerable interest in the pupils. A good range of learning resources brings lessons alive and make it individual to each pupil.

#### Physical education

78. Provision in physical education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning overall are good
- Many, good extra-curricular activities are provided
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' learning in other areas, especially literacy, numeracy and their personal development.

- 79. Pupils follow a well planned curriculum that includes outdoor and adventurous activities for the oldest 10 and 11 year olds. Pupils of all ages are achieving well, indeed some of the younger pupils, especially six and seven year olds are making particularly good progress in their hand/eye coordination. Pupils also swim in the school's small splash pool and at a local swimming pool. Although this was not observed during the inspection, teachers' records show that some pupils are beginning to swim without the use of flotation aids. The school also offers a number of extracurricular activities including a gym, football and yoga club which is an improvement on the previous inspection.
- The school employs a temporary specialist teacher for two days per week. The quality of 80. teaching and pupils' attainment is better during these lessons than when pupils are taught by their class teachers. Some class teachers lack the necessary skills and subject knowledge which can leave teaching feeling rather uninspired and as such pupils' do not achieve as well. At its best teaching is very lively, busy and pupils work very hard throughout the entire lesson. Pupils fully understand the routine for physical education lessons, including changing quickly into appropriate clothing, although unfortunately this does not apply to all staff. Pupils are given many opportunities to make choices such as; who do they want to work with and what team do they want to join the red or blue team, complete with red and blue equipment. Support assistants provide very good help and use their initiative well to support pupils' learning. There is a good range of learning resources and pupils use large gymnastic apparatus with care. Many seven year olds have good emerging games' skills. Pupils of all ages are learning to strike a small ball with a bat, kick a large ball into skittles. While ten and 11 year olds are learning specific passes for game situations such as chest and bounce passes. Pupils who experience outdoor activities enjoy climbing using an artificial wall, and a rope ladder, they also participate in team building activities such as directing blindfolded staff around an obstacle course.

81. Lesson plans are detailed and very good links are made to other subjects, especially literacy and numeracy. For example, good use is made of games, during warm ups, to aid pupils' counting skills such as *What's the time Mr Wolf?* The use of prepositions helps pupils' learn in front, behind, under and over pieces of equipment in gymnastics. Familiar songs help pupils follow instructions while music supports dance activities. Pupils' achievements are assessed using a modified version of the P scales and this information is communicated to the class teacher ensuring that pupils' records are up to date. The subject is well led and managed and this has led to good improvement since the previous inspection.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and citizenship is very good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because individual needs are accurately assessed and met.
- The subject is woven into the whole school curriculum, and outcomes clearly demonstrate its effectiveness.
- The curriculum is comprehensive, well adapted and very well monitored.

- 83. Staff know pupils very well, and this, combined with excellent assessment and recording, ensures that targets are appropriate and achievable. Daily living skills, such as washing, and dressing, are well taught in context, for example in preparation for lunch or before and after physical education and swimming. Since pupils vary so much in ability, maturity and understanding, some topics such as body awareness and the changes that occur as pupils grow and develop, are dealt with on an individual basis with support from the school nurse. Parents are also involved in the decisions about the right time for sex education. As a result, pupils are taught important facts at a time that best suits their stage of development and this contributes greatly to their very good achievement.
- 84. The subject is taught in several subjects across the curriculum, for example, healthy eating is studied in science, social skills, including independence, collaboration, and communication form part of circle time and English lessons. Personal development and good citizenship are encouraged and rewarded throughout the day, in and out of lessons. The school has high expectations of pupils in terms of how they behave, stressing consideration for others, and the responsibilities involved in being part of a community. They learn about others less fortunate than themselves and are involved in fund raising. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme by being independent, and self-motivating. They take responsibility for their work, follow routines without supervision and co-operate and share equipment amicably. Written work is well presented and shows very good progress. The school participates in a joint venture with the adjoining primary school to encourage active playtimes, as part of the Health Promoting Schools programme, and this is proving very successful.
- 85. The curriculum covers personal and social skills, health education including correct use of medicinal drugs, safety in the home and outside, appropriate behaviour for themselves and the adults around them, how and when to say "no", and good citizenship. There is a strong emphasis on relationships. The curriculum is very carefully monitored because of the cross curricular nature of teaching and individual progress is very well assessed. The effectiveness of personal, health and social education and citizenship is enhanced by the excellent ethos of the school where pupils are constantly presented with very good role models by the staff.

# 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	1
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
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	1
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).

In a special standards.	school suci	h as this,	standards	<b>achieved</b> a	nre judged a	gainst individ	lual targets a	and not national