

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Prescot

LEA area: Metropolitan Borough of St Helens

Unique reference number: 104781

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Lee

Lead inspector: Dr John Collings

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 March 2004

Inspection number: 260674

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	232
School address:	Ashton Avenue Rainhill Prescot Merseyside
Postcode:	L35 0QQ
Telephone number:	0151 4264431
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr William Lyon
Date of previous inspection:	5 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is about the same size as most other primary schools. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average and there are five pupils whose first language is not believed to be English. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and the number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is also below the national average. The school was been awarded the 'Healthy Schools Award', the 'Active Mark Award' and has an after-school care scheme. The school draws from the immediate surrounding housing that is generally owner-occupied and also from outside its immediate catchment. Attainment on entry to the school is above the average at the age of four.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20753	John Collings	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education
10965	Pat Edwards	Lay inspector	
30075	Mike Duggins	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Oakdene primary school provides a **good** standard of education for its pupils and standards and achievement are **good** throughout the school. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and management and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and a strong senior management team. Teaching is good throughout the school. The school is **effective** and gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics across the school and in science in Years 3-6 are high. Standards in science in Year 1-2, although satisfactory, should be higher.
- Although standards are high by Year 6, pupils' ability to carry out science investigations independently are not as good as their abilities on other parts of the science curriculum.
- The headteacher motivates all staff by valuing their contributions and creating effective teams, which enables them to make a full contribution to the development of the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and relationships between all members of the school community are very good and pupils behave very well because teachers know their pupils well and are supportive and caring of them.
- The school provides a good curriculum, including that for the pupils' personal development and for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding and plan work that is challenging so that pupils achieve well. However, provision for gifted and talented pupils needs to be developed.
- Assessment, and its use in planning appropriate work, is not as well embedded in other subjects as it is in English, mathematics and science.
- Resources are good but a lack of outside equipment limits opportunities for the reception class pupils to develop their gross motor skills.

The effectiveness of the school has been maintained since the last inspection. There is a clear school development plan and information and communication technology and science investigations are being embedded into the curriculum.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **good** throughout the school. Standards are **good** by the end of the Foundation Stage, **good** by the end of Year 2 and **good** by the end of Year 6.

Standards by Year 6 have been well above average since 2001. Value added measures show pupils, including the current Year 6, achieve well. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English and science remain higher than average and standards in mathematics are well above average. The change in standards since 2003 is because of cohort differences.

Overall, pupils enter the school with skills that are above those usually found at the age of four and enter Year 1 with standards that are better than expected for their age. By Year 2 achievement continues to be good to securely maintain the standards in reading and writing and mathematics that are better than the nationally expected levels. Standards in science are at the level expected for the pupils' age and achievement is satisfactory.

By Year 6 standards and achievement are good in English and very good in mathematics. In science, standards and achievement are good, but pupils' ability to devise their own science investigations is not as developed as it could be. Pupils meet national expectations in information and communication technology, religious education and music. Standards in physical education are above national expectations in the aspects inspected. Insufficient evidence was collected to make a judgement in other subjects.

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	B
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A
Science	A	A	A	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' attitudes and personal qualities are **very good** and they behave very well; there are good relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils. Attendance and punctuality are good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is **good**, social and moral development **very good** and **good** overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The quality of teaching is **good** across the school. Assessment is satisfactory overall, with good assessment in English, mathematics and science that is well used to plan work to meet the needs of all pupils. However, assessment in the other subjects is less well developed, but is currently part of the school improvement plan to address. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory.

The school meets requirements of the National Curriculum well and provision for enrichment is very good. The school is becoming increasingly innovative in the way it delivers the curriculum through increased use of information and communication technology and making meaningful links across different subjects of the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and for pupils with statements of special educational needs very good. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is less well developed but is being reviewed by the school.

The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are good and pupils are well cared for. Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good. The school seeks the views of pupils informally; however, plans to create class councils and a school council are well in hand.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher are **very good**. Since her appointment the headteacher, in co-operation with the governing body, has consolidated the vision for the school. Staff are well motivated and their contributions to the vision and direction of the school are valued. The leadership and management of key staff is good overall and governance of the school is good. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are very happy with the school and with the information they receive, particularly about the curriculum. The Friends Association is very supportive and parents find the headteacher and staff very approachable should they have issues they wish to raise. Pupils are happy in the school, work hard and behave well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are to:

- Although satisfactory, raise standards in science in Years 1 and 2;

- Although satisfactory, continue to raise standards in information and communication technology across the school;
- Apply the good assessment in English, mathematics and science to other subjects;
- Develop outdoor provision for the reception class;
- Improve the support for gifted and talented pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall standards and achievement are **good**. Pupils enter the reception class with skills that are above average for their age; they achieve well and the current children in reception are on track to enter Year 1 with attainment above that expected nationally. In Year 2 standards and achievement are good in English and mathematics, and satisfactory in science. By Year 6, achievement is good and standards are above those normally found at this age in English and science; in mathematics standards are well above those expected nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are high across the school.
- Standards in science in Years 3-6 are high.
- By Year 2 standards in science are satisfactory, but should be higher.
- Although overall standards in science are high by Year 6, pupils' ability to carry out investigations independently are not as good as their abilities on other parts of the science curriculum.

Commentary

1. Children start school with skills that are above average for their age, except in creative development, which is average. The current reception children are on track to securely attain the goals children are expected to reach on entry into Year 1 in the six areas of learning for this age group and the vast majority of children should exceed them.
2. Standards at Year 2 have varied but since 2000 have improved compared to all schools and to similar schools. In the 2003 national tests, pupils' performance was above the national average in reading and writing and well above the average in mathematics. When results are compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The fall in performance in 2003 over 2002 is because the 2002 cohort contained a significant number of higher-attaining pupils.
3. Inspection evidence and school documentation shows that standards currently in Year 2 are above those expected for the pupils' ages in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils achieve well to maintain above average attainment. Standards and achievement in science in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory. The reason they are not as good as reading, writing and mathematics is because there has been an emphasis on these areas of the curriculum, especially writing, rather than science. There is already an action plan in place to improve science standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.9 (18.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.5 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.8 (20.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Standards in the Year 6 national tests have been above the national average in English, mathematics and science since 2001. Standards in mathematics in 2003 were well above the average and in the top five per cent in the country. When compared to their prior attainment,

at the end of Year 2 in 1999 they achieved well in English and science and very well in mathematics. Value added measures show that pupils achieve well.

5. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining levels in English and science that are above those normally found at this age, and in mathematics, well above the expected level. When compared to their scores at the end of Year 2 in 2000, pupils are achieving well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.2 (29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.3 (28.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.6 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

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

6. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are better than typically found, and pupils are articulate and confident speakers. The school has done much to develop reading and successfully promotes it as an enjoyable activity and, as a result, standards in reading are above those expected for pupils' ages. As a result of a recent focus on writing, standards are now above the level expected nationally. Pupils' writing reflects their very good speaking and reading skills; the vast majority of pupils use an extensive range of vocabulary that makes their work interesting.
7. In mathematics, indications are that standards by the end of Year 2 will be above the national average and by the end of Year 6 well above. Pupils are highly motivated and want to succeed and consequently achieve well. Good use is made of consistent setting of homework in Years 3 - 6 and the booster lessons in Year 6. A pleasing feature is the regular, high quality, quick-fire mental and oral work, which engages and develops the pupils' thinking processes.
8. The vast majority of pupils are working securely within the expected Level 2 in science. However, too few pupils are working at the higher Level 3 and there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage in investigation and to identify why an investigation is fair or not. Year 6 pupils carry out and interpret a significant amount of practical work; however, pupils are less skilled in planning, carrying out and evaluating an investigation they have devised for themselves.
9. Through good provision and support pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language also achieve well. The school recognises that it does not identify rigorously enough those pupils who are potentially gifted and talented and has limited procedures to ensure that they achieve as well as they could. The school is aware that in the national tests in 2003 boys' attainment was higher than girls'. Inspection evidence did not identify any significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment in this cohort. The school is monitoring their progress very carefully to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they are able.
10. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations across the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. However, there has been significant improvement since June 2003 when the new computer suite was installed. The school is making increasing use of information and communication technology in all areas of the curriculum and pupils are gaining in confidence in its use. The school is well placed to improve further.
11. Standards in religious education and music are satisfactory. Standards in physical education in the aspects inspected were above national expectations. Provision for personal, social and

health education is very good. Insufficient evidence was seen to make a secure judgement on standards in the creative subjects of art and design and design and technology, or, in humanities, geography and history.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, attendance and punctuality are good and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in the varied activities provided.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are very good.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are very successful in learning to respect others and to develop values of honesty and fairness.
- Provision for spiritual and cultural development is **good**, social and moral development **very good** and **good** overall.

Commentary

12. Pupils' attitudes to school have improved since the time of the previous inspection. They are proud of their school and enjoy being part of the school community. They concentrate very well in lessons and try to do their best. They get on very well with each other and with adults working in the school.
13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes is very good. Pupils know the school rules and the behaviour expected of them. Parents and pupils are happy that bullying is not an issue. They say that staff deal promptly and efficiently with any reported incidents. All adults working in the school apply the agreed behaviour policy consistently. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
14. Teachers value pupils' ideas and time is allowed for pupils to reflect on their feelings, use their imagination and develop self-awareness. Staff very successfully provide good role models in their dealings with pupils and each other. Worthwhile opportunities to discuss and develop matters of behaviour, relationships and moral issues such as recycling are provided. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Staff are very effective in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility as helpers, for example activity leaders, house captains and prefects.
15. Pupils have a very good knowledge of their own and other cultural backgrounds through visits to museums and places of interest and visits to school by music and theatre groups.
16. Attendance for the last reporting year is good. Teachers call registers promptly at the beginning of every session. Staff monitor attendance carefully. Parents are familiar with the school's policy regarding absence. However, no ongoing record is kept of holidays taken in term-time.
17. Spiritual development is good and reflects the school's Christian ethos. Religious education makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' spirituality and an appreciation of the range of religions found in Britain today. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development and enhances pupils' self-esteem. Friendship, care and mutual respect are guiding principles. Good singing reinforces spiritual development.
18. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school's aims, values and rules of behaviour promote a clear moral understanding. Pupils know that any incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with firmly. This makes them think positively and

recognise the difference between right and wrong. Staff act as good role models in helping pupils to develop moral principles. Broad moral issues are discussed such as preservation of the rain forests, as well as issues closer to home such as recycling in school.

19. Pupils' social development is very good. Classroom tasks improve pupils' self-esteem, while whole-school duties enhance their corporate commitment. Pupils' good personal development enables pupils to co-operate and collaborate during lessons and play very well. This is strengthened by very good community links, after-school clubs, residential visits and fund-raising for charitable causes.
20. Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of their own Christian faith and a broad awareness of non-Christian beliefs and values through visits to the local Anglican Church and a synagogue and through, for example, a samba drumming day. Pupils gain a good knowledge of national and local cultures through topic work, educational visits and community events. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to become aware of the multicultural nature of Britain today.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	96.4	School data	0
National data	93.9	National data	0.4

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

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. Assessment is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships result in high standards of behaviour and pupils want to learn.
- Overall, work is challenging and well planned to meet all pupils' needs.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach.
- Skilled teaching assistants give good support to ensure that all pupils are fully involved.
- Planning of cross-curricular links and the inclusion of information and communication technology across the curriculum are strengths.
- Good use is made of practical work and visits.
- Lessons have good pace and resources are used well.
- Assessment and its use in planning appropriate work is not as well embedded as other subjects as it is in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed for staff or understandable to parents.

Commentary

Good relationships result in high standards of behaviour and pupils want to learn.

21. Teaching is good throughout the school and this is the most significant factor in the overall good achievement that pupils make. This is achieved through good relationships not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils. This results in pupils collaborating well and developing increasing independence. All teachers, from the least to the most experienced, from reception to Year 6, create an ethos for learning where pupils are keen to come to school, have very good attitudes to learning, behave very well and want to learn.

Overall work is challenging and well planned to meet all pupils' needs.

22. This is particularly true of English and mathematics across the school and science at Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson pupils applied a range of previously learnt skills to convert notes on buzzards to well-structured and well-written complex text for others to read. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson all pupils were fully challenged through good questioning that was very well directed to pupils' previous attainment. Good planning and challenging work were also seen in a Year 4 physical education lesson taken by instructors from Warrington Wolves Rugby Football Club, where pace and challenge involved pupils actively for the whole lesson and resulted in pupils attaining above the standard expected for their age. Good planning and challenge were also seen in a Year 3 English lesson, where the teacher's clear instructions and good questioning involved pupils in creating a play about pirates.

Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach.

23. Teachers' good knowledge and understanding are used well to question pupils to establish what they know, understand and can do and then to involve them in further challenges. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 science lesson, where pupils were creating simple circuits with switches and their questions were not directly answered but the class teacher discussed problems with the pupils and encouraged them to seek their own solution. This ability to question pupils to enable them to develop their independence was also seen in many lessons. A good example was in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where good inter-pupil discussion, supported by the class teacher and teaching assistant, enabled pupils to create lists and tally charts to identify the most popular of the paired choices they had created, for example pizza – chips, milk – water, play station – game boy.

Skilled teaching assistants give good support to ensure that all pupils are fully involved.

24. The use of teaching assistants is well planned by class teachers and their skills make a significant impact on pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, good questioning through well-constructed role-play in the school 'transport office' by the class teacher and the teaching assistant ensured that all were challenged. Good support was seen in a Year 5 geography lesson where the teaching assistant ensured that all pupils were fully involved in the class role-play, and in a Year 3 information and communication technology lesson, good planning by the class teacher and teaching assistant ensured that all pupils were fully supported but were able to be as independent as possible.

Planning of cross-curricular links and the inclusion of information and communication technology across the curriculum are strengths.

25. Overall, work is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The school is making increasing use of information and communication technology and cross-curricular links to enable the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one subject to be applied and consolidated through another. A particularly noteworthy example was the combination of mathematics, physical education, information and communication technology and science in Year 6 on the same day! The recording of data relating to heart rate and exercise in graphical form through information and communication technology ensured that concepts were reinforced. Other good examples were seen in Year 1-2 during an English lesson, where pupils related the Easter story, the use of information and communication technology in geography and history where they used search engines to research information, and the development of literacy skills in Year 6 when discussing advantages and disadvantages of the railways in Victorian times.

Good use is made of practical work and visits.

26. Good use is made of practical work to stimulate pupils' imagination through visits and to apply and consolidate work across the curriculum. Good practical work was seen in mathematics in

Year 1 where pupils sorted and classified objects to create simple pictograms of the information. Another good example in mathematics was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were very involved in using equipment to estimate and then measure the mass of different objects. Good practical skills were also demonstrated through a Year 5 visit to the local secondary school where they were very involved in using simple programming skills to control a sequence of events. Other good examples of practical work to enhance learning were seen in a Year 2 and Year 1-2 science lessons where good questioning and encouragement through trial and error to create simple circuits and switches led to good learning. This was also apparent in Year 3 science lesson where good use of newtonmeters with different scaling ensured that pupils needed to read the graduations carefully and to choose the 'best' newtonmeter to measure a particular force.

Lessons have good pace and resources are used well.

27. The vast majority of lessons have good pace. This involves the pupils and maintains their interest. A good example was seen in a Year 1 science lesson where good questioning, a good range of equipment and good pace ensured that all pupils were able to complete their simple circuits and begin to investigate the conductivity of different materials. Good pace was also seen in a Year 4 music lesson where pupils were using a good range of tuned and untuned instruments to depict mood. The good resources ensured that all were fully involved and good questioning and pace ensured that pupils were clear about what was expected of them. Good resources in the information and communication technology suite enabled all pupils to be fully involved and create imaginative and aesthetically pleasing posters to illustrate their poems about shells which they had written in English. Imaginative use of a couple of balls and an overhead projector enabled the Year 5 teacher to explain very well the changing phases of the moon. In lessons that were satisfactory, rather than good, lack of pace was the most significant factor.

Assessment and its use in planning appropriate work is not as well embedded in other subjects as it is in English, mathematics and science.

28. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is used well to plan appropriate work that is clearly based on pupils' prior attainment and is well matched to individual needs. The good assessment is a significant factor in ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Assessment is not so well developed in other subjects and this is currently impeding some pupils' progress as work is not so well matched to their prior attainment.

Pupils' individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed for staff or understandable to parents.

29. Pupils' individual education plans are satisfactory and focus clearly on what pupils need to learn next and the support they will need to achieve their individual targets. However, they are not yet working documents that are updated and amended regularly enough. The language used in the documents is too often drawn from the national literacy and numeracy strategies, making it difficult for parents to understand what it actually means their child should be doing. Pupils are involved in reviewing the plans and complete an evaluation sheet before the review meeting and they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	11 (26%)	25 (60%)	6 (14%)	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

The planning and content of the curriculum are **good** and extra-curricular provision **very good**. Accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range and quality of learning experiences provided in the reception are good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Increasing use of cross-curricular links to apply and consolidate learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and very good for those with a statement of special educational need.
- The individual education plans are not yet effectively used as working documents.
- The identification and support for gifted and talented pupils is not well developed.
- Lack of outside Foundation Stage equipment limits opportunities for gross motor skills development.
- Resources are good.
- Booster classes impinge on some curriculum areas.

Commentary

30. Overall, the curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and planned well for continuity and progression. Statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met, as are those of the local education authority's adopted Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The inclusion policy operated by the school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. Many examples of policy into practice were observed during the inspection.
31. The Foundation Stage curriculum adds depth and quality of learning experiences with a wealth of well-planned activities, which emphasise skills and understanding as well as knowledge. This is linked directly to the good overall management and teamwork in this department.
32. The school is making increasing use of cross-curricular links to not only make the curriculum more meaningful to pupils but also to allow knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one subject to be applied and consolidated in another. For example, in Year 6, mathematics, physical education and science were linked in investigating the effect of exercise on heart rates, and history, geography and religious education are being used to apply different writing genres to support English. There is increasing use of information and communication technology across the curriculum to support the vast majority of subjects, for example use of the Internet to support research in history and geography, use of word processing to support English, and data logging temperature and light changes over time to support mathematics and science.
33. The provision for personal, social and health education, which includes the use and misuse of drugs, and sex education, is very good. There is a detailed policy and the co-ordinator, in conjunction with the teachers, has recently implemented effectively a new framework for this aspect of the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators monitor planning on a regular basis to ensure that all pupils benefit. As a result, the impact is positive and the trend in achievement throughout the school has been upward.
34. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Sport clubs include football, netball, rugby, hockey, judo and fencing, with regular opportunities for pupils to take part in local and area competitions. The school won or reached the final stages of many tournaments, and the school represented St Helens at the Merseyside Youth Games last year. Their successes

have rewarded these efforts. Other clubs, including choir and French, are well attended and contribute significantly to pupils' pleasure in the performing arts.

35. The curriculum is enhanced further through a wide range of theme days, for example outside experts to lead workshops in science, art or design and technology. The school values educational outings and pupils have access to a wide range of visits and fieldwork, for example the Theatre Royal in St Helens and the Science Museum in Widnes. Annual outward-bound weekends contribute positively to pupils' social and personal development and improve team-building skills. In addition, interesting visitors such as theatre groups, musicians, artists, the police and nurses add another dimension to the pupils' education. These extra extension programmes increase their enthusiasm for learning.
36. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Teaching assistants are well qualified and highly motivated in their desire to support these pupils, and contribute significantly to the good achievement of pupils. Those that support pupils with statements of special educational needs provide very good support, ensuring that the pupils make good progress in their learning and are fully included in lessons. Parents are involved in the review and target setting process for their children. Good use is made of external agencies to support the school's work with pupils with special educational needs. Very good support from the headteacher, administrative staff and governors ensures that management of special educational needs is efficient.
37. Although the school identifies gifted and talented pupils, for example pupils in Year 4 who are being coached by Liverpool Football Club and Everton Football Club, overall it does not provide sufficient support for gifted and talented or potentially gifted and talented pupils.
38. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory. The recently installed computer suite is of a high quality. An area for development of which the school and governors are aware is the Foundation Stage outdoor facility. This is being targeted in the school improvement plan.
39. The good links with the local nurseries and secondary school, which include pupil visits and teacher exchanges, ensure that transition between the phases is smooth. Timetabled French lessons in the older year groups add a further dimension to curriculum development.

Care, guidance and support

Provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring is **good**. **Good** care is taken of pupils and **good** account is taken of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils well and are supportive and caring of them.
- Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve.
- Parents are happy with the school's induction programme.

Commentary

40. The school continues to maintain the caring environment it provides for its pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and value their contributions in lessons. Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Achievements in and out of school are consistently celebrated. Staff informally monitor the personal development of pupils through class discussion and circle time.
41. Child protection procedures are fully in place and training is regularly undertaken. Parents in reply to the questionnaire say that they are happy with the school's induction arrangements for those children entering the reception class. These allow the children to settle quickly and feel

secure in their new surroundings. Pupils have trusting relationships with staff. They feel that the staff treat them fairly in any situations that arise.

42. The school has an effective health and safety policy and all safety checks are up to date. Plans are well in hand to hold elections for class councils which will allow the school to consult pupils more closely and gain their views on a range of issues.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has maintained **very good** partnerships with parents. Links with the community and other schools are also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information parents receive in the weekly newsletter, prospectus and curriculum letters is very good.
- The Friends Association is very supportive of the school.
- The headteacher and staff are very approachable.

Commentary

43. The school has improved the good information it provided for parents at the time of the last inspection. Most parents are very pleased with what the school provides and what their children achieve. They feel very comfortable about talking to staff regarding any worries or concerns. Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the amount of homework received and feel it successfully reinforces and builds on work undertaken in lessons. The school encourages parents to help in school, and staff appreciate the regular reliable help they receive in class and on trips by a large number of parents and grandparents.
44. Pupils' annual progress reports are clear about what pupils can do; however, some targets for improvement are too broad to provide information on ways in which parents can help their children at home. Teachers provide parents with useful information about topics studied each term. Some parents commented that they would like more than one consultation evening per year. However the school is reviewing its current. The prospectus provides a useful, practical guide to the school. The school has consulted parents about its uniform policy and out-of-school care. The Friends Association is very supportive of the school and raises considerable amounts of money to improve resources and add to pupils' learning.
45. The school, together with the local college, provides classes in information and communication technology for parents and members of the local community. Staff have good curriculum links with the local high school and the Rainhill City Learning Centre. Work experience students are made welcome in the school and the school has very good links with Liverpool Hope and Lancaster Universities for initial teacher training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher motivates all staff by valuing their contributions and creating effective teams, which enable them to make a full contribution to the development of the school.
- Performance management plays an important part in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The management of the school focuses on the most important aspects for improvement.
- The governing body is fully involved in supporting school improvement.

Commentary

46. The headteacher is a very good leader who has implemented very good school improvement since her recent appointment. She has ensured that the school provides an education that meets the needs of its pupils. She has inspired and supported staff and this has secured consistently good teaching and created a very cohesive team approach. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. The school is very inclusive and there is a strong team ethos that has been developed through the development of a strong senior management team and all involved are committed to providing the best possible learning environment for all pupils.
47. The recruitment of new staff has had a positive effect on strengthening the team and the headteacher has worked with support staff to ensure that they can assist teaching staff in the management of their workload. The headteacher values the contributions made by staff, governors, pupils and parents. The headteacher uses performance management very well to support all staff and to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to review and develop curriculum provision.
48. Due to the headteacher's clear vision and guidance and strong support from the deputy headteacher, other staff with management responsibilities undertake their tasks well and have a good understanding of what needs to be done to further raise standards. Subject leaders in English and mathematics make good use of performance data to identify areas that need developing. The inclusive approach to school improvement ensures that all involved are fully committed to the priorities identified. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very well by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The co-ordinator provides good support for teachers when they have particular concerns about individual pupils and she has developed good links with the special needs co-ordinator in the local secondary school to facilitate the transfer of pupils with special needs.
49. Governance of the school is good. The school improvement plan is a working document that clearly identifies priorities and the actions required to address them. The very good analysis of pupil performance data provides staff and governors with a clear means of measuring the progress of pupils year by year. Governors are provided with very comprehensive information, including that which allows them to monitor the quality of education provided in the school. Therefore, they have a good understanding of what the school does well and have identified areas where further development is necessary. They regularly challenge the school and have high expectations of what pupils and the school can achieve. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	498 425	Balance from previous year	14,174
Total expenditure	500,638	Balance carried forward to the next	11,963
Expenditure per pupil	2,086		

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 **good**, which is similar to the last inspection.

50. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class in September as four-year-olds is above what is expected nationally, except for creative development, which is in line. By the end of the reception year nearly all reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning and the vast majority exceeds them.
51. The induction system is good. Before children enter reception positive links are established with parents, all of whom support the school well. During the inspection many good examples were noted when the teacher and other staff discussed routinely issues arising from school or home with parents or carers.
52. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and is supported effectively by the class teacher and teaching assistants. A good curriculum, good planning, assessment and recording ensure that children experience a good balance between directed and free choice activities. The children's learning, including those with special educational needs, is good. They also achieve well due to good overall teaching, the time invested wisely by the teaching assistants and their own willingness to learn.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunity for directed and free choice activities is balanced well.
- Good opportunities to learn through play.
- Adults provide very good role models.

Commentary

53. The children's personal and social development is given high priority and to good effect. Due to very good class management and challenging tasks, they are well on track to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices about the activities which they wish to pursue. The teacher's good emphasis on learning through play ensures that children's social, language and mathematical skills are being developed well consistently. All adults are very good role models which help children to form positive relationships and care for others. As a result, their confidence increases. They feel secure and self-esteem is enhanced, as noted with a group role-playing a shopping activity in the shop corner. Other examples included role-playing in the kitchen, playing with water and sand, and constructing models from plastic cubes and wooden blocks.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children with special educational needs receive a high level of support.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed.
- There are consistent opportunities for language development.

Commentary

54. Children make very good progress in this area of learning throughout the Foundation Stage. This is due mainly to very good teaching and effective use of dialogue between adults and children. They are encouraged to extend their thinking and communication skills through a variety of activities, as noted with a group in pretend conversation while playing with a model farm and farm animals. Nearly all listen attentively in an active manner and are eager to answer the teacher's probing questions, as observed in a very good lesson about predictable and patterned story structures. Reading and writing are promoted very well and as a result of regular organised sessions and parental involvement, especially with reading, improvement is constant. Nearly all children explain in detail their preferences or dislikes of characters or events in stories, exemplified well by two pupils reading about the adventures of Kipper and Biff. Although overall writing is good and some very good, a small number of pupils with special educational needs is in the early developmental stages. Nevertheless, these children, as a result of the teacher's hard work and very good teaching assistant support, coupled with their own eagerness to succeed, improve rapidly. Examples of writing on display include story settings, posters, letters and invitation cards. Independent writing includes examples such as

I see my shadow. I see a pig looking back at me. I like them two sheep. My mummy took me to the park.

55. Both reading and writing indicate that good attention is given to the importance of letter sounds in words. Attainment is above what is expected from children of this age.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Tasks are matched well to the children's needs.
- Oral and mental mathematics sessions are very effective.
- Good attention is given to ordering numbers and place value.
- Teaching and learning are very good.

Commentary

56. By the time the children leave the reception class nearly all exceed the expectations for this area of learning. All higher attainers count to 30 and beyond, and add and subtract single digit numbers accurately. Tasks are pitched well to meet all children's learning needs, including those with special educational needs, which ensure that thinking and calculating skills are being developed continually. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, lower-attaining children were required to identify the correct money for three items in a shopping basket; those of average ability had to select correct coins to pay for five items, while higher attainers were expected to figure out the change due. In the same lesson very good use was made of number fans to engage the children's intellect from the outset. The vast majority identifies two- and three-dimensional shapes accurately and uses non-standard measures such as cubes or hand spans to estimate length of books, desks and floor. Good opportunities to develop mathematical vocabulary such as 'greater', 'less than', 'heavier', 'lighter', 'taller', 'smaller' are common routine, as noticed during a free activity session in a discussion between a group of children and a teaching assistant in the sand and water area. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve well in this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to study the local area and the outside environment.
- The staff make good use of resources.

Commentary

57. Throughout the reception year children begin to understand more about the place in which they live, and know how they and others change as they grow from babies to adulthood. As a result of well-organised trips, for example to the local church and library, they find out about how people live. They chat confidently about the different features observed on their walks, such as seasonal changes and types of houses. Good planning ensures that they begin to understand simple computer uses and many use the mouse correctly to draw shapes, paint pictures and calculate simple mathematical problems, as observed during part of a free choice activity. During this activity session children used the click and drag technique successfully. In science they learn about habitats as they study minibeasts in the local environment, and how different sounds are made while hitting, plucking or blowing musical instruments. Designing and making skills are enhanced as they build model tower blocks. Their geographical knowledge and understanding are developed well by drawing simple classroom plans. By the time they leave reception, attainment is above national expectations.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- Opportunities to develop ball and gymnastic skills are good.
- Provision to develop gross motor skills is limited due to lack of outdoor facilities for climbing, balancing, pedalling or riding scooters, cars or tricycles.

Commentary

58. By the time they leave the reception class the children's physical development is above that expected nationally. Good provision through table-top games, modelling materials and use of simple tools improves steadily their hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills. Good examples were observed of children cutting, measuring and pasting various materials to make a collage of scenes from their current book, 'A Train Ride'. Children respond well to instructions, as observed during a very good gymnastics lesson where they developed a good awareness of space and built up movement sequences to include running, jumping and balancing, both on and off apparatus. As a result of these well-organised activities, children show consideration for others as they take turns, which contributes positively to their personal and social development. A pleasing feature is their high level of ball skills, displayed both by girls and boys. This was demonstrated admirably in another very good lesson where the teacher's high expectations, challenge and evaluation of the children's performances resulted in displays of a high standard. Less well provided for is the opportunity to experience climbing, tunnelling, cycling or pedalling activities due to lack of equipment. The school is aware of this and notice of how to address the issue is included in the school improvement plan.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have good opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape.
- Opportunities for role-play are good.

Commentary

59. Children are offered a wide range of interesting and creative activities each day and the balance between free choice and more structured work is good. The provision for using different media is good. Children's skills in this area are satisfactory as they handle paintbrushes, scissors, glue-sticks and collage materials while painting and making friezes. This was evident in a class where children colour-mixed paints while drawing scenes from the text of 'A Train Ride'. In role-play they enjoy activities such as planning a trip to Liverpool or St Helens, discussing fares and buying tickets for the train journey. Children's development is in line with what is expected from this group nationally.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching is good. Work is well planned and resources are used very effectively.
- All pupils achieve well.
- Assessment information is used well.
- Good progress has been made in developing pupils' writing skills.
- Pupils enjoy English lessons and work hard to improve their work.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to use and further develop their speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

60. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average for their age. Pupils are articulate and confident speakers. In lessons pupils are encouraged to work in groups, talking about and explaining their work to each other. Adults provide good role models for pupils as they listen carefully to the contributions of all pupils and engage them in conversation, encouraging them to reflect on their work. Some pupils attain standards that are very high.
61. Standards in reading are above those expected for their age. The school has done much to develop reading and successfully promotes it as an enjoyable activity and as a result pupils achieve well. They read a wide range of fiction and are equally interested in non-fiction texts. Pupils take home both fiction and non-fiction books. The school has library space in each wing and there is a good range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, available. Many pupils also belong to local libraries, and are supported well by their parents at home. All of these factors help to promote pupils' learning and the standards they attain. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to read out loud and they clearly enjoy this. When reading out loud they vary the volume, speed and expression of their speech to suit the text being read to engage the interest of the listener. Pupils talk confidently about the books they are reading, giving opinions about the characters and reasons for events. Pupils confidently locate information from books and when using information and communication technology.
62. Standards in writing are above those typically expected for the pupils' ages overall and the school has done much to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Teachers have helped pupils

to ensure that their writing is well structured, and spellings and the use of punctuation are accurate. The organisation of pupils for literacy lessons ensures that pupils of all abilities receive appropriate levels of challenge and support that enable them all to achieve well. Pupils enjoy writing and are very productive. They have well-developed editing skills and are able to draft and redraft their work to produce final pieces of very good quality. Pupils' writing reflects their very good speaking and reading skills as they are very aware of the purpose of their written work and organise it very well. The vast majority of pupils use an extensive range of vocabulary that makes their work interesting.

63. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, but much has been done in the past year to ensure that the decline in standards that had occurred has been reversed. The quality of teaching has been maintained as good overall but with some very good teaching. The quality and use made of assessment information have improved, with all pupils being given clear targets that help them to know what they need to do to improve. Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs receive good support. Teachers use a variety of appropriate resources in lessons to support their learning. These strategies are very effective and help pupils to feel secure, with the result that their confidence grows, they work very hard and achieve well. Pupils of higher ability are both challenged and supported and as a result they too achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and make effective use of the good resources and skilled teaching assistants to promote pupils' learning. Pupils' attitudes are good, they behave well in lessons and are very productive.
64. Although new to her post and, at the time of the inspection, working in a part-time capacity, the subject co-ordinator works effectively to support her colleagues and is very well supported by the headteacher. Monitoring systems, including looking at teachers' planning, pupils' work and the analysis of assessment data are used very well to guide developments in the subject, identifying aspects of the subject that require attention. A clear vision has been established for the future provision of the subject based on continuing improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum are good overall. Discussions are a regular feature of lessons and promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. Reading is also a regular feature of pupils' work in other subjects. Effective links are made to other subjects that help to give pupils' written work a real purpose. For example, in a Year 5 geography lesson pupils were reading, discussing and analysing documents in order to develop arguments to be presented in the form of letters to elected councillors. The use of information and communication technology to support the language and literacy has improved considerably since the previous inspection and the pupils could use applications to enhance and develop their writing and the Internet to research aspects of their work.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and sometimes very good, and all pupils achieve well.
- Standards are very good by the end of Year 6.
- Good mental and oral strategies are employed in all classes, and pupils are challenged well.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and highly motivated.
- The quality of marking is good overall.
- Homework is used effectively.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject very well.

Commentary

66. Indications are that standards by the end of Year 2 will be above the national average and by the end of Year 6 well above. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. As this is similar to the judgement of the last inspection, the high standards have been maintained. During the past five years the results in the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils have been above or well above the national average. Results during the same period in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests have been consistently well above, with the exception of 2000, and since then have been upward.
67. The overall good teaching and the time invested wisely by support staff impact positively on the progress pupils make. This, combined with their own high motivation and eagerness to succeed and improve, ensures that all, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Learning is enhanced further by the consistent setting of homework in the Years 3 - 6 age range and the booster lessons in Year 6. A pleasing feature is the regular, high-quality, quick-fire mental and oral work which engages and develops the pupils' thinking processes.
68. Pupils are required routinely to discuss their methods of calculation and justify their answers. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson pupils had to explain how and why they used a variety of strategies to near-double two digit numbers by addition. There is a strong focus on securing basic numeracy skills throughout the school, but particularly in Years 1 and 2. There is evidence of very thorough work to reinforce basic understanding in all classes, as noted in the revision exercises in an analysis of the pupils' past and present work. Overall the level of challenge is good, as observed in a very good Year 6 lesson in which pupils solved problems by extracting and interpreting data in frequency tables and bar charts. Nearly all the pupils enjoy lessons, especially when they involve practical work, as observed in a good Year 2 lesson on solving real-life money problems.
69. Pupils in Key Stage 2 attain well; for example, in Year 3 higher-attaining pupils understand place value to 1,000, add and subtract tens and units accurately, divide two digit numbers by one digit numbers correctly and know a range of simple fractions. Year 4 pupils know the characteristics of two- and three-dimensional shapes, calculate area by adding squares and measure length and capacity with increasing accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 5 solve accurately real-life problems involving division and multiplication and have a good knowledge and understanding of decimals in relation to place value. Lower attainers in this year group find these operations more difficult. Problem solving is a strong focus across the school and employs all the mental strategies and concepts, which pupils learn and consolidate on a daily basis. Year 6 pupils, for example, have a good understanding of the more complex two-dimensional shapes and have already covered a wide range of work including fractions, decimals, percentages, probability and ratio. Good use is made of investigative work in most classes to secure pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts. A good example observed was in a Year 1 class sorting and organising information in relation to data handling.
70. Common strengths of the overall good teaching and learning are the careful planning of lessons and the accurate match of work to pupils' needs, which ensure that they are always working at a comfortable but challenging level. Good knowledge and understanding of the subject underpin the rigorous approach of many staff, and the good support from the well-prepared teaching assistants moves learning on apace. Teachers use language well and place strong emphasis upon the methodical recording of work to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the stages involved in a calculation.
71. All teachers use assessment well to guide their planning of future work. The school has begun to establish targets for each year group and plans are in place to introduce a more formal tracking system. Marking is thorough in all classes, with many good examples of clear guidance as to how pupils can improve. However, there are some variations in practice.

72. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and teachers' plans on a regular basis. Test results are analysed rigorously and weaknesses diagnosed are dealt with successfully. He has recently introduced a new information and communication technology programme to the subject following a whole-school in-service training session on its use. The initial impact is encouraging.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Pupils use mathematics work regularly to support their work in other subjects. They use graphs and tables to record scientific data and enhance measuring skills during practical tasks in design and technology, while in geography older pupils use scales. This is a developing feature at present but with emerging strengths as access to quality information and communication technology provision increases.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 6 are above average for the pupils' age and pupils achieve well.
- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are at the level expected nationally, but could be higher.
- Science investigational skills in Years 1 and 2 are not as good as other parts of the science curriculum.
- Pupils' ability in Years 3 - 6 to raise their own questions for enquiry is not as well developed as other parts of the science curriculum.
- Assessment procedures in science are good overall but do not monitor pupils' progress in science investigation as well as other areas of the science curriculum.

Commentary

74. Overall, the standards in science have been maintained since the last inspection. The average rather than above average standards by Year 2 are due to an increased focus on English and mathematics, as identified in the school development plan. The above average rather than the well above average standards by Year 6 are due to cohort differences. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve satisfactorily through Years 1 and 2 and well through Years 3 - 6. The issue from the last inspection, of 'not reaching their potential' in investigation has been largely addressed. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in this area of science are very secure; however, they are not given sufficient opportunities to devise and carry out questions that they have devised for themselves.
75. Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. All teachers plan and manage their classes well. They involve their pupils through challenging discussion and questioning, and give them opportunities to collaborate and carry out practical work. Lessons have good pace and all pupils are fully involved. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 carry out a suitable range of practical work, for example in Year 2 creating simple circuits and switches and identifying how loud sounds are at different distances. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage in investigation, for example recording why an investigation is fair or not or comparing, for example, the force of different magnets. In Years 3-6 teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject challenge pupils.
76. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves, give reasons for answers and to use their previous knowledge, understanding and skills and apply them to new areas of learning. This was evident in a Year 6 science lesson where the teacher's very good questioning developed pupils understanding of the relationships between plants' need for carbon dioxide and the excretion of oxygen, and other organisms' need for oxygen to release energy from food in the muscles and the need to excrete the carbon dioxide produced.

However, while Year 6 pupils fully understand fair testing and can explain investigations they have carried out, they are given few opportunities to devise investigations to answer questions they have raised for themselves.

77. Overall, there are good assessment procedures and these are used well to plan subsequent work to emphasise and develop identified weaknesses. However, while pupils' knowledge and understanding of 'Living Things', 'Materials' and 'Physical Processes' are well monitored, pupils' developing skills in science investigation are less well monitored. The school is addressing this through recently revised assessment procedures.
78. Information and communication technology is being increasingly used in science, for example, using a data logger to record temperature changes over time, researching information from the Internet for the work on the planets in Year 5, and to graph the results of heart rate changes due to exercise. However, some opportunities are not fully exploited, for example the use of the word processor to record science work, the use of digital cameras and a multimedia program to present work done in science.
79. Leadership and management are good and have already identified the issues raised in the report and have put in place an appropriate action plan to address them. The school is increasing its use of cross-curricular opportunities to enable teachers to apply and consolidate work in one area of the curriculum in another. A notable example was the Year 6 science lesson where there had been an emphasis during mathematics at the beginning of the day on graphing. A physical education lesson later in the day was used to record changes in heart rate during exercise and these results were then used in the science lesson at the end of the day to graph, plot, interpret and explain the changes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has addressed the issues from the last inspection well and made good progress in provision since the installation of the suite last summer.
- Standards meet national expectations for Year 6 and Year 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- The use of information and communication technology to support other subjects in the curriculum is developing well.
- Assessment procedures have been recently put in place but are not yet impacting sufficiently on planning for the full range of abilities in classes.

Commentary

80. There has been good improvement in information and communication technology since the last inspection. Standards are still satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 as they were at the last inspection but expectations nationally have increased significantly since then. Improvements have been significant since June 2003 and the installation of the new computer suite. The school is very well placed to make further improvements.
81. Three lessons were seen, two in the infants and one in the juniors. From the judgements made on these lessons, discussions with staff and pupils and a review of pupils' work, teaching is at least satisfactory, with some good elements. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to programme a 'Roamer' to move across the floor in a predetermined way to find 'treasure'. Pupils were well supported and encouraged through challenging questioning by the class teacher and teaching assistant to explore and learn from their errors.

82. Good teaching was also seen in Year 3 where pupils were creating good quality posters to present the poems they had created in an English lesson. Through good support, many pupils produced not only technically competent posters but also demonstrated good aesthetic appreciation through the use of appropriate fonts, borders, colours and imported pictures.
83. By Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets, for example to plot the results of recording pulse rate at different activities, use the Internet to research information for science to support work on the planets and use a multimedia program to create a presentation on the life of Gandhi in history. Year 6 pupils also use word processors and a desktop publishing program to create editions of the 'Oakdene Oracle'.
84. Good use is made of links with the local secondary school where, for example, pupils in Year 5 visit and use their facilities to create control programs to control simulated scenarios on screen such as controlling the sequences of a range of lights.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. The school is making good progress in ensuring not only that the skills learnt in information and communication technology are consolidated and applied in other subjects but also that other subjects make good use of the benefits of information and communication technology. In addition to the examples cited above a particularly good example of this cross-curricular approach was the use of an interactive whiteboard by the Year 6 teacher to demonstrate graphing techniques in mathematics, and then to use the information gained during a physical education lesson on pulse rate to apply and graph this information during a science lesson later in the day. There are also other good examples developing in the school, for example the Internet to support writing about buzzards in English in Year 5, through the creation and writing of postcards to support work in geography in Year 1 and the use of the Internet to research work on the Greeks to support history in Year 6.
86. Leadership of the subject is good. The school has made good progress, particularly since the installation of the new computer suite, in developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in information and communication technology and in their use of these skills across the curriculum. The school's action plan has identified the need for more accurate assessment to ensure that pupils are challenged sufficiently through work that is securely based on their prior attainment. Accommodation and resources are good and are used well.

HUMANITIES

87. Work in **geography** and **history** was sampled and analysed, with only two lessons seen in each subject. Therefore it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. However, discussions with subject leaders and pupils, and the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning form the basis of judgements made for these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work in books and on display that standards are at the level expected for their age. In both subjects the curriculum is enhanced through a range of visits, and pupils are very enthusiastic about these. Teachers make the work both interesting and relevant to the pupils. Discussion with pupils indicated great enthusiasm for the subjects.
88. Teachers plan lessons well and make good use of a range of resources and artefacts. The curriculum in both subjects is based on a national scheme of work that is adapted to take account of the particular circumstances of the school and the local environment. The co-ordinators monitor planning and pupils' work but more needs to be done to allow pupils' progress to be assessed and tracked.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject.
- Good links are being developed with faith leaders, allowing pupils to visit a range of places of worship and to learn about other faiths.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

89. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. These features represent good improvement since the previous inspection.
90. In the two lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory overall and pupils were gaining a good understanding of Christianity. Lessons are well planned based on the locally agreed syllabus and good resources are used effectively to support teaching and pupils' learning. Appropriate emphasis is given to exploring other faiths and the school has developed contacts with representatives of Judaism in order to enhance this. Pupils in Year 2 had visited a local synagogue and the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool and had very much enjoyed the experience. A consistent feature of teaching is the way pupils are encouraged to look beyond the factual, and to explore ideas about symbolism and imagery, as, for example, when pupils in Year 3 explored the relationship between eggs and Easter. These features of lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
91. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has ensured that lessons are planned to ensure that all pupils cover the units within the locally agreed syllabus. Assessment of pupils' progress is recognised as an area for further development. Resources available to support teaching are satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides good support for teachers, and is committed to improving standards further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in **art and design** or **design and technology**, and the limited amount of work on display due to the timetabling systems means that a judgement cannot be made on the quality of teaching. However, the displays on view indicate that standards in both these subjects are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Work suggests that most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of visual and tactile elements including colour, pattern, line and tone, and how these can be combined, as illustrated in Year 4 mood paintings and a Year 6 montage depicting human movement after the style of Stephen Moody. Design and technology work in the younger classes focuses on how mechanisms can be used in different ways as they produce moving pictures of events and characters from the text, 'Little Red Riding Hood'. The schemes of work and plans indicate that all aspects of the subjects are covered. In talking with pupils about the work they had done, their comments were positive and they were proud of their achievements. These two subjects are co-ordinated satisfactorily, but assessment is an area for development.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Singing by the end of Year 2 is good and by the end of Year 6 very good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- The profile of the subject is raised through the enrichment of the choir and outside specialist teaching, which gives pupils the opportunity to perform for the public.
- Pupils achieve well and listen with concentration.

Commentary

92. Attainment in music by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations which is similar to the judgement of the previous inspection. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They also achieve well due to good overall teaching and their own eagerness to improve. A pleasing feature is the high standard of singing, observed during assemblies and choir practices, due to the dedicated staff input. Recognition of this has resulted in the school choir performing at St Helens Theatre with the resident concert band. Singing is joyful and enthusiastic. The inspired teaching, as observed during an upper school choir lesson, and shared enjoyment lifted the pupils' performance. Christmas and end-of-year musical productions are oversubscribed and the celebration of skills when performing for parents and local people is a credit to the work of the teachers and the pupils' own perseverance and confidence.
93. All lessons promote collaborative working and positive attitudes to music, exemplified well in a Year 1 lesson in choosing appropriate instruments to accompany events in the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' which inspired good appreciation of musical notation. Pupils' understanding of mood and image was demonstrated well in a good Year 4 lesson on combining sounds to form textures by using a variety of tuned and untuned instruments. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils created melodic patterns while exploring pitch in the 'Little Duck Song'.
94. The subject is co-ordinated satisfactorily. Resources are good, maintained well and easily accessible. More rigorous assessment is an area for development in these subjects.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations in the lessons seen.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good.
- External links with schools, colleges and local clubs are good.
- Assessment procedures are too limited to ensure that planning is based on prior achievement.

Commentary

95. Four lessons were seen during the inspection, two in the infants and two in the juniors. Standards were above national expectations in three out of the four lessons.
96. By Year 2, pupils travel across floor apparatus such as floor mats, low boxes and benches. As a result of good teaching they do this imaginatively, using a range of skills such as hopping, rolling, jumping and skipping, and put a range of these activities together to create simple sequences. They start and finish these sequences with poise, are 'light on their feet', confident to demonstrate to others and many are able to keep their muscles in tension to enhance presentation. Good management and pupil behaviour ensure good pace to the lesson and full involvement of the pupils.
97. During a Year 4 lesson pupils showed above average skills for their age when being instructed in rugby skills by Warrington Rugby Learning Development Society. As a result of good pace in the lesson, pupils were very involved, showed above average skills in passing the ball, with accuracy and agility. This very good lesson was well planned and because of good management and the good attitudes, behaviour, co-operation and collaboration of the pupils, they were fully active for the whole lesson and made very good progress in the development

of passing skills. School records show that the vast majority of pupils are able to swim more than 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

98. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that include netball, football (including a club specifically for girls), rugby, judo, hockey, fencing, rounders, cricket and trampolining.
99. Although standards are above national expectations, current assessment procedures are not monitoring pupils' progress sufficiently to enable the school to plan work that is based on pupils' prior achievements.
100. The subject is well led. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has attained the Active Mark Award and there are very good links with other schools, for example Rainhill High School, through the School Sports Co-ordinator programme. Good use is made of coaches from Warrington Wolves Rugby Football Club to support rugby and from Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs to support football. Pupils have been consulted over the curriculum and adjustments made to accommodate their preferences. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good curriculum.
- Good use of other areas of the curriculum to promote personal, social and health education.
- Pupils' views are well considered.

Commentary

101. The subject is well led. The school has a very good curriculum to support pupils in their personal development. It includes sex education and the dangers of drug misuse, and provides pupils with good information to help them to make decisions about their own lives. Specific lessons and focused assemblies are a regular feature within the curriculum and are used very effectively, as observed in a whole-school assembly about self-esteem. In addition to discrete lessons there are very good opportunities in other subjects to promote personal development, for example in physical education, experimental work in science and collaborative work in mathematics. Whilst reviewing the sex education policy, parents' views were sought through a consultation evening and pupils' views are sought in many ways including questionnaires, and they are given good opportunities to listen, think and speak as they explore a variety of issues relevant to their own lives. They begin to learn how to deal with difficult situations which might arise, such as the consequences of aggressive behaviour. The setting up of an elected school council is imminent. During the inspection a number of parents commented on how happy and confident pupils were about coming to school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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