

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST SEBASTIAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL &
NURSERY**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104664

Headteacher: Mr D Hardiman

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 17 - 19 May 2004

Inspection number: 262248

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 3-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 269

School address: Holly Road
Fairfield
Liverpool
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Fr P A Kelly

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Sebastian's Catholic Primary School is an above average sized primary school in an inner area of Liverpool with well above average levels of social deprivation. There are 269 pupils on roll and about 85 per cent is white British. There is a mix of minority ethnic groups, who are mainly Black African and Caribbean. Some children (about 10 per cent) are from refugee families or seeking asylum, and some of these are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Their first languages include French, Lithuanian and Portuguese. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average at 22 per cent. Their needs are mainly specific and moderate learning difficulties, emotional or behavioural difficulties or autism. The attainment on entry to nursery of most children is well below average. Pupil mobility¹ is quite a significant factor by the end of Year 6. The school has gained several important awards, including *The Basic Skills Award*, *Artsmark (Gold)* and *Activemark (Gold)*. It is a *Beacon School* and a *Centre of Excellence for Primary Modern Foreign Languages*.

¹ The proportion of pupils who start at the school at times later than in the reception year or who leave before the end of Year 6

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21285	F Carruthers	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communications technology Modern languages Music English as an additional language
19343	M Howel	Lay inspector	
23453	C Cressey	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography Physical education Foundation Stage
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Sebastian's is an **excellent** school providing excellent value for money. Pupils make excellent progress while they are at the school because the ethos of the school and the quality of education they receive are excellent. The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Inspirational leadership and outstanding teamwork result in an excellent quality of education at this school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is of the highest calibre across all age groups.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes have an excellent start to their schooling.
- Provision in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and Spanish is excellent and as a result, all pupils achieve exceptionally well.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Innovation in curricular development and the sharing of best practice are strengths of the school.
- Support and guidance for the welfare of pupils are excellent.
- Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are outstanding.

Since the last inspection when it was judged to be very good, the school has gone from strength to strength and improvement has been excellent. High standards evident in the last report have been maintained and provision has improved in several key respects. The accommodation has significantly improved with the establishment of a new additional building and outdoor area, *The Field of Dreams*. Curricular developments have been excellent and include, for instance, the introduction of Spanish to pupils in all classes and major upgrading of resources to assist with the teaching of ICT. Improvements to the expertise of all staff, including teaching assistants, through very good training and the sharing of best practice, have led to high quality learning for all pupils. Partnerships with other schools and the wider community, through a local network of schools as well as the work that the school carries out in its role as a *Beacon School*, have continued to be developed very well. The school has sought and received recognition for the quality of its work through further awards and accreditation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; A in the top five per cent of schools; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals. This comparison is used here because it is considered to be the measure that best reflects the school's circumstances.

Pupils' achievement is **excellent**. All children make very good progress in the nursery and reception years from low levels of attainment on entry. By the end of the reception year, they have achieved the goals in learning expected of children and some are working at higher

levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science is above average. Results in last year's end-of-Year 2 tests were well below average but this reflects that fact there was a well above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group. Results in previous years were much higher. Progress continues to be very good in the junior classes and in the current Year 6, standards are well above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in recent years have frequently been in the top five per cent of schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. Standards in ICT and Spanish are above average. Pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make very good progress. Boys and girls perform very well in national tests compared to boys and girls nationally. High achieving pupils do very well. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **excellent**. Levels of attendance match the average for primary schools nationally and compare very favourably with similar schools. Pupils have very good attitudes and enthusiasm for learning and behave well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **excellent**. Teaching and learning are **excellent**. About two thirds of lessons are very good or better; and in 96 per cent of lessons it is good or better. This is a very high proportion of high quality teaching compared to schools nationally. It is the result not only of highly expert teachers, some of whom hold the status of *Advanced Skills Teachers* and *Leading Subject Teachers* for the Local Education Authority, but very skilled teaching assistants who make a massive contribution to the pupils' learning. The curriculum that the school offers is exceptional, providing not only excellent provision in several key subjects but also outstanding enrichment through various projects, events and out-of-school activities. Provision for the pupils' care and welfare is very good. For their guidance and support, it is excellent. Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are of the highest quality and assist the pupils very well in their overall excellent achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **excellent**. The headteacher, staff and governing body share high ambitions for the school and are exceptionally effective in achieving them. The work of the governing body is very good. Senior staff and subject leaders make an excellent contribution to all aspects of leadership and management. Staff are highly successful in overcoming the significant barriers to learning caused by high levels of social deprivation among families locally.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils hold the school in the highest regard. Pupils are almost unanimous in saying how much they enjoy school, and both parents and pupils fully appreciate the hard work and exceptional quality of the staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no improvements needed.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is excellent, as is their progress from a low base of attainment on entry to the nursery to the end of Year 6. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. They are well above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Since the last inspection, the trend in results at the end of Year 6 has been above the national upward trend.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is high in English, mathematics, science and Spanish.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make very good progress.

Commentary

1. This is a school which has high expectations for what pupils can achieve in all subjects. These expectations begin as soon as the children start in the nursery. They make very good progress so that by the end of the reception year almost all have reached the goals expected of children in their learning and a good number are working at higher levels. This rate of progress is the direct result of the high quality of the provision in the Early Years Unit.
2. Statistical information about performance in national tests and assessments in recent years shows that the school is frequently among the highest five per cent of schools when grouped according to social disadvantage. Boys and girls perform very well. At the end of Year 2, results are usually above the average for schools nationally and well above the average for similar schools. This is the case in the current Year 2. An exception was the year group last year, illustrated in the table below, which had an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, results fell in 2003 but there is clear evidence that pupils' progress was at least satisfactory and in many cases good. The school, however, is not complacent and has assigned more classroom assistants to the year group now that they are in Year 3 in order to bolster the pupils' achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.2 (17.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.2 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.4 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. At the end of Year 6, results in recent years have continued to show an upward trend, so that last year they were overall in the top five per cent of similar schools. High standards are evident in the current Year 6 and the school is on course to reach or exceed its challenging targets. In all aspects of their work in English, mathematics and science, the pupils display confidence and a very solid knowledge base. Standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are very good and pupils' investigative skills in both mathematics and science are very well developed. Attainment in Spanish is above average and the pupils' progress has been exceptional, given the subject was introduced into school less than two years ago. Attainment in ICT and history is above average and pupils' progress is very good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.9 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.5 (29.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (28.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They make particularly good progress in literacy and numeracy, where the very good assistance they receive in class. The setting arrangements, whereby pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment, help them to learn important basic skills. They make very good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are given a very good start to their schooling. The families of some are newly arrived from other countries as asylum seekers or refugees and the school makes every effort to communicate with them in their own language and welcome them into school. The pupils receive very good support from both staff and outside specialists so that they quickly make strides with their learning. After a few years, those that have remained at the school frequently are members of higher attaining groups and they perform very well in national tests at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

There is excellent provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave well throughout the school. Levels of attendance are in line with the national average and compare favourably with schools in similar contexts.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school.
- The pupils know they are valued as individuals.
- The excellent spiritual and cultural provision is evident in all aspects of the school's day.

Commentary

5. Relationships among pupils, and between teachers and pupils are excellent. The school is a very friendly and orderly community where there is very good co-operation and consideration for others. The pupils know they are valued and will be listened to, and they thrive in the secure and stimulating atmosphere. They have confidence in their teachers and know they can turn to them for help.

6. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are fully involved in their lessons. They concentrate well and are very proud of the work they produce. They work well together in small groups or pairs and listen to and respect the views of their fellow pupils. There is very good support for the extra-curricular activities and one parent commented that 'it is sometimes hard to get them (the children) to come home.' During lunchtime and other breaks the pupils play very well together. They are looking forward eagerly to the planned changes to the playground. They move around the school in an orderly manner, and teachers have to spend very little time in lessons correcting inappropriate behaviour. There is productive 'buzz' during lessons. Behaviour is very rarely less than good and there have been very few exclusions.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	249	2	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	13	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

- The overall provision for spiritual moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The strong Christian ethos of the school is very evident in lessons and all aspects of school life. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are testaments to the very good provision for moral development. Pupils are very aware that they are part of the local community and enjoy the opportunities they are given to play an active part in local events. They also understand that they are a part of a much wider community, and the school makes excellent provision for them to experience a flavour of life in other cultures. The work the school does in this area plays a very significant part in the personal development of the pupils.
- Attendance figures are in line with the national average, with below average unauthorised absences. The school works hard to ensure that parents are aware of the importance of the regular attendance of their children, and their success is evident in the current rates. This success is even greater when the figures are compared with those of similar schools.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **excellent** and there are strengths in depth across all of its aspects.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **excellent**. Procedures to check pupils' progress are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are examples of very good and excellent teaching across all age groups.
- Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Staff use new technology highly effectively.
- Pupils know their targets for improvement and are given excellent guidance in achieving them.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11 (24%)	19 (42%)	13(30%)	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.

9. A high proportion of very good and excellent teaching results in high quality learning for pupils and high achievement. Excellent lessons were seen in English, mathematics, science, Spanish and geography, and examples of very good teaching were seen in most subjects. Teaching is very well planned, has excellent pace and stimulates the pupils' imagination. Sampling pupils' work over a full year reinforces the impression from lesson observations. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught exceptionally well because the levels of challenge and interest of the tasks are so good. As a result, the children are engrossed in their learning and this positive attitude persists throughout their schooling. Teachers and assistants have excellent relationships with the pupils and manage their behaviour very well. They give great encouragement to the pupils and believe in their potential to achieve highly.
10. Classroom assistants make a massive contribution to pupils' learning across the whole school. They were observed leading the teaching in some instances, for example with infant-aged pupils using laptop computers. Their role in group work, assisting lower-attaining pupils and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, helps the pupils to gain confidence and achieve success. They were frequently seen working in tandem with teachers and displaying high levels of expertise. The school takes every opportunity to promote their skills and some are working towards qualification as teachers.
11. A key feature of lessons is the excellent way that the staff use new technology. Almost all classrooms have interactive whiteboards and they are in constant use. Staff not only make full use of software to help teach the subjects of the curriculum, they also prepare their own presentations, using *Power Point* to introduce lessons in subjects. They regularly encourage pupils to use the Internet to find out more about a topic. Excellent use is also made of laptop computers which are brought into classrooms so that groups of pupils can work with them, for instance during English and mathematics lessons.
12. Procedures to assess how well pupils are doing are excellent. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, assessments are frequent and levelled according to National Curriculum descriptors. Results of optional and formal assessments are loaded into a computer program, which staff then use to identify gaps in knowledge and weaknesses in

performance. There is self-evaluation in the foundation subjects², which helps pupils to be aware of their own progress. Marking of pupils' work is very thorough, encouraging and refers to the lesson objectives relevant to the piece of work.

² Foundation subjects in this school are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, religious education and physical education
St Sebastian's Catholic Primary School &
Nursery

The curriculum

The curriculum is **excellent**. There are excellent opportunities for rich learning experiences, for instance through extra-curricular activities. Resources for learning are very good and accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exciting and innovative opportunities promote learning in meaningful ways.
- Excellent provision is made for pupils to participate in the arts and sports.
- Pupils make an excellent start to their learning in the Foundation Stage.
- The school's policies and practices ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils with very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

13. The school provides an excellent and well-planned curriculum for its pupils. It fully meets all statutory requirements. It is exciting and innovative, presenting pupils with an imaginative range of experiences through which they can apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to a range of subjects in meaningful ways. This richness is designed to link subjects together without losing their discrete nature and to promote enjoyment and high achievement across the whole curriculum. It is further enriched by the school's well-planned and creative *Theme days*, which have a strong focus on specific areas of the curriculum and enable pupils to work with authors and musicians. Such an occasion was seen during the inspection when some classes benefited from the visit of a drama consultant. Working with Year 6, he explored and analysed with them Shakespeare's language in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. At the end of the afternoon, through his inspiring and highly effective teaching, the pupils gave a short presentation demonstrating very good achievement and fluency in interpreting Shakespeare's text. Pupils had clearly enjoyed the experience.

Example of outstanding practice

The school is a Centre of Excellence for modern foreign languages and pupils learn Spanish as soon as they enter the school right through to Year 6.

Spanish is not just a bolt-on to an already crowded curriculum in this school. It enriches and embellishes all aspects of the life of the school. Registers are called with responses and greetings in the language, prayers recited by children as young as five and Spanish lessons proceed at a cracking pace with pupils engaging in quick fire dialogue. Signage throughout the school is in the language, and pictures and posters illustrate the culture of Spain. With the excellent support of staff from the local education authority's primary foreign language team, the staff have taken the subject on wholeheartedly and three are seeking a GCSE in it. Student teachers who are majoring in modern foreign languages contribute their skills and benefit from working alongside the excellent practitioners. There are strong links through European initiatives with a school near Barcelona and the staff from both schools have made exchange visits to immerse themselves in each other's language and culture. Courses for parents have been running since the school began to teach the subject, and parents too are working towards accreditation. Last summer the whole school plus parents and guests took part in a lively Spanish Festival, with drama, dance and music at its core. Innovative and exciting learning at its best!

14. Arts and sports have a very high profile in the school. The imaginative approaches taken ensure that extremely high levels of interest and high standards in art, music, literacy and a wide range of sports are achieved. The awards gained by the school such as the

Artsmark Gold and *Activemark Gold* are evidence of the school's commitment to these subjects. The whole school is rightly proud of these achievements. There is a well-established tradition of pupils taking part in literary competitions, music festivals and concerts. For example, the school has strong links with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The quality and variety of extra-curricular activities, which are very well attended, are excellent. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to take part in three residential visits during their time at the school. These visits provide pupils with the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of new activities, and help to broaden their horizons.

15. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Considerable emphasis is placed on providing exciting and challenging practical experiences which stimulate children's interest and imagination and enable them to make rapid strides towards the early learning goals.
16. There is a very strong commitment to equal opportunities. This ensures that the curriculum benefits everyone. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils' individual education plans reflect learning activities that are matched well to their needs. This provision is effective in enabling them to make very good progress towards achieving their targets. Very good relationships underpin the superb ethos for learning as well as the very good levels of achievement in personal, social and health education. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is similarly of a high standard.
17. At the time of the last inspection, accommodation was judged to be unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case. The school has just realised its vision for *The Field of Dreams*. This tastefully restored, listed building adjacent to the school provides, in the words of Year 6 pupils reporting for their school newspaper, '*challenging opportunities and a variety of exciting facilities such as: Astro turf, running track, ICT suite, art centre, day care nursery. These facilities also incorporate the school's Foundation Stage classes. We have now revealed our phenomenal 'Field of Dreams' which will help to unlock hidden potential, helping children to achieve their goals.*' Within the school's main building, further work is needed to improve school accommodation for accessibility, better working conditions for administration and a staff room fit for relaxation and work. The library is situated on a corridor and is very small.
18. The school is very well resourced with a dedicated computer suite as well as laptop computers available for use in classrooms. There are many highly qualified staff who bring their considerable experience to the development of the curriculum. High quality displays in open areas and in classrooms celebrate pupils' successes and enhance their self-esteem. They show very effective cross-curricular links and indicate excellent provision. They are often an interactive resource for the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **very good** provision for the pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. There is excellent support and guidance for pupils' academic and personal development. The pupils' views are sought and highly valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent procedures in place to meet the personal needs of individual pupils.
- There are very good procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.
- There are excellent induction arrangements.

Commentary

19. All pupils are valued as individuals and their teachers have very good knowledge of them and their personal needs. The very close working partnership between the school and parents is an important factor in the school's approach to teaching and caring for the whole child. Personal development is carefully monitored through regular meetings between teacher and pupils, and two excellent counselling services are available for pupils who are experiencing particular problems at home or in school. The school is especially aware of the problems facing pupils whose families are refugees or asylum seekers. They are provided with excellent support and the school is sensitive to their individual needs. The school's warm and caring atmosphere ensures all pupils know they can turn to any teacher for help. The relationship between teachers and pupils is excellent. This was very evident from the number of pupils who gave a positive answer to the relevant question on the pupils' survey (97 per cent). There was an equally favourable response when the pupils were asked if they liked school, and again this reflects the school's genuine concern for its pupils' welfare.
20. The school provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils. Procedures for dealing with any child protection issues are very effective. Pupils are encouraged to lead a healthy life style. The school has organised first aid training for the pupils, and all are encouraged to walk to school on a regular basis, often as part of *The Walking Bus*.
21. The school has excellent procedures for helping pupils to settle happily into school. When children join the nursery they are soon secure in the daily routines. The transfer into Year 1 is well planned and ensures the children enjoy their first experience of school life. They quickly understand the way they are expected to behave, and excellent relationships develop with their teachers. The school provides excellent support for pupils who join later in their school life, with particularly emphasis on those who join mid-term or arrive with little English.
22. Pupils are confident that their views are listened to and their suggestions are taken seriously. There is a well-established school council that meets each week. The representatives take an active part in the discussions, and are given time to report back to their classes. There is an equally active *Eco Council* that has raised the pupils' awareness of environmental issues and has encouraged them to think about the recycling of waste. Both councils are currently very involved in the new layout for the playground and in the type of equipment they would like to see provided. When the school recently produced a new handbook on behaviour, the pupils' views were taken into account. At the start of each term, the pupils help to draw up the rules for their new classes, and some classroom have 'suggestions' and 'worry' boxes. Through the annual school questionnaire and the excellent relationships with their teachers, the pupils are provided with many opportunities to have their voices heard.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents, other schools and the community are **excellent**. The parents are very supportive of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very real sense of partnership exists between the school and the parents.
- The school is very much a part of the community.
- The *Beacon School* status of the school makes a considerable contribution to the development of the pupils as well as to the community.

Commentary

23. The school and the parents are fully committed to the aims of the school. There is true partnership between them and this is evident across the whole school. Parents are fully involved in the education of their children and are a vital part of many of the school activities. This is especially so of *The Walking Bus*, which would not be possible without the parents' commitment and support. The parents and school are receiving national recognition for the success of this scheme, which is currently the most effective in the country. A number of parents regularly help in the classroom and others are always willing to help on school trips and outings. The Parents' and Teachers' Association is very active and provides significant sums of money for the school. Events are very varied and are well supported, not only by parents and school staff but also by many parishioners and local community members. Parents appreciate the very ready access they have to consult with teachers, and the sensitive support and help they receive. The school encourages any parents who wish to return to work or further their own education, and again parents appreciate the advice and help the school provides.
24. The school's involvement with the community is excellent. There are very close links with the church and parish activities. The shared values between the school and the church are very evident and make a significant contribution to the personal development of the pupils. Very good use is made of the school's facilities throughout the year by a variety of local organisations. Pupils benefit from the many visitors to the school and the very wide range of visits they make into the community. The school has played its part in the city's recent successful bid for the *City of Culture 2008*. It is regularly represented at civic events and a group of pupils are contributing to a diary of the refurbishment of St. George's Hall. The involvement in the community provides pupils with excellent opportunities to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.
25. Through its *Beacon Status* and a network of local schools, the school has developed excellent links with a number of local primary and secondary schools. There has been a sharing of good practice, considerable staff development and the introduction of new initiatives and ideas. The teachers have enjoyed the challenges they have faced and opportunities to work with teachers from other schools. The school has been a key player in a number of projects initiated by the local education authority. A solid network has now developed in the community that involves all schools and benefits all pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **excellent**. Governance is very good. The school is highly effective in overcoming the significant barriers to learning that pupils face.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and direction by the headteacher is inspirational.
- Excellent delegation gives responsibilities to all who work in the school.
- Innovative practices help pupils to get the very best education.
- Governors work in close partnership with the school and community.

Commentary

26. This is a school where the headteacher's outstanding leadership and management are pivotal to the school's success in raising the achievement of its pupils to very high levels. It is highly successful in combating a wide variety of barriers to learning, the result of the headteacher's relentless search for ways to improve the education of pupils. His major strength lies in his passionate commitment to providing pupils and the community with a rich and exciting environment to promote highly motivated learners. His highly developed skills of leadership and management galvanise all concerned with the school to tap into a wide range of valuable initiatives to improve the education of the pupils. Staff, parents, governors and representatives of the local community have a tangible pride and enthusiasm for their school. They are exceptionally well motivated and their ambitions for the school know no bounds. Once one ambition has been reached another one is waiting to be tackled.
27. This remarkable commitment and ambition has been translated in to reality with the recent opening of *The Field of Dreams*, which provides the youngest learners in the school with an excellent learning environment and older pupils benefit from having a dedicated ICT suite, an arts room to extend their creativity and outdoor sports facilities whose quality is rarely seen in primary schools. In addition, the community has gained access to computers and to improved care for babies and toddlers.
28. Leadership at all levels will go the extra mile to provide the best teaching and learning environment for the pupils and the community. Teaching and learning are monitored in an atmosphere of trust and a desire to continually improve and provide the best. As a result, exemplary teaching is not only in evidence from the qualified teachers but from learning support assistants, nursery nurses and visiting consultants. All involved with the school are seen as educators of children. Data analysis, assessments and tracking procedures are being used very well by senior staff and class teachers as an effective tool to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can.
29. When new initiatives are developed, all staff implement them with enthusiasm and carefully evaluate their success in improving the teaching and learning. The teaching of Spanish is one such example of a highly successful innovation benefiting both pupils and staff. The schools' Christian ethos is central to all that the leadership accomplishes and this is apparent in the high quality care, support and guidance pupils receive. The headteacher's concern for the needs of individual pupils has ensured that adults who work in the school liaise very well so that the personal help and educational support given to pupils are highly effective. This is especially noticeable in the extra support given to pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who are new to the school or the country. It enables all to achieve very well. It is also highly apparent in the promotion of good behaviour and very positive attitudes. All who work in the school are valued and respected and their individual strengths are

fostered for the benefit of all. This is reflected in the way senior staff take responsibilities and, as a result, provide excellent support for their colleagues, which in turn leads to very high levels of achievement for pupils. This can be seen in the school's success in gaining awards and in the number of excellent teachers whose skills have been recognised nationally.

30. Governors have an exceptionally strong commitment to the school and play an effective part in enabling the school to be so successful in its ambitions and enterprises. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well, meet regularly and review how well the schools is doing in meeting its targets. They have been especially effective in supporting the head in gaining the necessary funds to improve the accommodation. They are proud of the school's achievements and have worked in partnership with the headteacher and staff to gain the necessary funding needed to implement the many changes which have occurred since the last inspection.
31. The school manages its financial arrangements very effectively and there are robust systems in place to check on spending and ensure it is being used effectively to raise the achievement of the pupils. The school benefits much from substantial additional funding for new initiatives and from the very generous support of the parents and wider community.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	800,414
Total expenditure	790,807
Expenditure per pupil	2,559

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,500
Balance carried forward to the next	50,107

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is excellent, resulting in confident, well motivated and successful learners.
- Teaching assistants and nursery nurses provide excellent support to enhance learning.
- Activities and tasks are very well planned to enable children to make rapid progress in learning to be highly successful readers, writers and mathematicians.
- The accommodation and resources are very good, enhancing children's learning well.

Commentary

32. Provision has improved further since the last inspection. The overall level of attainment of most children entering the nursery is well below average. As a result of the excellent provision and consistently high quality teaching, most children make rapid progress through the *stepping-stones* of learning for children at this age. They achieve very well and make significant gains in their learning. This means that the majority of children meet the early learning goals expected of children in all six areas of learning before they leave the reception class.
33. Children are admitted to the nursery class in the term they reach their third birthday and move in to the reception class in the September before they become five. Improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection have been excellent. The nursery and reception classes now share the same accommodation and work as one Early Years Unit in the new purpose built *Field of Dreams*. The accommodation is very good and enables teachers to provide a stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment in the most pleasant of surroundings.
34. Teaching and learning are excellent. All staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play. They make school a most enjoyable experience, which promotes a love of learning and enables children to become highly successful learners. The accelerated learning project, which involved staff visiting Australia, and the initiative to teach Spanish have had a significant influence on the quality of the teaching and learning and have led to children making rapid strides in their progress.
35. Tasks and activities are very well planned and sessions provide a very good balance of teacher-directed activities and those that children can choose for themselves. Clear learning outcomes are identified for each area of learning and each task and activity. All staff plan together to meet the needs of the different ages and attainment levels, enabling all children to achieve as well as they can. Additional support is provided for children who learn at a slower rate, are new to the school or have special educational needs. Highly challenging tasks are available for older children and those who learn at a faster rate. Children are encouraged to do their best and produce high quality work. This is achieved through teachers providing clear, precise instructions and support, which build up

children's confidence and skills. Staff know the children exceptionally well and set different tasks and challenges to enable all children to achieve the highest standards they can. They are constantly assessing what children know and understand and use their knowledge of children's progress to plan the next step in learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's Christian ethos is central to its success in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Children are becoming very confident, secure and eager learners.
- They behave very well and show kindness and care for each other.

Commentary

36. Children enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers at the start of sessions. The excellent teaching results in very good achievement and the majority of the children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children learn the Christian values of kindness, generosity and friendship through the examples that are set by their teachers and the activities and games the children engage in. They are helped to cope with loss and separation through the thoughtful provision of a memory table, celebrating the lives of people known to them who have died. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Relationships are excellent and as a result, children feel valued, secure, work hard, and are very proud of their achievements. They spontaneously applaud and praise others' efforts raising self-esteem and showing care and sensitivity towards others. Teachers know the children well and can provide individual attention where needed. The children share resources and work together in a variety of situations, such as role-play and outdoor play. More able children work independently for sustained periods of time and take pride in their reading and writing successes. They work hard at challenging tasks. Children develop a sensitivity to, and awareness of, other people, their different religions, cultures and ways of life. They reflect on what makes them happy or sad and can empathise with imaginary characters in stories.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are becoming very confident communicators, readers and writers.
- Thinking skills are promoted very well.

Commentary

37. The excellent teaching results in very good achievement and the majority of the children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Considerable emphasis is placed on children becoming thoughtful and questioning learners. Teachers provide good models of language. Children respond positively to this and older children use rich vocabulary and complex sentence structures. They enjoy the many opportunities available to engage in conversations and confidently explore new vocabulary as they take on roles in imaginative play situations. Well-planned games and activities promote children's understanding of letters and sounds. A wide range of mark making tools are readily

available and the children's efforts are valued and encouraged. Children recognise and write their own names using capital and small letters with increasing confidence. Younger children know that their marks on paper convey meaning and they are beginning to attempt simple words using initial and final sounds. Older, more able children use their increasing knowledge of sounds to write complete sentences, which tell a story in sequence and include appropriately placed capital letters and full stops. Simple words are spelt correctly and more complex ones are spelt as the children hear them. The very youngest of children choose books as an activity and retell stories and predict what might happen from pictures. Most reception children are reading independently, using their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. Children are becoming very confident linguists as they use their knowledge of Spanish to count, name colours and greet their teacher.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced at every opportunity.

Commentary

38. The excellent teaching results in very good achievement and the majority of the children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The children use mathematical ideas and skills in a wide range of practical and stimulating situations. When playing with two and three-dimensional shapes, small world toys or emptying and filling containers in the very well-planned sand, water and outdoor play area, children consider size, shape and position. With support and encouragement, children designed and built a complex bridge showing very good understanding of shape, size and pattern. Reception children can count in tens to one hundred and more able children eagerly rise to the challenge of counting in twos and fives up to thirty. They understand 'more than and less than' and use the vocabulary of addition and subtraction with accuracy and confidence. Children are learning to record their investigations in simple graph form as they identify their favourite breakfasts or which children can successfully tie their shoelaces.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to be inquisitive and develop a responsibility for their environment.
- The provision for cultural and spiritual development is excellent.

Commentary

39. The excellent teaching results in very good achievement and the majority of the children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore a wide range of made and natural materials. Children develop a good sense of time as they learn about the different seasons and celebrate birthdays and festivals. Good scientific skills are promoted as children observe the changes that occur when they bake bread, and they learn how to care for plants and animals. Children work independently with a wide range of construction toys, discovering how things are made and move. A wide range of materials helps the children to develop their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. Children are competent in using different computer programs to support their learning in mathematics, language and literacy. In the reception year, they use art software to draw pictures and are able to use the mouse accurately to achieve the required effect. Through the celebration of Christian Festivals, children are developing a good understanding of their own faith and community. They learn to respect other cultures and religions through well-planned activities related to Chinese New Year, Eid, Hanukkah and Diwali. During the celebration for Chinese New Year, children had a traditional banquet and successfully mastered the art of eating with chopsticks.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is now very well resourced for this area of development.
- Children have very good opportunities to use large apparatus and toys to support their skills of co-ordination.

Commentary

40. The excellent teaching results in very good achievement and the majority of the children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children's natural exuberance and energy are promoted exceptionally well through lessons, topics, routines and daily opportunities to enjoy the excellent outdoor play facilities. In physical education lessons and the imaginative and well-resourced outdoor play area, children show good control over their bodies as they run, jump, skip, hop, balance, climb and slide. Teachers are always on hand to encourage children to improve their movements and provide good instructions and demonstrations to help them succeed. Children show considerable dexterity when handling pencils, scissors, brushes, construction toys and jigsaws.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

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

Commentary

41. The excellent teaching results in very good achievement and the majority of the children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children enjoy taking part in the many excellent role-play situations that the exciting resources promote. They develop their imagination and extend their language skills, as they become gardeners, builders, family members and imaginary characters from their favourite stories. A very good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Older children accurately keep a beat as they clap to the sound of the 'trip trapping' of the three goats. Children develop their senses well through investigating texture, shape and colour. They learn to mix paints to create different colours and they are able to choose appropriate colours to create different images and scenes. Children choose different materials such as dough and junk materials to create their own high quality designs, pictures, models and collages.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, reaching standards which are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- The teaching of English is imaginative, challenging and exciting.
- Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and sets clear targets for pupils and teachers alike.
- Literacy is very well promoted in a wide variety of subjects.

Commentary

42. The teaching of English is a strength of the school and the high standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Currently standards in Year 2 are high with many pupils working above the national average. The work in Year 6 shows that some pupils are attaining standards well above that expected for their age group. Achievement is very good overall.
43. From Year 1, pupils make very good progress in reading. By Year 2, pupils have acquired the appropriate strategies for reading new words and many are beginning to understand the deeper meaning of a text. Pupils in Year 6 are accurate readers who cope equally well with fiction and non-fiction texts across the curriculum.
44. The quality of pupils' writing is very good throughout the school. By Year 2, many pupils write in sentences with spelling and punctuation that are generally accurate. As they progress through the school, they make very good progress in learning to punctuate, spell and use grammar correctly. By Year 6, pupils write very well in a range of styles. The school publishes its own newspaper accounts. On the Friday before the inspection, *The Field of Dreams* had been officially opened and working in role as a group of reporters, pupils wrote an outstanding piece of journalism describing the event, paying close attention to precise and effective use of vocabulary. The school encourages all pupils to see themselves as creative authors and has impressive examples of their writing around the school. The 'Big books' produced by pupils in Years 3 and 4 using ICT are both beautiful to handle and fascinating to read.
45. All teachers foster and encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills very well and this has helped to underpin the very good quality of extended writing. The development of pupils' thinking, the opportunities to express themselves in drama and poetry, the attention to detail through consistently high quality teaching all underpin the success of provision in English.
46. The teaching of English is very good and sometimes outstanding. As a consequence, many pupils make rapid progress. The variety and pace of lessons and the constant challenge being offered to pupils ensure an intense and productive learning environment. Reading, writing and speaking skills are all very well developed by very good teaching that provides frequent opportunities for pupils to collaborate in their learning. However, perhaps the greatest motivator to the pupils is the sheer enthusiasm for teaching shown by the teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported in the classroom by very capable teaching assistants. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and successfully promote trusting and constructive relationships. Planning of lessons is very good. The Joint Primary Strategy has been implemented and adapted effectively and, as a result, there is a good balance of whole-class, group and individual work. Teachers know pupils well and set

appropriate targets for individual learning. Marking includes constructive comments and gives suitable guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards English. They participate in discussions enthusiastically and behaviour is usually good. These strengths greatly benefit their learning.

47. The subject co-ordinator gives an excellent lead to the subject. She has high levels of skill and uses her own considerable expertise to suggest innovative ways to teach the subject not only to colleagues within the school but to teachers who visit from other schools. She observes colleagues as part of her monitoring of teaching and learning of the subject and advises them of any points to develop. This has supported the good level of improvement in teaching since the last inspection.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

48. All teachers seize every opportunity to extend their pupils' language and literacy skills in every subject. Teachers, for example, made good use of role-play in history to develop skills in speaking and listening. In most lessons, question-and-answer sessions are used well to develop pupils' oral and written responses. The presentation of the latter is often enhanced by using the pupils' word processing skills.

Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a Centre of Excellence for teaching the subject.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to language learning and achieve very well.
- The subject makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' speaking and listening skills as well as their personal and cultural development.

Commentary

49. Since the subject was introduced less than two years ago, the pupils have achieved very well. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is at expected levels in speaking and listening to the language. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average. By Year 2, pupils know the terms for parts of the body, colours and shapes. They can tell the time in the language, they are familiar with many instructional words and know simple songs and rhymes. They answer simple questions about themselves and their families. Pupils in Year 6 are able to ask and answer over twenty questions of one another. They count forwards and backwards to 100 and solve multiplication problems in the language. They know phrases for the weather and begin to construct simple sentences from two phrases, such as *When it is snowing, I practise skiing*. Not only do pupils achieve very well but they also have very positive attitudes to the subject. They are often disappointed that the lesson has ended.
50. Teaching and learning are never less than very good and are excellent overall. This is because of expert teaching available from members of the Modern Foreign Language Service of the local education authority as well as the contribution of the school's own staff, both teaching and support. The pace of lessons is excellent; learning is fun; there is

often a competitive edge to lessons that keeps the pupils on their toes; expectations are high; and no one feels left out. Pupils with special educational needs are often very willing to voice their answers and those learning English as an additional language relish these lessons, which are conducted entirely in what is for them a third (or possibly fourth) language.

51. Subject leadership by the co-ordinator and outside specialist is excellent. In a very short space of time, they have made the subject a central part of all activities in school and raised the school's status to one of excellence in the city's provision for modern foreign languages in primary schools. The subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' confidence in speaking and listening and to their cultural development. Both staff and parents are benefiting from the provision because everyone involved in the school is taking part in learning the language and raising the profile of the culture of Spain.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of high quality and staff have excellent expertise in the subject.
- Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to learning.
- Very good attention is given to helping pupils to use their mathematical skills in everyday situations.
- Systems to check on pupils' progress are excellent.
- Very good use is made of mathematical skills in other subjects.

Commentary

52. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 and above average at the end of Year 2. This represents excellent achievement over the time the pupils are in school. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils understand the value of digits in numbers very well and are able to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers accurately. They have a good grasp of simple fractions and use standard units of measurement well in their calculations. Average and lower attaining pupils work at levels expected of pupils at this age and have a good grasp of numbers up to 50. Almost all pupils are achieving the expected Level 2. All pupils in Year 6 are confident calculating numbers, including decimal fractions. Higher attaining pupils display very good skills solving problems and their work plotting graphs of functions x and y is well above the average expected of pupils at this age. Pupils are expected to work hard and present their work neatly and they do. The school is on target to achieve its challenging targets for these pupils.
53. There is a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching to account for these high standards. Because the quality of teaching is strong across all age groups, it is judged to be excellent overall. Teachers have full command of the subject and high expectations of pupils' achievement. They are very ably supported by classroom assistants who help small groups of pupils as they work in lessons. This provides pupils with special educational needs with valuable assistance so that many achieve expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. Organisation of classes, including grouping by prior attainment for all lessons in junior classes and for some in infant classes, pushes on the level of challenge very well. Staff use resources very effectively, especially new

technology when it can simplify the process of learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 quickly grasped the concept of ratio as they watched the teacher use an interactive whiteboard to excellent effect. They then had the opportunity themselves to find the correct ratio by manipulating the board. As a result of excellent teaching, pupils learn skills quickly and assuredly. Older pupils show very good levels of independence as well as good teamwork as they tackle problems.

54. Subject leadership and all aspects of subject management, including monitoring of teaching and learning and the analysis of performance data, are excellent. Systems to check pupils' progress are fully established and lead directly to short-term targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils are aware of these and constantly review progress towards them. Courses and information for parents give them better opportunity to help their children with work at home. The use of ICT in this subject is excellent.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Mathematical skills are linked closely to ICT, science, design and technology as well as geography and history. Teachers' plans indicate these very good links and the subject co-ordinator is keen to identify them and suggest more for teachers to follow. Larger projects, such as last year's food technology topic carried out by Year 6, are also devised to help pupils appreciate the use of mathematics in everyday life.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average by Year 6.
- Teaching is consistently of a high quality.
- Pupils are particularly skilful in investigating scientific processes.
- Good links are made with other subjects.

Commentary

56. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Standards have improved further since the last inspection and progress is consistently very good across the school and in each year group.
57. Throughout the school pupils display an eagerness for discovery. In Year 2, skilful teaching extended the pupils' already sound knowledge of forces. Questions such as 'Can you think why?' challenged pupils' thinking as they conducted their own experiments to discover how changing the height of a ramp affected the speed of a car. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build progressively on this secure foundation of basic skills. They approach practical tasks with considerable confidence, independence and enthusiasm and have a very good understanding of what constitutes a fair test. Older pupils share ideas and have very lively discussions with each other and their teachers to express their own ideas about finding solutions to problems. By the end of Year 6, pupils are showing high levels of scientific enquiry and investigation and are confident and eager to participate in *The Young Investigators Award* as recognition of their high achievements.
58. Teaching overall is excellent and innovative. The school provides a wide variety of stimulating and challenging investigations and experiments leading to high levels of attainment in scientific enquiry. Learning support staff and teachers demonstrate high levels of expertise and enthusiasm which motivate pupils to reach the highest standards they can. Where additional support is needed, adults are always on hand to provide specific help, resulting in all pupils, whatever their ability, having the same chance to do well. Developing pupils' independent learning is at the core of all the teaching and learning and is an essential part of all lessons throughout the school. Pupils are continually challenged to ask questions, form hypotheses, carry out experiments and record their findings clearly and carefully through tables, charts, diagrams, writing and the use of ICT. Teachers provide pupils with excellent prompts for learning. Clear, precise demonstrations, instructions and the use of planning boards prepare pupils well for their independent tasks and ensure pupils have the tools necessary to be successful scientists. Standards of presentation are very high and this helps pupils to develop clarity of thought as well as encouraging them to take pride in all they do.
59. The management of the subject is excellent. There is a clear emphasis on developing teaching styles that promote pupils' skills of enquiry as well as a very secure knowledge base, an analysis of data to identify strengths and weaknesses and very effective assessment procedures. Cross-curricular links and the use of new technology such as

interactive whiteboards and computer microscopes are used very effectively to extend pupils' learning and add interest and challenge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high level of expertise among teachers and classroom assistants results in pupils' learning being very good.
- Staff make excellent use of new technology in their work.
- The subject is used exceptionally well in other subjects.

Commentary

60. Attainment is above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. All pupils display confidence in tackling new tasks and the high quality of work is clearly evident in displays around school. Pupils have good skills of word processing, analysing information, using art and graphics packages and accessing the Internet for information and sending mail.
61. The improvement in standards since the last inspection is the direct result of significant developments in resources and the expertise of staff to teach the subject. Though few discrete lessons were observed, it is clear that teaching and learning are very good. The staff have excellent command of the subject and, in addition to the confidence shown by teachers to handle new technology, classroom assistants make a major contribution to learning by teaching small groups of pupils very well. This was seen in several lessons across most year groups. Pupil management is excellent and expectations for what pupils can do are high. Staff are keen to embrace new developments in hardware and in their planning they use the equipment in all subjects of the curriculum.
62. Subject leadership is very good. Excellent links have been established with a local learning network and the school has an outstanding website, kept regularly up to date by a classroom assistant. Staff have made very good improvements in provision since the time of the last inspection, including developing new systems to assess and check the progress of pupils. A new computer suite was opening at the time of the inspection to enhance provision further. However, the room is cramped and problems of space and comfort have to be overcome if it is to be fully effective.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. An outstanding strength of the provision in ICT is its extensive use in other subjects. Lessons seen across all subjects made excellent use of laptop computers, interactive whiteboards, and a digital camera as well as hand-held devices. Plans for work in English, mathematics, science, Spanish and all the foundation subjects make full use of new technology and the pupils' own skills to enhance learning. As a result, teachers regularly use *Power Point* presentations in lessons and pupils as young as nine are confident presenting topic work in this high quality format.

HUMANITIES

Geography was only sampled during the inspection. A scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils indicate that the school provides an excellent curriculum to promote pupils' interest in people and places across the world. Cross-curricular links are used particularly well to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and to add focus and interest to pupils' learning. Teaching is adapted well to pupils' different learning styles and makes a very good contribution to the success that pupils have in the subject. The local environment is used well to build up a very good knowledge base and to develop effective geographical skills. Through the use of well-planned visits and visitors, teachers bring the subject alive for pupils. As pupils move through the school they are encouraged to think of themselves as geographers.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- A good range of literacy skills is used to help pupils to learn.

Commentary

64. From the lessons observed and the wide range of pupils' work displayed and seen in books, standards are judged to be above average for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Because the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good and the curriculum is rich and exciting, the pupils achieve very well.
65. Teachers are very good at providing intriguing and exciting activities. For example, a representation of the tomb of Tutankhamen has been constructed and used with flair and imagination by the teachers to add interest and relevance to pupils' learning about the Ancient Egyptians. The curriculum is enriched by visits and in a Year 4 lesson, pupils recollected very well the information they had acquired on their visit to Liverpool Museum. Their answers indicated good learning about the process of mummification which they subsequently had the opportunity to follow in role-play. In a Year 2 lesson on the life and contribution made by Martin Luther King, pupils quickly empathised with groups who are marginalized in society. The lesson made a very good link with personal and social education.
66. The subject adds well to the range of pupils' literary experiences. Pupils write accounts in their own words and in different styles such as letters, questionnaires and leaflets. They use their research skills to answer questions on topics studied. Linked to their work on thinking skills, teachers use historical evidence and sources to give pupils a realistic basis for their discussions. Displays of work and artefacts are used very well to help pupils to learn and understand the past. The curriculum promotes pupils' cultural development very well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were only sampled during the inspection. All of these subjects are given a high priority by the school and this is evident in the achievement of the *Artsmark Gold* and *Activemark Gold* awards. The school provides pupils with a wide range of excellent experiences in **art and design** to develop skills systematically, as well as knowledge and understanding of art and design. Cross-curricular links are used particularly well to deepen pupils' skills knowledge and understanding and to add focus and interest to pupils' learning. Work displayed around the school effectively demonstrates this. Pupils' observational skills are particularly well developed and by Year 6 pupils produce work of a high standard. Visits, artefacts and natural materials are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in art and design and to provide a focus for their work. In **design and technology**, standards in a Year 4 lesson were above those expected for pupils of this age. In designing and making a torch, they showed a good understanding of the factors to take into account. Very good questioning by the teacher ensured that they gave information concisely and accurately, and were encouraged to use specific vocabulary such as conductor, insulator and circuit. Very good cross-curricular links were made with science. Much of the pupils' finished work is displayed well around the school and their design books show very comprehensive planning and evaluation in Years 3 to 6. At the end of last summer term, pupils in Year 6 began a project with a local fast-food store to design a new product. This food technology project soon embraced other areas of the curriculum and pupils learned business skills at the City Learning Centre, sent out questionnaires to other schools in the Education Action Zone, analysed the data returned and prepared a *Power Point* presentation. This is an example of the exciting and innovative initiatives undertaken at the school, which make learning both fun and instructional.

In **music**, there is a very good range of activities for pupils in addition to class lessons, including a choir, instrumental tuition and recorder groups. In the few lessons seen, teaching and learning were good and pupils showed keen enthusiasm for the subject. The school participates fully in many festivals and concerts, and pupils have been entered for, and achieved success in, competitions in the city for school bands, recorders, choir, guitars and solo vocalists. The subject is very much at the heart of the school's mission to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve their best.

Physical education is a high priority for the school. An analysis of the overall planning indicates that generous time is allocated to the subject to ensure that all elements are given good coverage and pupils have time to develop their skills and competencies in a range of areas. The promotion of the subject is evident through the many excellent opportunities for pupils in lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities. Staff, including support staff, lunchtime supervisors and visiting coaches are all highly motivated and experienced and enable pupils to be successful healthy participators. The recent opening of *The Field of Dreams* has provided the school with very high quality sports facilities, which further improve the school's provision for the subject and enable pupils to achieve their best.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social, health and citizenship education was only sampled during the inspection. No lessons were observed but a very good lesson linking history and thinking skills was seen, in which pupils in Years 3 and 4 discussed the emotions and actions of Howard Carter during the discovery of Ancient Egyptian treasures. It is clear from this lesson as well as

teachers' planning, which includes religious education, *Circle time* and this subject, that provision is very good. The subject contributes very well to pupils' excellent personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	1
Overall standards achieved	1
Pupils' achievement	1
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	1
The quality of teaching	1
How well pupils learn	1
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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