

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**Bedford Drive Primary School**

**Birkenhead**

**LEA area: Wirral**

**Unique reference number: 104988**

**Headteacher: Mrs V Maher**

**Lead inspector: Anna Dawson**  
**Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 April 2005**

**Inspection number: 266393**  
**Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996**

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

<b>Type of school:</b>	<b>Primary</b>
<b>School category:</b>	<b>Community</b>
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	<b>3 – 11</b>
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Number on roll;</b>	<b>427</b>
<b>School address:</b>	<b>Bedford Drive Rock Ferry Birkenhead Merseyside</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>	<b>CH42 6RT</b>
<b>Telephone number:</b>	<b>0151 6451561</b>
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<b>Appropriate authority:</b>	<b>Governing body</b>
<b>Name of chair of governors:</b>	<b>Mr S Preston</b>
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	<b>May 24<sup>th</sup> 1999</b>

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Bedford Drive Community Primary School is situated in Rock Ferry, a suburb of Birkenhead. It is a large school for boys and girls aged 3-11. It includes a 52 place nursery with provision for part-time children which is currently oversubscribed. There are currently 375 pupils in the main school. The nursery is oversubscribed. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is high. The school serves the immediate neighbourhood that is considerably disadvantaged economically. There are 39.1 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals. This is well above average. There are 25.3 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, which is above the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural and emotional difficulties. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Overall, children's attainments on entry to the Foundation Stage are well below average in language development and personal and social skills. At the end of reception, pupils are overall below average and a small minority still have very low attainments in language skills. There are a significant minority on course to attain the Early Learning Goals. There are very few pupils with above average attainments. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language. One per cent of pupils who speak Bengali are learning English as an additional language. The school is similar in character to what it was like when it was inspected last except that overall the pupils' attainments on entry are lower.

The school is included in the Excellence in Cities (EiC) and is a member of the Wirral EiC Action Zone. The school has gained Activemark in 2000 for sport achievement. In 2005 it was awarded the National Clean Air Award. It is presently working towards Healthy Schools Award and Basic Skills Quality Mark (BSQM).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11608	Anna Dawson	Lead inspector	Science; information and communication technology; art and design; design and technology.
13746	David Russell	Lay inspector	
27725	Michael Theobalds	Team inspector	English; personal, social, health education and citizenship; geography; history; special educational needs.
30205	Therese Kenna	Team inspector	Mathematics; physical education; religious education; Foundation Stage.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school** with many strengths and few weaknesses. The school is successfully helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning. It gives good value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1-6 pupils achieve well even though standards are below average overall in English, mathematics and science. Some pupils find difficulty in giving clear explanations of their work during class discussions which limits their attainment.
- There are strengths in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education where standards are average.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The leadership and management of the school are successfully raising standards. However, the lack of a computer based system to track pupils' achievement limits the school's effectiveness to monitor the pupils' progress over time.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, where it is satisfactory it lacks pace and challenge which slows pupils' learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are good relationships within the school and most pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Parents and pupils think highly of the school. However, the pupils' attendance for a small minority is well below average.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in 1999. The key issues identified in the last inspection have either been fully resolved or partially. The school has improved the quality of the management of the school, the curriculum, and teaching and learning. Pupils' behaviour has improved. Consequently, standards are rising. There has been a decline in attendance, despite the school's good efforts to support a significant minority of pupils who do not attend regularly.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall, pupils' achievement is good.** In the nursery and reception classes, most children achieve very well. The majority of children start with well below average language, communication and personal and social skills on entry to the nursery. By the time the children reach the end of the reception year the majority are still only working towards the nationally expected goals for children of this age. A significant minority are on course to attain them and a minority are on course to exceed them. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests and assessments for Year 2 pupils, standards were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Compared with schools in similar contexts, pupils attained well above average standards in reading and mathematics and average standards in writing. The pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to attain below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There is an improvement from last year as more pupils are now attaining at higher levels.

#### Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	C	D	D
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	E	E	E	E

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

In 2004, results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils show that compared with all schools nationally, and the schools in similar contexts, pupils attained below average standards in English and well below average standards in mathematics and science. The current Year 6 pupils achieve well. However, some pupils have limited speaking skills which tends to restrict their attainments. Standards overall of the present Year 6 are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils achieve very well in ICT and religious education. In ICT standards are average. In religious education, pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Well below average attendance, pupils moving in and out of school and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, have a negative impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 3-6.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Most pupils are keen to learn and behave well and there are good relationships throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Punctuality is satisfactory but attendance is unsatisfactory. Attendance is well below average for a small minority despite the good efforts of the school to promote good attendance. When pupils are not at school, learning is missed and this adversely affects the pupils' achievement.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good overall** throughout the school and results in pupils learning well. It is very good in the Foundation Stage where the children achieve very well. ICT is used particularly well by teachers to enhance pupils' learning. The quality of assessment is good. Relationships are good throughout the school. When teaching is satisfactory, the slower pace to lessons and a lack of challenge in the work results in pupils learning at a slower rate. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. They are taught very well by their teachers and teaching assistants and they achieve very well towards their targets. The school provides a good curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and a good personal, social and health education and citizenship programme. The pastoral care of pupils is very good. The academic monitoring of their learning is good. There is very good provision for seeking and acting on pupils' views. There are good links with parents and very good links with the community. However, some parents have only limited involvement in their children's education. Family learning where children and their parents work together has been found by the school to have a positive impact on children's learning. The school has very good links with other nearby schools. The quality of the learning resources and the accommodation is good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**There is good leadership and management of the school.** There is an effective governing body. The headteacher demonstrates a clear vision for the school as a caring community and there are some good procedures in place such as the breakfast club, homework club and strategies to build pupils self-esteem which help pupils overcome barriers to learning. The senior management of the school and the teachers have successfully worked with the Local Education Authority (LEA) advisers to set targets for improvement. This is resulting in rising standards. The school is at the early stages of using ICT effectively to track pupils' achievement. This limits the school's effectiveness in using data efficiently to plan pupils' work. Many of the governors give freely of their time to help the pupils in school and promote education within the community. The governors are very supportive and have a good overall understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Statutory requirements are met.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school and feel comfortable in approaching the school with concerns. The pupils say they enjoy school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise further the standards in English, mathematics and science;
- monitor the quality of teaching more rigorously in order to attain greater consistency in good or better teachers in Years 1-6;
- use ICT more effectively to track pupils' achievements;
- continue to strive to improve the attendance of a small minority of pupils.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good**. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils with special educational needs **achieve very well**. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but most pupils are working at the nationally expected levels. There are strengths in ICT and religious education where pupils **achieve very well** to meet the expected standards.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well even though standards are below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Pupils achieve very well in ICT and religious education. They attain the nationally expected standards in ICT and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.

#### Commentary

1. Children get a very good start to their education. The majority enter the nursery with poor language, communication and social skills. The children achieve very well overall in the nursery and reception classes because of the very good provision that is made for them. There is a wide range of abilities which includes very few higher attaining children. The indications are that the majority of children are still working towards the goals that are set nationally in the areas of learning by the end of reception. A small minority of children have well below average speaking and listening skills. A significant minority are on course to attain the expected goals and a very small minority will exceed them.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (14.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.6 (13.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.0 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The above table shows the results for Year 2 pupils in the 2004 National Curriculum tests and assessments. It shows that standards were broadly average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain just below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Most are currently working within the nationally expected standards.

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (26.7)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.2 (24.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	26.6 (26.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The table above reflects the National Curriculum test results for the Year 6 pupils in 2004. The pupils attained below average standards in English and well below average standards in mathematics and science when these results are compared with other schools nationally and those in similar contexts. The pupils currently achieve well in Years 3-6. Most of the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards are improving and most of the pupils are working within the national expectations. Some pupils struggle to find the vocabulary to express themselves when explaining their work during class discussions which limits their attainment.
4. Several factors negatively affect standards and pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 more than in Years 1 and 2. For example, between Years 3 to 6 there is high mobility. These pupils joining the school generally enter with low attainments. The pupils needing most help because they have special educational needs are in Years 3 to 6. Poor attendance of a minority has an adverse effect on achievement. The overall results fluctuate between the year groups because of the differing ability of the pupils taking the tests. There are a high percentage of pupils in the present Year 6 with special educational needs which negatively impact on the overall results for the year group.
5. Standards in ICT are average in all year groups and pupils' achieve very well. Pupils are reaching the expected standard in the development of their skills and have good access to resources in order to apply what they know in lessons. The interactive whiteboards are used well by staff as a tool for teaching. Achievement is very good in religious education. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have a growing awareness of diversity within society and respect the views and beliefs of others.
6. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well because of the very good provision that is made for them. There are very few pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL). They achieve well when they receive direct help from class teachers, teaching assistants or the specialist help from a visiting teacher. However, opportunities are sometimes missed by the staff to check the pupils' learning and to extend their understanding of vocabulary. Pupils achieve well because the school aims to ensure that all pupils are included and have access to all aspects of school life, whatever their ability or background. In the recent past, the school has been successful in raising boys' attainment in literacy and closing the gap between the boys and the girls. This is an ongoing focus for school development as girls still attain higher standards than the boys.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' have **good** attitudes to school and behave **well**. Their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attendance is **well below average**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- School promotes good relationships through a carefully constructed code of conduct and well-defined rewards and sanctions.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is overall well controlled. This leads to positive attitudes to learning and pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Curriculum time is used well to foster pupils' personal development.
- Attendance levels are well below average. The school is making every effort to improve the situation with close monitoring and promoting good attendance.

## Commentary

7. All pupils are aware of the code of conduct and the consequences of not complying. The four-colour zone system is effective in moderating pupils' behaviour and relationships. It is well implemented around the school. For example, in classrooms, teachers assemble the zone charts displaying all names of pupils moving into the various zones. The objective is to remain in the good behaviour green zone. Progression through into the red zone leads to exclusion. During 2003 / 2004 five pupils entered the red zone and were excluded for fixed periods. In general, good relationships between pupils and adults prevail throughout the school.
8. Acceptable behaviour in lessons allows pupils to concentrate, and to display good, and sometimes very good, attitudes to learning and to achieve to the best of their ability. Pupils say they enjoy school. One older pupil in saying 'the school was a safe, comfortable and happy place to be', echoed the thoughts of the majority questioned and reflects the aims of the school well. Pupils are polite and willingly hold doors open for each other and visitors. The school has long corridors, lots of fire doors and numerous steps to negotiate, so it is imperative pupils behave well at all times when moving around school. They achieve this expected level of behaviour well. Occasionally boys are over boisterous during playtimes. Recently the school initiated the 'Bedford Applause' active playground scheme which is promoting well good moral and social behaviour.
9. Although there are few minority ethnic pupils, the majority appreciate and understand the importance of different faiths, belief and festivals. They can identify with the needs of others and willingly raise funds for people less fortunate than themselves. For example, the older pupils raise funds for Red Nose Day and school council took the responsibility of raising funds for the victims of the disaster in Asia. All pupils can distinguish right from wrong. As they progress through the school they display high levels of moral and social development. Circle time and school assemblies are used effectively to enhance pupils understanding of living in a community which is successfully promoting good moral and social behaviour.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.1	School data :	0.6
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

10. Attendance levels are well below average and show a definite downward trend over the last three years. This is despite the good efforts of the school to improve attendance. All year groups are affected by the low attendances of a small minority of boys and girls. Holidays taken during the school term are not impacting significantly on attendance levels. When pupils are absent, it has an adverse effect on their standards of achievement. Unauthorised levels are above the national average. Pupils' absences in Years 1 and 2 contribute significantly to the 0.6% unauthorised absence. Punctuality is generally satisfactory with very little lateness in all year groups. This is closely monitored.

## 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	381	8	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	35	0	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides **good** quality education. Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is good. The curriculum is **good** and **very successfully** enriched. **Very good** care is taken of its pupils and they feel secure, happy and valued. The school provides them with **good** support, advice and guidance. There are **good** links with the parents and **very good** links with the community and other schools and colleges.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment is **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good relationships between the staff and the pupils.
- The pupils with special educational needs are taught very well.
- The teachers work hard to help pupils overcome barriers to learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge but at times lessons lack pace and challenge.
- Teachers use assessment well to plan pupils' work.

**Commentary****Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(4%)	17 (31 %)	23(43 %)	12 (22 %)	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.*

- There are good relationships between the staff and pupils. As a result, most pupils respond well and work hard because their work and their efforts in lessons are valued. The pupils enjoy their work and are happy and feel secure in school. The teachers manage the pupils well and the pupils respond well. For example, this is seen in the pride taken by pupils in presenting

their written work. The staff consistently praise and reward pupils for their efforts and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions and learning. This builds the pupils' confidence and self-esteem and contributes successfully to their personal development. The provision of a homework club, breakfast and after school clubs and positive lunchtime play activities encourages pupils to succeed.

12. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good and in accordance with the requirements of their individual education plans. The pupils receive appropriate and flexible combinations of in-class and withdrawal activities. The school has developed very good procedures for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils follow the same curriculum as other pupils but receive good additional support from learning support assistants and specialist teachers from the LEA and from a local special school. The teaching assistants are deployed well and review pupil progress alongside class teachers. They make an informed and valuable contribution to the teaching of these pupils, and show sensitivity and care when supporting them.
13. The teachers work well overall to motivate and encourage pupils to learn. They work with pupils successfully to overcome any barriers to learning and to ensure that pupils have equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. At the beginning of most lessons, teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils. Similarly at the end of the lesson the teachers refer back to the learning objectives, questioning pupils to check on their learning. The teachers use the correct technical terms and vocabulary for each subject which promotes pupils' learning well. When teaching is satisfactory, the pace of the lessons is not as fast because the work is not always challenging enough or stimulating in pupils a desire to learn. Consequently, pupils' learning tends to diminish. There are very few pupils learning English as an additional language. Although their achievement is good overall, at times teachers miss opportunities to check on their learning for instance as new vocabulary is introduced.
14. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The teaching of literacy and numeracy and religious education is planned well. Teachers are particularly confident in teaching and using ICT. Where there are interactive whiteboards in classes they are used well as a teaching tool to capture pupils' interest and demonstrate learning. ICT skills are taught well in the computer suite. Teachers are helped well by the ICT technician who not only ensures that the computers and whiteboards are in good working order but helps teachers and small groups of pupils improve their skills.
15. Assessment is used well to plan work in English, mathematics and science. National data and internal tests are regularly scrutinised and the data gathered is then used to inform teaching and learning. Any weaknesses are recorded and used in teaching. The challenges set inform the school development plan. As a result, school has been successful for example in raising standards steadily since the last inspection as the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels has risen. Although the data is analysed by the teachers, this is time consuming. This is recognised as a target for development within the school improvement plan.

## The curriculum

Curriculum provision for pupils is **good**. The school provides a relevant curriculum, enriched through **very good** extra-curricular provision, particularly in sporting activities and the arts. Accommodation and learning resources are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for the Foundation Stage of learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The enrichment of the curriculum by educational and residential visits, visitors to the school and extra-curricular activities is very good.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship.

- The accommodation is good and there are good quality learning resources.

## Commentary

16. The curriculum is planned well. English, mathematics, science, religious education and ICT, are given high priority by the school whilst opportunities for creative learning activities in other subjects are also planned for. Key staff, particularly in English, mathematics and special educational needs, keep up to date with training and national initiatives to make sure that pupils and teachers benefit fully. The school benefits from the help and advice of the local authority advisers. The grouping of the older pupils of similar abilities in English and mathematics results in work matched very well to the pupils' needs in some classes. Lack of consistency in provision in some of these setted classes leads to unevenness in the quality of teaching and learning. In most subjects opportunities to link areas of learning are frequently found. This is a positive feature of lessons and helps pupils to understand the relationships between subjects and motivates them to learn.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Individual Education Plans for these pupils are of a good quality with a full range of needs identified and small steps evident in the teaching strategies used. These are delivered throughout the curriculum and are monitored closely by class teachers and the SEN co-ordinators.
18. Many and varied opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences are an important part of the school's curriculum. Very good enrichment activities range from seasonal sports clubs to music, drama and the school choir. The school offers very good opportunities for pupil participation in sport; competitive matches for several different teams are organised and the school is a successful participant in the local swimming gala. An annual residential visit for Year 5 pupils, together with trips within the locality to places of historical, geographical and artistic interest and liaison with the LEA's curriculum enrichment team, stimulate interest further.
19. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship. The regular personal, social and health lessons have a positive effect on aspects of school life and successfully develop pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils receive age-appropriate education about the beneficial and harmful effects of drugs and older pupils are taught a well-planned course on sex education. The school prepares well for the transfer to secondary education. Pupils visit their chosen secondary school for induction and good liaison between schools ensures that all pupils are well prepared and confident about the next stage in their education.
20. Good use is made of the very well maintained accommodation to provide a good range of teaching and learning spaces. The libraries, well-resourced ICT suites and areas of the playground are good features. Learning resources are good.

## Care, guidance and support

The school's approach towards pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Support, advice and guidance are **good**. The processes for seeking pupils' views and involving them in the school's work and development are **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places very good emphasis on pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.

- This is a fully inclusive school. Teachers know their pupils well and closely monitor pupils' achievements and personal development.
- Pupils take comfort in knowing there is always someone to turn to in times of need.
- There is very good involvement of pupils in the work of the school. Every opportunity is taken in seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

## Commentary

21. Pupils learn in a healthy and safe environment. This is a very caring school. Very safe practices are adhered to at all times. There is a designated medical room to treat injured pupils away from the hustle and bustle of school life. All accidents are recorded and statistically analysed to review where most accidents are occurring. There are high numbers of qualified first-aiders available throughout the school. The school closely follows the child protection procedures. The staff are fully aware of how to handle cases of concern. Risk assessments are carried out on all school visits and in curriculum areas. The conscientious site supervisor is vigilant in ensuring the school is safe for the pupils. All doors have finger safe devices fitted to them. Good attention is given to promoting pupils' healthy lifestyle. For example, lunches are monitored to ensure a well balanced meal. Pupils eat fruit and healthy snacks at break times. Physical activity is promoted well on the curriculum and in the provision of extra-curricular activities.
22. Teachers form good trusting relationships with pupils. They keep a watchful eye on their personal development and give guidance to them at every opportunity. Across most year groups the school has relatively high levels of inwardly mobile pupils. The efforts taken to fully include these pupils in school life are very good. Incoming pupils meet the Home/School Link Support Worker and headteacher to discuss the school layout and code of conduct. In the first week at school the Home/School Link Support Worker carefully offers guidance to the pupils. Within the classes, buddies are identified so incoming pupils can link up with an identified pupil to help them focus on class routines. These procedures quickly help the pupil to settle into their new surroundings. Teachers know their pupils well.
23. Pupils are actively encouraged to be open and honest in everything they do. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help. The school takes a pride in declaring, 'this is a telling school'. It means pupils bring problems they are experiencing quickly to the teachers' attention. Problems are discussed rationally and sorted out quickly. Circle time allows pupils to talk about issues giving them concern.
24. At every opportunity, the school seeks the opinions of pupils and use questionnaires to gather their views. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in the life of the school. For example, during lunchtime, some of the older pupils help in the secretary's office to answer incoming calls whilst the secretary is at lunch and a number of pupils help teachers prepare for afternoon lessons. To continually improve the school, representatives from Year 6 classes on the school council, help to canvas views of pupils in all year groups. Buddies and play leaders contribute greatly in helping younger pupils develop confidence and self-esteem.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents. The use of the community to enrich pupils' learning is a **very good** feature of the school. School has **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school and are pleased with everything the school is doing for their children. The school has strong communication links with parents.
- Teachers strive hard to overcome pupils' barriers to learning.
- Every opportunity is explored to provide enrichment to the curriculum. The school has very good links with the community.
- Educational links with other schools are very effective and strongly contribute to wider partnerships.

## **Commentary**

25. Partnership with parents and carers is good. They form good relationships with teachers. They are pleased with everything the school is doing for their children. They are kept fully aware of school events through well -prepared newsletters, school prospectus and governors' annual report. Reports on pupils' progress give attainment levels, effort grades and defined targets for the children. Parents/carers willingly share their skills and talents with the school for the benefit of the pupils. For example, one parent came in to play the piano for some of the younger pupils. He demonstrated how the type of music being played affects people's feelings. The pupils enjoyed this. However, there is a significant majority of parents/carers who give little support to the school or their children's learning. The school seeks the views of parents when there are issues to be explored. The returned questionnaires on all aspects of bullying gave the school useful information on how parents understand bullying by drawing on their experiences when at school. Through mutual trust and understanding there is a good exchange of information between home and school. Family learning where parents work alongside their children in school can lead to accreditation awards which are recognised nationally. School self-evaluation has proved this to be a very successful and positive way to engage parents in supporting their children's learning.
26. It is unfortunate that there are numerous barriers to learning that teachers have to address, understand and be sympathetic towards. By careful planning, these barriers can be partially removed but they present teachers challenges that cannot always be overcome. Parents with older children are not always able to help their children with homework. The school recognises this and has a homework club to offer additional support and guidance for pupils in Year 6. Upon completion of homework, pupils are encouraged to research projects on computers; learn their spelling lists or do reading. Breakfast Club is popular with the pupils. Each morning it gives them the opportunities to meet their friends; have a chat over a drink and toast in a friendly, family atmosphere created by staff. It is a good start to the day.
27. The school uses the facilities within the community very well to enrich the curriculum and to consolidate pupils' learning. Year 5 pupils had the opportunity to attend a three-day residential activity holiday in Llangollen where they experienced abseiling, archery, rock climbing, mountain biking and staying at a Youth Hostel. A wealth of educational visits is arranged each year to places such as Alderton Synagogue, Tam O' Shanter Farm, Chester Zoo and places of interest in Port Sunlight. Pupils are appreciative of these opportunities. This enables them to have a wider understanding of the outside world.
28. There are very good links with other schools. The school feeds up to eight high schools in the area but the majority of pupils transfer to Prenton High School for Girls, Rock Ferry and Bebington High Schools. Transfer arrangements are very good. Towards the end of June Year 6 pupils spend an induction day at their selected schools. Class teachers and learning mentors from the secondary schools visit the school for discussions with Year 6 pupils. The school has a very good relationship with a local special school to support pupils with specific difficulties. Additional provision in the form of specialist teachers is brought in from this source.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**



The school is **well governed**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The overall management of the school is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is well led and governors effectively carry out their responsibilities.
- The school is successfully achieving its aims.
- The school is well managed. The management of special educational needs is very good.
- Good use is made of the school finances to help children learn.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to track the pupils' achievement.

### **Commentary**

29. The headteacher leads the school well and is supported well by the governors, senior managers and subject leaders. There has been good improvement in the management and governance of the school since the last inspection. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by an able deputy headteacher. The senior leadership team provide very good support in moving the school forward. The headteacher has gained the support of the parents and the community. The good behaviour of pupils, the care taken of them and the opportunities provided for pupils' personal development are major factors that are helping the school to achieve its aims. Emphasis is placed on giving pupils full support and helping them to overcome any barriers to learning. For example, there is a homework club for Year 6 pupils and a breakfast club that provide a good start to the day and additional tuition when needed. The governors fulfil their duties well. They share the headteacher's commitment to a caring school that provides a happy working environment and promotes high standards of behaviour for its pupils. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They receive very good information from the headteacher and the subject leaders. The committees work effectively and report fully to the main board. The governors are fully involved in strategic planning. Statutory requirements are met.
30. The school is well managed and there is a clear management structure within which the staff work effectively to raise standards. The subject leaders manage their subjects well. They have developed good action plans to further their subjects and keep the staff and the governors well-informed about their subjects. The staff are good role models for the pupils. All staff are trained well in behaviour management. The result is consistency in approach from the staff in managing pupils' behaviour throughout the day and as a result, pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection.
31. The management of special educational needs by both co-ordinators is very good. Pupils are assessed for their needs on entry to the Foundation Stage and effective deployment of staff ensure that they get the help that they need in whole class, small group and individual teaching. The co-ordinators for special educational needs work very hard to communicate with the parents of these pupils about attainment and support. Pupils and staff benefit from the expertise of the staff from a nearby special school that provide some training for staff and help pupils.
32. The school manages its budget well. The governors ensure best value is gained from expenditure. The school makes good use of its available resources including those designated for special educational needs. Good use is made of additional monies from initiatives such as the Wirral EIC to raise standards. Monies from bids made have funded booster classes, additional staffing, and courses for parents in basic skills and learning resources. The school has implemented the recommendation from the most recent financial audit report. Procedures for day-to-day financial control and administration are good.
33. The school does not however use ICT sufficiently well to track pupils' achievement. The school analyses the data from the National Curriculum tests and assessments. It also analyses standardised tests to set targets for school improvement. These are analysed accurately and

used well to set targets for improvement. The School Development Plan is a useful tool which is clearly focused on raising standards. However, the school lacks a comprehensive ICT based program to track pupils' progress. This lessens the school's effectiveness in using its data to monitor learning because the data is not easily accessible and available for interrogation. Good work is evident in using paper systems and some data which is held on computers to help teachers refine their planning. However, the school has recognised without a comprehensive ICT system, the analysis of data is time-consuming and inefficient.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	991609	Balance from previous year	21803
Total expenditure	976370	Balance carried forward to the next	37042
Expenditure per pupil	2150		

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for children in all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year is **very good**. It provides children with a stimulating and very effective start to school life.

34. Children start in the nursery after their third birthday. Most enter the nursery with very well below average skills in all areas of learning. This attainment is lower than reported previously during the last inspection and reflects a decline in the overall attainments of children entering the school. Children transfer to one of two reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they will become five. Through very good achievement, a significant minority are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning by the end of the reception year but most are on course to work towards them. The children's skills in speaking and listening are overall well below average. There has been very good improvement in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection, in all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage is very well managed; the co-ordinator leads a very effective team. Under her leadership the Foundation Stage has developed into an environment where children are given a very good start to their school life. She has very clear ideas for the future development of the stage.
35. The nursery and reception classes provide a stable and caring environment and the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively, practical activities, which support their progress very effectively in all areas. Children with special education needs are very effectively supported and have full access to the curriculum. The main strengths in teaching are the knowledge and understanding that both teachers and support staff have of the ways in which young children learn, and their ability to plan for the many very small steps necessary in order to achieve this. Children are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, they understand how to learn.
36. As soon as the children begin their schooling they are assessed against the nationally recommended targets. This results in very effective planning by both the teachers and classroom assistants with work specifically aimed at the needs of individual children. Further daily assessment ensures that planning is constantly adapted to meet the changing needs of all the children in all areas of their development. This ensures that an atmosphere is created where children are able to learn independently whilst being given reassurance and guidance that enables them to feel safe, secure, valued and individually very well cared for.
37. The teachers in both the nursery and reception classes have very good links with parents. There are very good procedures to help the parents, carers and children settle in school and so they become involved in their work. Both the nursery and reception classes have their own teaching areas that are well equipped and established. They share a well equipped outside area, the use of which is carefully planned in order to ensure a clear progression of experiences across all classes. Given the well below average attainment of the majority of children on entry, this planning is rigorous in order to securely match the needs of the children. However, access by the reception classes is limited due to the constraints of the building.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Regular routines are quickly established.
- Very good classroom organisation develops social interaction.
- All staff show a consistent approach when supporting children.

## **Commentary**

38. In both the nursery and the reception classes routines are well established and consistent across all classes this is helping these young children to work in various groups, to take turns and share. As a result children are growing in confidence and developing positive attitudes to their work. They understand classroom rules and routines and their behaviour is very good. For example, lining up for lunch is accomplished in a sensible and careful way.
39. Children enter the nursery class with personal, social and emotional developments that are very well below the levels expected. The teacher and classroom assistants place great emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills, and in order to do this they design activities supporting all areas of learning. The classroom has been carefully organised to enable children to select what they do from a planned range of activities and many work independently, alongside and some co-operatively using the available equipment, apparatus, computer, tools and materials. Children make choices sensibly and most work confidently in the various areas of the classroom. They concentrate for appropriate periods, at times sitting quietly or working as part of a group or the whole class. Most children choose to work alone or alongside others, and have not as yet learned to share.
40. In the reception classes these areas of development are further encouraged. Children are helped to become independent. There are clear routines for children to select and work in the different areas of the room or with particular pieces of equipment. Children understand and respond to these routines well. The approach taken to involve children in managing resources and equipment for themselves is good for promoting personal development and many are able to clear things away quickly and tidily when the music plays.
41. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. All staff give clear ideas of what is expected of the children including the difference between right and wrong. Patient, supportive teaching, where children are encouraged to work together and collaborate in their tasks, results in happy and confident children who learn well.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's communication skills are being developed well.
- Great emphasis is placed on developing children's listening skills.
- Writing is made relevant and interesting.

## **Commentary**

42. In the nursery, the teacher gives children very good examples of how to use speaking and listening skills by listening carefully to what they say, interacting with them as they work and at times joining in with their activities and play. This has a positive impact on the progress children make. Some children enjoy conversation and are beginning to take turns in speaking and listening, particularly with adults. However, a very significant majority do not listen well either to other children or adults. Many are reluctant to, but most have great difficulty in expressing themselves in order to be understood.

43. As a result of very good teaching strategies in both the nursery and reception classes, children in the reception classes answer questions posed by their teacher and are eager to express their ideas in words. Some show confidence in speaking to adults and to other children, and many initiate conversations in their play. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing a book with an adult. Most children know some letter sounds and can draw the shapes of letters.
44. Children understand that writing is used to communicate and at times they enjoy working at the writing tables, making books and lists. In the nursery they have opportunities to write during their imaginative structured play sessions. Staff work with small groups of children giving them very individually focused help. In the reception class in one lesson observed, some children demonstrated the ability to use their knowledge of sounds to write the names of the dinosaurs they were studying.
45. Children are aware that books are a source of information and pleasure. They handle books with confidence, and are eager to retell the stories. Some are able to recognise some familiar words.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's counting skills.
- Mathematical concepts are made relevant to children's experiences.

### **Commentary**

46. Children are making very good progress in developing their awareness and understanding of mathematics. They enjoy counting. In the nursery, children are learning to count as they count the steps that the dinosaurs take. In the reception classes most can count accurately to 20, and many can count beyond 20. The teachers make good use of number rhymes to reinforce children's counting. Children count while they sort objects as they play. Teachers constantly reinforce mathematical language children need for their work. This was seen in the reception class, where the teacher ensured that children used the correct mathematical language as she introduced the concept of estimation.
47. The teachers organise the classrooms effectively to enable them to meet the mathematical needs of all children. Planning ensures that children are provided with a balance of teaching and activities, which is appropriate to their needs. Mathematical learning opportunities are planned into a range of activities that children choose for themselves.
48. Most children in the reception classes can recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They know circle, square, triangle and rectangle. They relate addition to combining two groups of objects, and can use the appropriate language and symbols. They use relevant vocabulary when answering questions, such as those about 'more than'.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff plan a very good range of interesting activities that lay a strong emphasis on practical investigation. This makes learning interesting and exciting.
- Computers are well used.

### **Commentary**

49. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. Activities are interesting and are well planned with an emphasis on investigation. For example, nursery children were encouraged to describe and touch a fossil as part of a topic about dinosaurs. While as part of the same topic, reception children investigated what it felt like to walk bare footed through slushy water and damp sand.
50. Children use the computers with increasing confidence, using the mouse to identify and move items on the computer screen and point to illustrations. A variety of programs are used very well to promote the children's understanding in this area of learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor facilities at the nursery are used very effectively.
- Children are taught well to handle resources safely.

### **Commentary**

51. Staff use the outdoor area at the nursery very well particularly to support children's physical development. Opportunities are planned for children in the nursery to experiment and experience a range of physical activities, many supported by staff, for example a small group practised their throwing and catching skills as they joined in a game with their teacher. In the reception and nursery classes children manoeuvre wheeled vehicles around pathways in a controlled way and with an awareness of space. The essence of both the teaching assistants and teachers' good planning, was the extent to which they allowed the children to take initiatives and manage the tasks for themselves.
52. Reception class children use the school hall very well. During these sessions, children are introduced to new skills and activities, which they are then able to practise and improve in the outside teaching areas. In a very good lesson observation, reception class children used many different movements and pace when interpreting music to move as dinosaurs.
53. In the nursery the children move around the classroom with growing confidence. They show an increasing awareness of space for themselves and for others. Many use small equipment with increasing control, as they draw or write. However, many have difficulty in manipulating scissors, and several are still unsure which their dominant hand is. Many are able to manipulate construction materials. In the reception classes children are taught well to handle equipment with care, and most are aware of the need to do things safely. Children's skills in manipulating small tools, scissors and pencils develop well because of the good opportunities they have to practise and apply them.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of experiences and materials are used to stimulate children's imagination.
- Very good links are made with other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

54. In all classes children enjoy a good range of well-planned art and craft and role-play experiences to stimulate their imagination. They concentrate well on these, making pictures and models with a variety of materials and paint. They are beginning to relate well to each other and share in imaginative ideas to create stories and events. Nursery children take great delight in mixing colours as they paint pictures. Children in the nursery enjoyed singing 'Five Current Buns' as part of their number activities.
55. At times the children work with intense concentration on their tasks paying attention to small details. This was seen for example in the nursery as they stuck straws on their paper to create pictures of dinosaurs' skeletons, and in the reception class as they helped to weigh the ingredients for their dinosaur biscuits.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of their early identification and the very good provision they receive, particularly in Years 1-2.
- The school collects pupil performance data well but these assessments are not used well enough to further raise standards in reading and writing.

#### **Commentary**

56. Standards in English by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. The trend over previous years has been one of steady improvement since the last inspection. Standards in listening are higher than in speaking, writing and reading and are average.
57. Most pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs achieve very well. The needs of these pupils are identified very early in their school career and they have detailed and achievable targets in their individual education plans. As a result of the clarity of these targets and the good learning support they receive from teaching assistants they learn quickly and at a faster rate than most other pupils.
58. The standards of speaking and listening are developing well. The school has sensibly taken this area as a focus for school development and the raising of standards of learning, particularly in the area of pupils' writing. From below average attainment in Year 1, they quickly learn to answer questions, share ideas and listen to adults and their peers. They are encouraged by their teachers to answer questions in a full and detailed way. A wide range of teaching strategies is used, well matched to the abilities of their pupils, to promote discussion and vocabulary is explained well. In most classes these skills continue to develop, so that pupils speak with increasing confidence and are able to participate in many activities. A very good lesson was observed in Year 4 when teachers took the opportunity to assess the pupils' attainment in speaking and listening in a range of drama activities. Overall, pupils are better at listening than expressing or explaining their ideas. Some average attaining pupils find it difficult to speak at length and find the correct vocabulary to give clear explanations to questions. This tends to limit their attainment at a higher level.
59. Pupils achieve well in writing. In most classes in Years 1-2, pupils are learning good word building and alphabet skills. In Years 3-6 pupils are developing a sound understanding of vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. Most of their writing is straightforward. Pupils' skills in

using expressive and exciting language in English, however, are limited. Handwriting skills have been insufficiently developed with only a minority of Year 6 pupils using a joined and fluent writing script.

60. Standards in reading are average and pupils achieve well. The school places a good emphasis on the teaching of reading with specific time allocated within the curriculum every day and new resources purchased to improve provision. Pupils have regular access to good school and class library books and the consistent approach to group reading is having a positive impact on the development of reading skills.
61. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the more successful lessons resources are well used to support lively teaching with clearly identified learning objectives for the pupils. ICT is well used to develop spelling and other language skill development. Where teaching is only satisfactory, in Years 1-6, teaching lacks focus, pace of learning is insufficiently challenging and, where additional time and teacher resources are provided, unsatisfactory use is made of these resources. This reduces the involvement of the pupils in their learning and limits their achievement.
62. Information from standardized tests and statutory assessment tests gives useful information for tracking pupil progress. However, these assessments are inconsistently used to identify and plan the next learning steps for pupils' reading and writing skills in order to raise standards further.
63. The subject is very well led and managed. There is a good subject policy and learning resources have been improved. The development of teachers' skills is very well promoted and some effective initiatives have been implemented to continue the raising of pupils' standards in reading and writing. For instances learning resources have improved and there has been a whole school drive to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

64. The promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. The development of pupils' writing is promoted in all subjects and this provides a good route to developing literacy skills. ICT is well used to enhance pupils' reading, writing and research skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The progress of some pupils is restricted by their poor literacy, speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers are good at ensuring that pupils understand what they are going to learn.
- Teachers work effectively to ensure that pupils use the correct mathematical language with increasing confidence.
- Improvement in teaching and use of ICT is impacting positively on standards.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.

### **Commentary**

65. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. By the end of the current academic year standards for the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are below average. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have embraced the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy well since the last inspection and this is helping to improve standards.



66. In Years 1 and 2 teachers work effectively to ensure that work is matched well to the level that pupils have reached. Much attention is given to developing pupils' understanding of place value and sequencing skills. Teachers use question and answer techniques well to generate discussion and develop pupils' understanding. This was seen in a very good Year 2 lesson where pupils added together several coins identified by the teacher. However, progress is frequently restricted for many pupils by their inability to explain their reasoning.
67. In Years 3 to 6, as a result of good teaching pupils continue to achieve well. In Years 5 and 6 the system of setting pupils based on their prior attainment, further promotes their achievement. This enables teachers to challenge higher attaining pupils well and to ensure that work is accurately matched to the abilities of all pupils. For example, during the inspection, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 showed very good understanding of how to plot co-ordinates correctly into the four quadrants of a graph. They made good progress because the teacher split the learning into manageable steps that the pupils could cope with well. The teacher also took great care to ensure that pupils understood the learning before moving on to the next stage.
68. Within the subject the teachers make very good use of ICT, both in the use of interactive white boards, where available, to support their teaching. Computers within the classrooms are very well used to support differentiated activities where and when appropriate.
69. Throughout the school, teachers make very clear to pupils what they will be learning during lessons. Pupils' language skills are underdeveloped, but teachers work effectively to emphasise and reinforce the correct use of mathematical language. Pupils respond enthusiastically and use language satisfactorily. When given the opportunity to respond to using mathematics in contexts that are relevant to everyday life, such as doing calculations with money, pupils do so well.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

70. Good examples of mathematical work were seen in science as pupils draw tables and graphs of the results of their investigations. In mathematics, spreadsheets using ICT are used to work out answers to mathematical problems. In art pupils explore symmetrical patterns with the aid of ICT.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy their work and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and very effectively develops pupils' skills of scientific investigation and an understanding of scientific method.
- The supportive relationships within lessons encourage pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

71. Pupils achieve well across the school. Standards in science are below average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. There has been good improvement in the quality of the curriculum and the teaching since the last inspection. The pupils achieve well when taking into account the low starting point of many pupils on entry to the school. Opportunities for investigations and practical tasks make learning enjoyable. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Relationships are invariably strong and pupils are encouraged to do their best.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a well-structured scheme of work that sets out exactly what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well organised and managed. Teaching methods include effective questioning which draws on pupils' previous learning and extends their thinking. ICT is used effectively in lessons. Teachers make good use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards, computer microscopes and heat and light sensors. Pupils use the Internet for example, to research the habitats of plants and animals. Learning is recapped effectively at the end of each lesson.
73. There is a strong focus on pupils' developing skills in experimenting and investigation. Through this type of work, pupils gain a clear understanding of scientific methods and approaches, which enables them to interpret logically their data and observations. Activities are interesting and motivating. For example, Year 4 pupils successfully set up and recorded an investigation to find out how far water and minerals taken in through the stem of a plant travels to other parts of the plant. Pupils could see clearly how coloured dye had travelled to all parts of a carnation. Their learning was enhanced as they viewed the capillaries of the plant through the Intel microscope. Year 2 pupils enthusiastically observed mini beasts for their science lesson brought into school by the forest ranger. The pupils are aware of the importance of treating these creatures in a humane way. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and classroom assistants and take a full part in lessons, achieving as well as their classmates.
74. Overall, pupils have a good bank of scientific vocabulary which they use well in their explanations of science observations and during discussions. Older pupils in Year 6, do well when working within the national expectations appropriate to this age. However, some find difficulty in applying their knowledge and understanding when interpreting data and explaining their findings. This is the weakest aspect of their work and tends to limit their attainment at the expected level.
75. The subject leader has made a good start to leading and managing the subject. There is a clear view of the aims and priorities for science in the school. Resources are good. Good use is made of the outside environment for investigative work. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision for ICT is **very good**

### **Main Strengths and Weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- There are very good resources.
- The curriculum is well balanced and enriched by extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in using ICT.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

76. The subject is very well established and is a strength of the school. Pupils achieve very well to attain standards at the nationally expected levels in Years 1-6. The school has improved hardware and software, and to provide training for teachers, so that their expertise is greatly improved during the past few years. Since the last inspection, when standards were below average improvement has been very good.
77. Resources on the suites and classes are very good. The hardware is kept in very good working order by the technician on site. As well as the computers in the suite, pupils in most classes have access to computers in the classroom. These are generally well used by

teachers for work supporting the whole range of subjects. The school has 2 ICT suites and is developing a third. Very good use has been made of off-site facilities to help pupils learn.

78. The curriculum is well balanced. Pupils develop a good understanding of all aspects of ICT as they progress through the school. They enjoy working on the computers and in all curriculum subjects ICT is included well as part of lesson planning. This results in pupils applying, practising and refining the skills they learn in their ICT lessons in the suites. Pupils have visited for example, the City Learning Centre (CLC) and have worked on animation and modelling projects. As part of a Beacon School initiative the pupils have worked on PSHE units of work using ICT.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In lessons seen during the inspection, teachers showed confidence in handling a range of areas of ICT. The work is very well planned, following the national guidelines and assessed. Teachers are good at explaining new ideas and handled new hardware, such as the interactive whiteboards, well. They present their work in interesting ways, inspiring pupils and giving them confidence in their work. Use of the Internet has been well developed, so that pupils of all abilities know how to search for information. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the work, and achieve as well as others with help. By the end of Year 6 pupils are efficient users of text and graphics. They are developing multi-media presentations as part of their leavers' assembly. The school is part of an LEA ICT Certification Scheme and pupils' good achievement at the end of both key stages is recognised. Pupils' attendance at an after school club which encourages them to use digital camera and video equipment makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.
80. The subject is very well led and managed by an experienced subject leader. Work and standards are monitored well. The subject leader and other teachers with expertise have worked closely with the staff and helped to develop their confidence and expertise.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

81. The use of ICT across the curriculum is well established. Where there are interactive whiteboards in classrooms they are used well by the teachers to help pupils learn. In other subjects, pupils use ICT confidently. In science graphs and tables display results of investigations and good use is made of the Intel microscope and sensors. The Internet is used to research topics and correspond with pupils from other schools. Word processing is often used to present work attractively, while in subjects such as mathematics and science graphs and tables of results are produced.

## **HUMANITIES**

No judgements on provision are made in history and geography as too few lessons were observed in these subjects. These subjects were sampled during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **very good**

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good quality of teaching ensures a good focus in lessons on what the various faiths can tell pupils about moral and ethical questions in life.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- The subject is well led and managed.

## Commentary

82. Pupils are achieving very well to attain the standards set within the locally agreed syllabus. The very good achievement is in response to very good teaching that challenges them to think about the world around them and their place in it. The very good level of work seen during the inspection is enhanced by the pupils' ability to discuss facts and feelings. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
83. Planning includes a good range of activities, which promote tolerance and develop an awareness of each other's needs. Much of this understanding is developed through role-play and drama. Pupils in Year 2 expressed their feelings very well when they compared and discussed how the people would have felt when Jesus favoured Zacchaeus - the tax collector, over them, prior to dramatising the story. This helped them all to understand these feelings very well and to identify times in their own lives when they felt unfairly treated, and in turn how others might feel.
84. Teaching and learning are very good. Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute to the very positive learning environment. Resources and objects to support learning are used well to set the scene in lessons. This was observed in a Year 5 lesson as the teacher compared the teachings of the Qur'an with those of the Bible. This was further re-enforced as the Qur'an was used with great dignity in an assembly celebrating Mohammed's birthday. By the end of Year 2 the pupils will have learnt about some of the traditions in the religions of Christianity and Hinduism. While by the end of Year 6 pupils will have extended their knowledge to include the religions of Islam, Sikhism and Judaism.
85. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Very good support is given to pupils with special educational need ensuring that they are fully included in all aspects of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Good achievement is now being made across the school. There are good quality resources and the pupils' work on display is presented well and reflects their very good achievement.
86. In both **history** and **geography** the work is made interesting by the use of local resources and visits to nearby sites. From a scrutiny of pupils' work, from collections of photographs and from the colourful and stimulating displays around the school, it is clear that there is careful planning by teachers to develop pupils' literacy skills in many of their historical and geographical projects. The use of visiting drama groups encourages the pupils to talk and think about their work in an exciting and challenging way. This develops their speaking and listening skills and supports the promotion of improved writing skills. The Year 5 residential visit to Wales is well used to develop pupil skills and knowledge in both subjects.
87. Schemes of work in these subjects are being reviewed and are useful tools for all teachers when planning work in these subjects. They allow teachers to plan lessons in good detail and ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on steadily. Useful resources have been acquired from limited budgets and these are used well to stimulate the interest of pupils and to raise standards of teaching and learning. The subject managers have monitored planning, teaching and learning and support other teachers with their preparations for their lessons.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. No judgements on provision are made in art and design, design and technology, physical education or music as too few lessons were observed in each subject. These subjects were sampled during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.
89. In **art and design** teachers throughout the school follow the national guidance so that pupils build successfully on their previous skills. It is evident from looking at pupils' work that there is a wide range of interesting planned activities and a broad range of resources for pupils to use.
90. Pupils' work is often successfully linked to other subjects. Works of art from a range of cultures feature strongly throughout the curriculum as a stimulus for teaching pupils new techniques. For example, pupils study Mexican art and aboriginal art from Australia. However, pupils know less about the work of famous artists. The work on display around the school creates an attractive learning environment and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and is usefully developing a portfolio of pupils' work. The use of sketch books has been promoted across the school. However, pupils do not tend to use them as effectively as they could to develop design ideas.
91. In **design and technology** the pupils in Year 6, research designs and make shelters. They join them accurately in different ways and so develop an understanding of the strengths and appropriateness of structures for their purpose. Pupils in Year 2 worked on designing and making a glove puppet. They make labelled drawings of their design intentions, and used a range of materials to make their puppets, evaluating and improving their designs as they work. Discussions with the subject leader indicate that strengths and weaknesses in provision are analysed and evaluated, and relevant action is taken. The subject is well resourced. There has been good improvement in the curriculum and the standard of work sampled since the last inspection.
92. In **music** insufficient opportunities for lesson observation mean that judgements cannot be made about standards, teaching and learning. However, analysis of documentation, discussion with the co-ordinator and one lesson observation indicate that the school delivers a good curriculum. During one music lesson observed, pupils in Year 2 were able to recognise patterns of pitch, rhythm and pulse. They then produced their own compositions representing wind, rain, and hail and lightening using un-pitched percussion instruments, with very good results. All pupils are given the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. During assemblies pupils listen to music, and tunefully join in with songs and hymns. The school provides several extra curricular activities including choir, recorder and guitar groups and they take part in the annual Birkenhead Music Festival. Each year pupils are involved with many other Merseyside schools in a project with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. This year the theme was 'Year of the Sea'. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the raising of the subject's profile within the school. She has provided a good scheme of work, which gives teachers the confidence to teach the subject well.
93. In **physical education** it is clear that the school provides pupils with many good opportunities to acquire and develop skills in dance, gymnastics, swimming and games. The importance of health and fitness education is recognised. The school follows a syllabus for physical education, which ensures a good progression of skills, and strategies in which pupils are given opportunities to apply in a range of competitive sports. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra curricular sporting activities which ranged from a 'Wake Up Club' for pupils to football, dance, fencing and tag rugby for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. There are very close links with the high school which is on the same site. The high school has made its sports hall available to the school, and provides coaching. These along with the school's own two halls make for very good facilities. Pupils take part in many inter-school events; these include swimming and athletics.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils feel positively about the school.
- The pupils play an active part in the life and work of the school.
- Health education is well promoted in the school.

### **Commentary**

94. All staff are positive as they reinforce good attitudes to work and good behaviour in the pupils. The pupils are given a range of opportunities in lessons and around the school to enable them to develop their self-confidence and make the most of their abilities. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and achieve well. They respect the views and beliefs of others and are developing well an awareness of diversity within society.
95. The older pupils have an active role in the life and work of the school and participate in all school activities to the full. There is a very good range of extra curricular activities available for the pupils and the pupils readily support these clubs. The school council, school buddies, Year 5 pupils' support for the youngest pupils, 'Active Playground' management and the 'Health Promoting School' committee all play a valuable part in the life of the school. The school council, with Year 6 pupils representing specific classes in the school, has recently been concerned about the installation of cycle racks and the provision of school meals. School buddies from the older classes help younger and upset pupils settle into playground life and provide a valuable support. The care given by Year 5 pupils to Foundation Stage children at lunchtime is a significant strength of the school's arrangements for managing pupils out of class. The school prioritises pupils' personal, social and health development as an important part of its work and has put in place a programme, which includes pupils' learning about a healthy diet, sex education and relationships, education about the misuse of drugs and personal safety. All pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and for others, make informed choices and to understand how their own actions can affect others.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

**Inspection judgement****Grade**

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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