

INSPECTION REPORT

BRACKENWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Bebington

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105013

Headteacher: Mr G A Morris

Lead inspector: Mrs L Read

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 September 2004

Inspection number: 266470

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	213
School address:	Norbury Avenue Bebington Wirral Merseyside
Postcode:	CH63 2HH
Telephone number:	0151 608 3001
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Barrow

Date of previous inspection: 8 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brackenwood Junior is roughly the same size as most primary schools, with 213 pupils on roll. It is situated in the town of Bebington and serves a wide and diverse area. Taking into account the full range of housing and employment, social and economic circumstances are average overall. Pupils entering at Year 3, usually from the nearby infant school, have a range of learning experiences and attainments that are above average for the age group. The school has the capacity to cater for pupils with statements of special educational needs, most of whom transfer at Year 4 or later and travel considerable distances to attend. The total percentage of pupils in school who have special educational needs (13 per cent) is below average; however, 7 per cent of the school population has a statement of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Most of the special needs come under the learning or emotional and behavioural categories. Around 17 per cent of pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is average. Most pupils are of a white, British background and a few have Asian heritage. There are no pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as a second language. In recognition of the work done, Brackenwood holds the Schools Achievement and Investors in People Awards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21199	Mrs Lynne Read	Lead inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
19343	Mrs Marion Howel	Lay inspector	
21910	Mr Gordon Longton	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History
29261	Mrs Penny Ward	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design technology Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Brackenwood Juniors is a good school with many very good features. Leadership and management are good, and are firmly focused on high standards and ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. It is above expectations in several other subjects.
- Achievement is good overall and for the higher attaining pupils it is very good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and drives the school forward successfully.
- Teaching is good and much is very good.
- The good, broad curriculum and careful planning cater effectively for the needs of all pupils.
- There is no consistent system for assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, resulting in very good attitudes to learning, good behaviour and very profitable relationships.
- There are insufficient opportunities to prepare pupils for living in a multi-cultural society.

Improvements

There have been very good improvements since the time of the previous inspection especially in the provision for higher attaining pupils, the integration of pupils from the special educational needs base (SEN base) into class lessons, strategies to encourage good behaviour and in governance. Issues relating to management have been fully addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	D	A	B
Mathematics	B	B	A	A
Science	B	C	B	D

*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.*

Standards are well above average and achievement is good overall and very good for the higher attaining pupils. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is above average. The results above show that standards are improving at the school. In 2003, attainment in English and mathematics was well above the national average and for science it was above. When compared to similar schools, attainment is well above average in mathematics, above average for English but below average for science. The school took immediate action to improve the progress of pupils in science by introducing more emphasis on investigative and experimental work. Attainment subsequently improved. Work seen during lessons and a scrutiny of completed work confirms that these improvements have been sustained. The unvalidated results of the 2004 tests provide further evidence of high attainment, with around 50 per cent of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in English and mathematics and 60 per cent doing so in science. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs enter the

school, often at Year 4 or afterwards. They make good progress along their individual programmes of learning that are based on English and mathematics skills and often make very good progress in oral and practical work across other subject areas. By Year 6, pupils' attainment in art and design, history, geography, ICT and physical education is above expectations. Boys and girls achieve equally well in class; teachers give careful consideration to the books that they choose and the topics that they plan to maintain the interest of both groups. Those pupils who are gifted or talented have additional challenges in their work and achieve very well. Attainment patterns for both ethnic groups are around the same.

The school promotes **social and moral development very well. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes and good behaviour. The provision for spiritual development is good and for cultural it is satisfactory.** Pupils have a good awareness of local and national culture but few opportunities to learn at first hand about other cultures. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and has a direct impact on the high standards and good achievement. Teachers present their pupils with interesting lessons, driven at a fast pace. Assessment information is used very well In English, mathematics and science to set work at different levels of difficulty so that all pupils have the challenge or support that they need to learn effectively. This is especially effective for the higher attaining pupils and for the SEN base pupils who are fully integrated into the afternoon lessons. Teaching assistants are well informed and make a good contribution to learning.

There is a good, broad curriculum that successfully meets the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. Very good enrichment for the curriculum is provided through visits and visitors and out-of-school activities. Accommodation is mostly satisfactory and resources are good.

Care and guidance are satisfactory. Pupils form trusting relationships with adults and say that they feel safe in school. There are effective systems in place to promote good behaviour and to prevent bullying. Those pupils who have emotional difficulties are very sensitively supported. Thorough assessments of learning in English, mathematics and science allow teachers to set challenging targets. Assessment procedures in the other subjects are inconsistent and do not provide a clear, accessible overview of each pupil's progress. The school has good systems to ensure the health and welfare of pupils. Links with parents are effective in supporting pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good; they are sharply focused on high attainment and good achievement. The headteacher provides a clear vision and very good direction for the school. Governance is good and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher and staff monitor school performance rigorously and take appropriate action where needed. The subject managers are effective; their leadership is reflected in the above-average standards across many areas of the curriculum. Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play an active role in shaping the school's development. All staff are fully committed to providing access to all parts of school life for all pupils and work hard to this end.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The results of the parents' questionnaires and the meeting show that parents have good levels of confidence in the school. Pupils are proud of their school and they play a good, active role in school development through their elected council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop consistent assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science to provide a more accessible, all round picture of progress;
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good overall in English, mathematics and science and, for the higher attaining pupils, it is very good.
- Attainment in ICT has improved well. Standards are above national expectations and achievement is good.
- Attainment in art and design, geography, history and physical education is above expectations.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting points.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (26.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.8 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 77 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The results for 2003 in English and mathematics were well above the national average. Indications are that the results for the 2004 tests are equally good with around one half of the pupils attaining the higher level 5 in both subjects. A scrutiny of work over last year and this, together with lesson observations and discussions with pupils, show that these high standards are maintained for this year's cohorts in both Years 6 and 5. The

comparisons with schools whose Year 2 pupils attained the same standards as at Brackenwood are above average for English and well above average for mathematics. The school has exceeded its challenging targets for English and mathematics in 2003 at both level 4 and 5.

2. In science, the 2003 results were above the national average but, compared to schools whose pupils attained at a similar level on entry to Year 3, grades were below average. The results were a disappointment and the school embarked on a thorough analysis of attainment to identify the reason. It was discovered that pupils' skills in experimentation and investigation were weaker than in the other areas of science. The subject manager worked with teachers to rectify the situation and the unvalidated results of 2004 show good success. Using national indicators, standards are well above average, with 95 per cent attaining level 4 or above and 60 per cent of pupils attaining the higher level 5. Judgements made during the inspection show similar high levels of attainment in the present Years 6 and 5.
3. On entry to the school in Year 3, pupils have above-average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Overall, in Years 3 to 6, they make good progress and the higher attaining ones achieve very well, many of whom progress from an average level on entry to Year 3 to above or well above average at Year 6. This is especially evident in writing, which was the focus of school development two years ago and has improved very well. Records over time show that pupils' attainment is rising faster than the national trend. This is largely due to the thorough tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of individual targets. In turn, this leads to a good amount of challenge in lessons which moves learning on at a fast pace.
4. The school's provision includes a base for pupils who have statements of special educational need (SEN base). For this group, achievement is good. Each pupil's specific needs are assessed and they have individual programmes of work, largely covering English and mathematics skills. In the mornings they are taught as a class and make satisfactory progress. In the afternoons, these pupils join the mainstream classes to enjoy the other subjects in the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, health and social education. They have very good support and are given tasks to match their prior learning. This ensures that they have full access to the broad and interesting curriculum and make very good progress across all subjects, relative to their starting points. This inclusion into classes is a strength of the school.
5. Boys and girls of all attainment groups progress equally well, largely because teachers choose an interesting range of topics to interest all. The good range of fiction and non-fiction books show that teachers are mindful to choose those of special interest to boys and this is a successful strategy in capturing and maintaining their interest in reading. Pupils from the different ethnic groups and those who have special educational needs in the mainstream classes make good progress. Pupils who are gifted or talented have the extension work and breadth of the curriculum that they need to progress very well.
6. Attainment in ICT across the school has improved and is now above expectations. Many good improvements have been made, especially in resourcing, which mean that pupils have good access to computers and plenty of time to consolidate the skills that they are learning. In religious education, pupils attain what is expected according to the locally agreed syllabus and the subject makes a good contribution to their spiritual, social, cultural and moral education. Attainment in art and design is above average and pupils

have an especially good understanding of artists' backgrounds and of the techniques that they used. In history and geography the good attainment is underpinned by the good use of pupils' writing skills. The links with other schools supports pupils' good progress in physical education effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good; their behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance and punctuality at the school are both good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils exhibit very good attitudes to school.
- Pupils are well behaved in classes and in the playground.
- Pupils' personal development is good overall and the provision for moral and social development is very good.
- Pupils are not sufficiently prepared for life in a multicultural society.

Commentary

7. Pupils' attitudes are a considerable strength of this school. They are enthusiastic learners and work hard; the vast majority have good attendance records and arrive in good time for lessons. There have been no incidents of exclusion over the last year. Relationships with adults and each other are very good and have a positive impact on learning. Pupils with special educational needs have similar, very good attitudes to their peers. They take a full and active part in lessons and out of school activities. Because of the good induction procedures, Year 3 pupils settle quickly into school life and demonstrate good confidence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

8. Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school. Pupils discuss and agree class rules and are fully aware of the high standards expected and insisted upon by all staff. There is a caring ethos and a strong moral framework which result in pupils knowing right from wrong and encourages them to show consideration for others. During lessons pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. In the dining room they chat excitedly, sharing their news and in the playground they participate in football, singing games and playing conkers in a friendly way. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Interviews with pupils and staff show that incidents of bullying or any other form of harassment are very rare, but when they have happened the situation has been dealt with swiftly, firmly and fairly.

9. Provision to foster pupils' personal development is good and includes calm, discussion time. During these sessions pupils are encouraged to think deeply about such matters as feelings, emotions and relationships. This prepares them well for experiences and problems they may encounter in their lives. A residential experience for Year 6 pupils plays an important role in their development. The team building activities are especially useful in showing pupils how they can support each other.
10. Spiritual development is good. The content of religious education lessons and assemblies enables pupils to recognise and respect key beliefs. They consider special people in their lives and talk about their appreciation for all who help them. There are good opportunities for pupils to express themselves in creative ways through art, music and writing which support pupils' spiritual development well.
11. Social and moral development is very good. Pupils take their responsibilities of living in a community seriously, showing good levels of maturity as they move through the school. They take on many duties. These range from helping with registration and organising equipment, to acting as prefects in Year 6. During an interview with the school council, the pupils were articulate and confident. They are proud to act as their class's representative and clearly express to council the issues that their peers wish to raise. Pupils throughout school say that they are kept well informed and feel their opinions are listened to. They have clearly been very successful in implementing change, one example being the on-going improvements to the school playground and the provision of play activities.
12. The school encourages a good range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' cultural knowledge; these include musicians, people connected with sport and visits to museums and the theatre. However there is not yet a strong enough multicultural presence among those who come into school. There is little contact with pupils from different cultures and limited preparation for living in a multicultural society. Overall, cultural development is sound.
13. There have been no exclusions at the school over the last academic year. This is further evidence of the successful approach to encouraging very positive attitudes to education. It shows the success of the positive and sensitive approach to supporting those who have emotional and behavioural problems.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided at the school is good with many strengths. Teaching and learning are good and well supported by a broad and interesting curriculum. Parents are very supportive and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and much is very good. As a result, pupils learn well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good range of subject knowledge.
- The teachers' planning is good and uses assessment information well to target the next steps for pupils in English, mathematics and science.

- Teachers use a range of strategies and resources to challenge, motivate and encourage pupils of all abilities. They have high expectations of behaviour and endeavour.
- Staff ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in all lessons and receive the support they need.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7%)	13 (30%)	24 (54%)	4 (9%)	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.

Commentary

14. The judgement on teaching is based on evidence from lesson observations and by examining pupils' books over the last academic year and this. The quality of teaching has improved further since the previous inspection. Throughout school, teachers prepare and plan their lessons with care and with good reference to prior learning, thus ensuring that pupils have the challenge or support that they need to do their best. Teachers share the learning goal with the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. This provides a clear purpose for the work and ensures that pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support during lessons, often prompting pupils' thoughts and helping to clarify misconceptions. The quality of marking is a strength, especially in the key subjects of English and mathematics. As a result, pupils know where and why they have been successful and what they need to do to improve. There are many rewards and very good praise for effort and this encourages pupils to try their best.
15. Teachers make good use of pupils' very good writing skills to enhance and extend learning, for example in geography and history. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum and this allows pupils to consolidate effectively the skills that they learn. Teachers make good use of the electronic whiteboards and digital projectors to demonstrate new learning in ICT or to project text, diagrams and pictures for class discussions and during assemblies. Lessons include a good range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences but insufficient attention is given to developing their awareness and understanding of world-wide cultures.
16. The regular setting of homework for all age groups is good and enables pupils to extend the learning they have completed during the school day. Tasks are generally completed on time and to a good standard, with parents providing valuable support for their children. The variety of work set for Year 6 pupils help to develop their independent study skills effectively and to prepare them well for the type of assignments that they will have at their secondary schools.
17. During lessons, teachers check pupils' learning very carefully in English, mathematics and science. This work provides the essential information for teachers' planning on a day-to day basis and ensures a good pace to learning. Assessment procedures are not consistent in the other subjects although teachers do evaluate learning at the end of lessons, often in conjunction with the pupils.
18. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Assessments, tracking and target setting have improved very well in

the key subjects and expectations of learning are very high. There is considerable challenge for the higher attaining pupils and, by Years 5 and 6, around half of the year group are working at levels that are higher than usually expected.

19. Teachers have a secure knowledge across all subjects of the curriculum. This helps them to bring lessons to life and to successfully motivate their pupils. Very good relationships exist in classes, and pupils rise to the high expectations because they trust their teachers and know that help is readily available if they need it. The older pupils often work at an exacting pace and enjoy the varied challenges that their teachers set for them.
20. The headteacher evaluates the success of planning and teaching and there is a good programme of training in place to enhance skills. Because of the strong team work in school, teachers often pool their ideas and successes, and this is a good way of sharing good practice. Work for both classes in each year group is planned cooperatively by the two teachers and this ensures a consistent approach to learning and equal coverage of the curriculum.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the SEN base is generally satisfactory in the mornings and very good in the afternoons; overall it is good. They are usually taught together for English and mathematics in the mornings. There is a very wide spread of age groups, interests and abilities and the whole-class morning sessions provide just a satisfactory level of challenge or support rather than the very good level seen in the afternoon lessons. The careful adaptation of tasks and materials and the good level of individual support provided in the afternoon classes are major factors that enable these pupils to succeed. There is a very strong commitment to inclusion that is shared by governors, managers and all staff. In the mainstream classes the provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Pupils who require additional help are identified as soon as possible when they begin school. Their individual programmes of learning are shared with parents and regularly reviewed to maintain good progress. The role of the teaching assistants within lessons is well planned and they make a good contribution to the teaching team. They often keep pupils on track during whole-class sessions by explaining vocabulary and technical terms and helping them to clarify their thinking.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. It provides pupils with a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities, successfully meeting their interests, aptitudes and learning needs. There are very good opportunities for active learning outside of the classroom. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a balanced and interesting curriculum, which prepares them successfully for the future stages of education.
- The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very effective and skills are developed well through work in other subjects.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The availability of computers and associated software is good. This allows pupils to use their ICT skills when studying other subjects
- The development of personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.

Commentary

22. The statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met. Appropriate schemes of planning are in place for all subjects based on the latest national guidelines. Throughout the school, this planning ensures that teachers are provided with a range of suitable topics and guidance upon which to base their lesson plans. Curriculum provision is regularly checked to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all pupils. The school makes good links between subjects and learning is very well enriched by visits and visitors. For example, a ripple of excitement ran through the school when pupils discovered that a regular visitor from a local church mission was to take the assembly. The development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology is now good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
23. All pupils have access to the full curriculum and this is a very good feature of the school. Pupils from the SEN base work alongside their peers in the afternoons and this supports their social development very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes are well supported. The targets set for them are reviewed and revised regularly to make sure that they remain appropriate to current needs. When necessary, recording tasks are carefully adapted to ensure success.
24. The school teaches literacy and numeracy well. In mathematics there is good attention given to mental computation and in English there is a strong emphasis on developing and consolidating skills in writing. The school has developed more opportunities for using and applying mathematics and for experimental and investigative science. These are good improvements since the previous inspection and have had a positive effect on pupils' achievement, particularly that of the higher attaining ones.
25. Staff have worked hard to develop the provision for personal, social and health and citizenship education (PHSCE) including sex and relationships education and an awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. The curriculum in this area provides pupils with many opportunities to discuss and make sense of their experiences and to consider difficult concepts such as vandalism or prejudice. This has a significant impact on behaviour and relationships and, consequently, enhances the quality of learning.
26. A good range of activities outside school lessons is provided and pupils have many opportunities to participate in sporting events and activities such as chess, judo and fencing. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn French or enjoy the dance club. All these activities are very well attended and well supported by the dedication of staff and parents. The Year 6 residential visit is very popular and provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in outdoor adventure activities.
27. Pupils are well prepared for both the junior and secondary phases of their education. There are very good relationships between the infant and junior schools resulting in the smooth transition between Years 2 and 3. Year 6 pupils have many opportunities to visit the local secondary schools to help them feel confident about the move. Bridging units of work have been successfully devised for Year 6 to 7 to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the type of lessons they will experience.

28. A dedicated and enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff work well together. There are sufficient adults who are well deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils' learning needs. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The well-established arrangements for staff development are guided by the school's improvement plan. The lunchtime supervisors provide a good standard of care at midday. The caretaker and his team ensure a high standard of cleanliness at all times. The staff present attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the building and this creates a very pleasant and stimulating environment.
29. Since the extensive reorganisation and decoration of the school building, the quality and adequacy of the accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum and has improved the quality of education provided. However, the mobile classrooms used by the Year 3 pupils are small and uninviting in spite of the best efforts of the teachers to make them more attractive. The steps leading to the Year 3 block are very steep. Pupils have to cross an open area to the main building to use the toilets, join in assemblies, to use the library, the ICT suite and the hall for physical education. The headteacher and governors identify this as an unsatisfactory situation and have made many representations to the local education authority for funding to rectify the problem.
30. Resources in all subjects are good except for English and religious education where they are satisfactory. The school has plans to improve the library to enhance pupils' opportunities to carry out independent research. More artefacts are required to improve the teaching of other faiths and cultures.
31. Cumulatively, staffing, accommodation and learning resources ensure that the teaching and learning can take place purposefully and productively. This aspect of the school's provision has been well managed since the previous inspection, with significant improvements.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the pupils' care, safety and welfare. The quality of guidance and support for personal development is good and, in English, mathematics and science, it is very good. For the other subjects, guidance is satisfactory overall. The school involves pupils well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good induction arrangements for pupils starting at the school.
- The school seeks and acts upon the views of the pupils on a regular basis.
- There is good support and guidance for the pupils' personal development and academic development in English, mathematics and science.
- Guidance in the other subjects is variable; it is satisfactory overall but there is room for improvement.

Commentary

32. The good relationships within the school help pupils to feel valued as individuals. They are comfortable in talking to their teachers, both during lessons and playtimes. This good interaction helps to build the pupils' confidence. Personal development is monitored

informally, and teachers share relevant information as pupils move through the school. The teachers know their pupils and their families well, and are able to react sensitively to any problems that occur. Pupils say that they would not hesitate to tell their teachers if they were unhappy or being bullied, and they are certain that their concerns would be taken seriously.

33. The good induction arrangements help pupils settle into their new school quickly. There are well-developed links with the infant school, and both parents and pupils are given good opportunities to visit their new surroundings well before transfer. The parents say that the system helps their children to quickly feel comfortable in their new surroundings. The two schools are in the early stages of developing curriculum links, and are working towards a consistent handwriting style at present.
34. The views of pupils are sought through the school council, PHSCE lessons and discussion time. The school council is well established and the pupils are very confident to offer their ideas and voice their opinions. They feel their suggestions are taken seriously and follow any changes through to make sure that they are fully implemented. During the inspection, pupils excitedly played with their new, giant chess game that they had requested. Council members gain confidence and maturity through their work and pupils generally appreciate the fact that they have an influence in the running of their school.
35. The health and safety and child protection concerns highlighted in the previous report have all been dealt with and are now satisfactory. This represents a good improvement.
36. The care, support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is good and for those in the SEN base it is very good when they are integrated into class lessons. Teachers and the special needs manager liaise well to plan activities and support. The teaching assistants are well informed about individual needs and use their initiative to intervene where and when appropriate to ensure that pupils are getting the most out of their lessons. There is very sensitive but firm support for those pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.
37. Pupils have challenging targets in the key subjects to promote good progress and this is good practice. In the other subjects, the guidance is variable because of the inconsistent approaches to assessment and the quality of information that it provides. This is key issue of the inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is good and results in good support for pupils' learning. There are good links with other schools and satisfactory links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- The views of parents are sought regularly through the use of questionnaires.
- Parents are provided with good information about the school and their children's progress.

Commentary

38. The returned questionnaires show that parents are very pleased with the teaching, and the fact that their children are expected to work hard. They say their children are happy at school and that they make good progress. These views were endorsed at the parents' meeting. There were, however, some concerns raised about the general behaviour of the pupils and, in particular, the incidents of bullying. During the inspection the behaviour of pupils was seen to be good and they expressed no concerns about being bullied. They clearly know that bullying or any form of oppressive behaviour is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly on the few occasions when it occurs.
39. The school seeks the views of parents throughout the year. Parents of Year 3 pupils are asked to comment on the success of the induction arrangements. There is an exit poll for the parents of Year 6 pupils, seeking their overall opinion of the school. Parents of Years 4 and 5 pupils are asked about specific issues such as the school's homework policy or the behaviour of the pupils. The results of the questionnaires are analysed and the parents are informed of the findings and any action to be taken. This represents a good level of consultation together with effective action on the issues raised. There are three parents' meeting each year and the school has an 'open door' policy with teachers willing to talk to parents at any reasonable time. The vast majority of parents say that they feel well informed about their children's progress and feel comfortable about approaching school. This close involvement with the parents contributes well to the home-school partnership and consequently, to learning.
40. Parents are kept well informed about school events and news through the monthly school 'Flyer'. This is a well-produced and user-friendly newsletter. At the beginning of each term parents are given dates of significant forthcoming events, and are told of the topics their children will be studying. Parents receive a letter of introduction from their child's new class teacher at the start of each school year and this helps to forge good relationships. They are given copies of the school's homework, behaviour and Internet safety policies so that they are aware of expectations and boundaries. The annual reports on pupils' progress are informative and detailed and include targets for learning. Overall, the good information supplied to parents helps them to be actively involved in their children's learning.
41. Links with the community are satisfactory. One very popular visitor to school is a representative of a local church mission who takes some assemblies and religious education lessons. Pupils describe these sessions as 'excellent'. Representatives of charities also come into school and pupils respond well as they learn about the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. There are good links with local schools and colleges that bring many benefits to pupils' education. These include instrumental tuition from the music service and specialist help in subjects such as physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively and governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and based firmly on high aspirations and continuous improvement.
- There have been very good improvements in the leadership and management roles of the governing body and that of the senior management team since the inspection of 1999.
- The management and leadership of English, mathematics and science are very good.
- Day-to-day practice reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to all parts of school life.
- Information gathered from the school's self-evaluation programme is used effectively in school improvement planning.

Commentary

42. The school successfully lives out its mission statement on a day-to-day basis. Staff and governors are committed to the ethos of the school; they strive for high achievement and provide a caring environment where all pupils, regardless of any special need they may have, are fully integrated into all activities. Across the school, there is a strong sense of shared purpose and a clear vision for future development. Staff are constantly looking for ways to improve and work hard to this end. The headteacher and governors appreciate the main aids to learning in school; these include a dedicated teaching staff, supportive parents and pupils who are keen to learn. Problems or barriers are generally recognised quickly and tackled effectively. The increasing complexity of coping with the nature of pupils' special educational needs is a constant challenge for staff. In the past, falling roll numbers and reduced funding have been issues but are addressed by the long-term spending plan now in place.
43. The very effective cycle of self-evaluation includes classroom observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work and the checking of planning. This is carried out by the headteacher, senior management team and subject managers. Data from national and optional tests is very thoroughly analysed to see if there are any areas that require further development. All the information is then fed into school improvement planning. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The detailed tracking and target-setting system allows the headteacher, subject managers and teachers to check that individuals, classes and year groups are making the expected progress and to check that good challenges are set for the higher attaining pupils. Swift action is taken whenever a pupil's progress falls short of expectations. Staff investigate the reasons and provide appropriate support, either through specially targeted work or extra help in the classroom. This is an important factor that underpins the good achievement. Records of attainment and progress are thorough and easy to follow for English, mathematics and science. This enables managers to check effectively the quality of provision and attainment. For the other subjects, assessment and record keeping are not sufficiently developed to provide a clear, overall picture of pupils' achievement or to evaluate the success of the provision.
44. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator who is also the specialist teacher for the SEN base. A major strength of leadership and management at the school is seen in the success of the policy to integrate the pupils from the SEN base into mainstream classes, mainly in the afternoons. This has required some innovative approaches, much trial and error and a strong, whole-school commitment to the principle of inclusion. The deputy headteacher and senior management team are constantly evaluating the success of the approach and are pro-active in sorting out issues as and when they arise.

45. Staff have regular performance reviews, through which a programme of training and development needs is established. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. A lot of work has been done to improve the leadership skills of the subject managers. They use the information from their monitoring work effectively to produce an annual action plan for their subject which, in turn, is fed into the whole-school plan for improvement. The headteacher is keen to maintain a good work-life balance for his staff. Changes are well thought out, fully discussed and introduced at a sensible pace that allows for problems to be tackled as they arise. As a result, the school is able to attract and retain staff of high quality who promote pupils' learning at a good rate.
46. Support staff and teachers are deployed effectively to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Some teaching assistants have received training and are well supported in this; there are plans to extend this programme for the future. The school secretary has extensive expertise and experience, covering a varied range of duties to provide very good support. The accommodation and resources are used efficiently and best value is routinely sought. Taking account of the good quality of education, the high standards of attainment, the good leadership and management and costs that are around average (taking into account the costs of the special educational needs facility) the school provides good value for money.
47. Between them, the governors have a good range of expertise and experience that they use for the ultimate benefit of the pupils. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory requirements and offers equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils. They have an informed view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are fully involved in the decision-making processes that lead to school improvement planning, and they regularly check on the success of the work covered. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. They keep a close eye on attainment patterns and ask relevant questions. They are fully aware of the issues caused by having two classes in mobile classrooms and have been negotiating with the local authority to rectify matters. At present, they do not have the funding to solve the problem.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	667,233	Balance from previous year	-20,124
Total expenditure	669,881	Balance carried forward to the next	-22,772
Expenditure per pupil	2,803		

48. The totals above include the income and expenditure relating to the special educational needs facility. The deficit budget resulted from misinformation given to the school, the cost of covering long-term staff illnesses and fluctuating roll numbers caused by changes in the local population. A spending plan, agreed with the local authority, is in place to bring the school finances back into the black in the near future.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is well above average.
- Achievement is good overall and very good for the higher attaining pupils.
- Teaching is good overall, with several examples of very good teaching observed during the inspection.
- Pupils have individual targets that are based on careful assessments of work completed and this helps them to improve.
- Pupils regularly use the full range of their literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported and achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- There is very good leadership of the subject.

Commentary

49. Standards in English have risen since the previous inspection because there has been a strong focus on improving writing. Pupils attain standards well above the national average and achieve well. Around 50 per cent of pupils attained the higher level 5 in the 2004 tests and the same percentage are on track to do so in 2005. This represents very good progress for the higher attaining pupils since few enter the school with higher-than-average standards in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress along their individual learning programmes.
50. Pupils throughout the school enjoy English lessons. They are given many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. For example, during lessons, pupils are often given a short time to discuss with a partner before offering an opinion or answering a question. By Years 5 and 6, pupils attain well above average standards in speaking. They converse with adults confidently and read aloud with very good expression. Overall, pupils' listening skills are very good, especially in situations such as whole school assemblies. However, there are a few boys in some classes who lose concentration easily, although they are well supported by their teachers and support staff.
51. Pupils make good progress in reading and receive valuable help from their parents. Many enter the school with good, basic reading skills. Teachers provide an interesting range of books to widen their knowledge of authors and to encourage pupils to try out new genres. Good attention has been given to providing books of interest for both boys and girls. Through their guided reading sessions, pupils learn to enhance their comprehension skills, to infer meanings and to deduce facts. They examine different styles of writing and develop their capabilities for research. As a result, many attain the higher level 5 in reading by the end of Year 6 and achieve well.

52. Writing skills are well above average in Years 6 and 5, illustrating the success of the focused action to improve attainment in this area. Pupils use a good range of strategies to make their work interesting. These include:
- adventurous use of vocabulary;
 - complex sentences to give detail;
 - short sentences to create suspense;
 - addressing the reader directly to engage interest;
 - using the full range of punctuation to guide the reader.
53. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 write at length when recording their work in other subjects, using an appropriate non-fiction style to match the subject matter. There is especially good achievement in the standards of handwriting and presentation because there is a strong focus on these areas in Year 3. Spelling skills develop well with pupils learning to split words into syllables effectively or to identify prefix, root and suffix. Homework is very well used here with good preparation for the weekly spelling tests.
54. Teachers have good subject knowledge and often deliver their lessons with flair. They demonstrate the skills of writing effectively and pupils copy the useful techniques illustrated. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' achievement, both in class and when taking small groups for targeted work such as reading or spelling. Lessons begin with a clear explanation of the learning target so pupils know what is expected. Teachers include different short activities which generates a brisk pace to learning. They also deploy a good range of teaching techniques and include interactive sessions to maintain pupils' interests. For example, drama was used to introduce the difficult concept of active and passive voice and some good discussion emerged as pupils investigated idioms in the English language. Computers are used well, for example to help pupils present their work or for research purposes.
55. A major strength in the teaching of English is the very thorough assessment of pupils' learning and the careful tracking of their progress. This enables teachers to identify precisely where a pupil is having difficulty and problems are quickly rectified. It also leads to the setting of challenging targets which underpin the good and often very good achievement, especially in writing. Much evaluation of work is completed orally as teachers intervene skilfully in the writing process, prompting pupils to edit or reconsider parts of their work. Pupils' work in class and that completed at home is consistently marked to a very high standard. There is lots of praise for success and effort and clear pointers that show pupils how they can improve. There is a good emphasis on pupils evaluating their own work and corrections are routinely completed. The 'writing worms' recently introduced provide a good motivation for pupils since they represent a fun way to record the successes achieved by each individual.
56. Pupils in the SEN base usually have their English lessons in a small group. This is a successful strategy in providing them with the essential literacy skills that they need to take full advantage of their afternoon lessons in classes. However, the wide spread of age groups makes it difficult to find texts that will interest all for whole-class sessions and the school is looking at ways to split the shared reading session in order to solve the problem. Some of the resources for English in the base are old and uninspiring, especially the stock of reading books. This is recognised as an area needing improvement.

57. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and focused on constant improvement. The subject manager has a thorough overview of standards, teaching and learning and resources across the school. Consequently, there have been very good improvements in provision and learning since the previous inspection. The library has been recently re-catalogued and old stocks removed. There is a satisfactory selection of non-fiction books to cover all the topics and subjects taught and the school makes good use of the local authority's school library service to supplement the range of material. The distance between some classrooms and the library makes it difficult to use it for independent research. Teachers overcome this issue well by providing 'topic' boxes in the classroom which can be used at any time.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

At Brackenwood, speaking and listening, reading, writing are not confined to English lessons but are used well in every subject, often to a very good standard. This is a significant factor that underpins the sustained good progress since pupils have many opportunities to consolidate and extend the skills that they acquire.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

- Standards of attainment are well above the national average by Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. The use of setting for mathematics has proved very successful.
- Very good subject leadership is focused on high attainment.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The use of ICT in mathematics is helping pupils to make good progress.

Commentary

58. The results of the 2003 national tests were well above average with almost half of the pupils attaining the higher level 5. A similar picture is seen in the unvalidated results for 2004 and in lesson observations made during the inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The school offers good challenge for pupils who are capable of higher attainment and they achieve very well.
59. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and much is very good. Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations of standards of behaviour and use their very good subject knowledge and questioning skills well to support pupils' progress effectively. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject often fires pupils with enthusiasm for the task. Classrooms are hives of activity with good work habits clearly established. Particularly strong is the focus on teaching basic skills, especially during oral and mental sessions. Very good use is made of the interactive white boards to explain new topics and to take pupils through worked examples.
60. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils so that they feel involved in their lessons and are inspired to work hard. The management of lessons is very good and

pupils' interests are maintained through several, short activities. Teachers bring pupils together at the end of lessons to review what has been learnt. They use this opportunity well to praise pupils' efforts and to boost their confidence. Work is marked very conscientiously. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

61. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers recognise that some pupils need an easier or harder starting point for independent work and match tasks closely to prior learning. The system of setting for mathematics, based on prior learning, helps teachers to gauge the pace of the lesson well to suit pupils' needs. Teaching assistants provide good support in whole-class and group sessions.
62. Pupils throughout the school enjoy mathematics and are keen to learn. Homework is set regularly and pupils bring it back to school at the specified time. When required, pupils work cooperatively in pairs and small groups. This is very effective in promoting problem solving skills and in the development of mathematical language.
63. Assessment in mathematics is very good and informs teachers' planning well. The subject is very well led and managed by a dedicated and effective co-ordinator who sets a good example for colleagues. Management brings a high level of skill to the subject and keeps a careful check on learning through the school. Resources are good. They are well organised and readily available when required.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Skills in mathematics are effectively applied across other areas of the curriculum. Time lines in history help pupils to sequence important events. They read graphs and charts when researching topics and measure accurately when conducting science experiments or when constructing models in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the age of eleven are well above the national average.
- Pupils' achievement in science is good and very good for the higher attaining pupils.
- There have been very good improvements in investigational and experimental science.
- Teaching is good and very good for the older pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.

Commentary

64. Results in the 2003 national tests in science were above the national average. However, when compared to schools in similar circumstances, they were below average. The school took immediate action to analyse the results and then to introduce a greater emphasis on the skills of scientific investigation and experimentation. Results in 2004 national tests were much improved, with 97% of pupils attaining level 4 and 60% of pupils the higher level 5. Inspection findings are that pupils make good progress in their scientific knowledge and skills and that standards in Year 6 are similar to those of 2004, being well above the national average. This positive picture reflects not only the recent, very good improvements but many developments in the provision for science since the

previous report. A new scheme of work has been implemented which is aiding teachers in their planning of lessons. Pupils are now making more use of information and communication to research information and record their findings.

65. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and the higher attaining pupils progress very well indeed. Skills of observation develop well from Year 3 onwards where pupils had investigated living and non-living things, drawing out the differences. By Years 5 and 6, pupils are able to make reasonable predictions to plan an experiment, record results and arrive at a conclusion. Skills in English are used well. For example, during both Year 5 lessons seen, pupils' use of scientific language was very good and pupils of all ages use various non-fiction styles to record their work. Pupils use a good range of charts and tables in their work, thus extending their mathematical skills. A good improvement since the last inspection is pupils' increased use of ICT to find information and to present data in spreadsheets and in graphical form.
66. Teachers use a practical approach and make learning fun. Lessons are planned in very good detail, providing additional support where it is needed and good challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The skilful use of probing questions makes pupils think and provide explanations. Teaching assistants often help identified pupils by explaining technical terms so that they are fully included in discussions. As a result, pupils are beginning to think as young scientists, to ask their own, searching questions and devise a means of finding the answers.
67. Management of the subject is very good. Self-evaluation documents show a good knowledge of the standards of teaching and learning through observing work in the classrooms. There is a good programme of training, for both teachers and managers. Assessment, which is practically based, is of a good standard and new procedures are enabling teachers to track pupils' progress closely in all the different aspects of science. Good links with the secondary schools provide pupils with experiences that prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the subject has improved well since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school because of the good leadership of the subject and effective teaching.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils and there are high expectations of work output.
- The well-developed use of ICT in other subject areas is increasing awareness of its usefulness as a learning tool.

Commentary

68. Standards in all areas of ICT are above national expectations. The computer suite is having a very positive effect in raising standards which are further enhanced by the use of

ICT in other subjects. Interactive white boards are used well by teachers and pupils across the whole school.

69. Pupils take part in ICT lessons in the suite, backed up by further work on the classroom computers. This enables good consolidation and practise of what is learned. All computers are linked to the Internet and this provides very good opportunities for independent research. Teaching and learning are both good. Pupils want to learn because they really enjoy their ICT lessons. They demonstrate excitement, interest and concentration in their work and subsequently achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in classes. More able pupils are often provided with very challenging tasks. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils worked diligently developing their word processing skills as they produced a piece of writing, adding art work to enhance the finished product. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any Year 6 ICT lessons but an analysis of work in pupils' folders show that they cover a wide range of work to reach a good standard.
70. The leadership and management of the subject are good and there is very good support for staff and pupils, which helps them to gain confidence. The services of a visiting technician ensures that teachers have high quality equipment and good software that is kept in good working order. The manager of the subject has plans to introduce a new system of assessment, which will take into account the extended use of ICT in other subjects and provide more information to help plan future work. An improved system of assessment is under development which will provide teachers with a detailed view of progress in each aspect of ICT. At present, assessment is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

ICT is used well to support learning across the curriculum. Teachers' planning for other subjects regularly identifies opportunities for its use. Word processing is regularly used in English to present work attractively or to redraft writing. ICT is used well to present tables and graphs in mathematics and science. Pupils use CD-Roms and the Internet regularly for personal research in other subjects such as history, geography and art.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision for geography is **good**.

- Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy geography; they achieve well.
- There is good coverage of all aspects of the subject.
- Teaching is good and builds up pupils' knowledge and skills systematically.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

71. From the lessons observed and an analysis of pupils' work, indications are that pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach standards that are above expectations.
72. Mapping skills are well developed and pupils in Year 6 are confident in reading world maps and using grid references. They have studied the changes in world maps over time in a good link with history studies. Other very useful links between the subjects include work on the Aztecs and the countries of South America. This type of topic work enhances learning well and helps pupils to recognise cause and effect and how events can change the future. The programme of study includes a good emphasis on investigation in the local area. There is a good emphasis on field work with pupils developing a good understanding of environmental issues and an interest in conservation. Through links with PHSCE work, pupils are aware of the effects of waste and the benefits of recycling; this is helping to develop their skills of citizenship.
73. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make lessons very interesting and set work which offers a good level of challenge to pupils at different stages of learning, including those with special educational needs or the higher attaining pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well. Good opportunities for speaking and listening or for practising different kinds of writing develop pupils' literacy skills well. The use of tables and graphs, together with mapping work develops their numeracy skills effectively.
74. The leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a good, useful scheme of work based on the latest national guidance. This concentrates well on the development of geographical skills as well as knowledge and has helped to improve standards. There is scope, however, to investigate the similarities and differences between different cultures around the world and how cultural factors influence daily life. Assessments of pupils' work are satisfactory but could be better. They are carried out at the end of each topic but procedures are not consistent and records do not provide a clear picture of progress across each aspect of geography.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy studying the past and achieve well.
- Teaching is good.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to practice their literacy skills in history.

Commentary

75. The observation of lessons and an analysis of work in books and on display indicate that pupils achieve well and the standard of work is above expectations.
76. Lessons are interesting and include a good emphasis on historical enquiry. For example, pupils in one lesson investigated how new inventions and discoveries in Britain since the 1930s had changed everyday lives. Through some thought provoking discussion, pupils decided that the discovery of anti-biotics was the most important because it had

benefited all mankind. There is a good emphasis on personal research. For instance, pupils used different sources to find out about Egyptian pharaohs. They used technical terms well and came to realise the importance of archaeology in telling us about the past. Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of people and events of the past and of change over time.

77. Good use is made of ICT in this subject. In one lesson on Ancient Egypt the teacher made very good use of the interactive white board to show a short video extract which fired pupils' curiosity. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively as they report their findings succinctly.
78. There is good leadership and management in the subject and good sharing of expertise. Teachers' planning and pupils' completed work is checked regularly to ensure that the curriculum is covered thoroughly. Visits and visitors to the school add special interest and enrichment to the subject. For example, pupils had investigated, at first hand, the history of a local priory and others were looking forward to some drama work linked to their current topic. Resources are good and well used. The school is aware of the need to devise a new system of assessment for history.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning covers all elements of the subject and includes a good emphasis on world religions.
- Lessons pay good attention to supporting pupils' personal development.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

79. The curriculum meets fully the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The provision and the quality of teaching have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment matches expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the subject supports pupils' moral, social and spiritual development well. Achievement is satisfactory.
80. Across the age groups, pupils have a sound understanding of Bible stories and older pupils understand that religious belief often influences people's ways of life. There is a satisfactory emphasis on learning about world religions and pupils are knowledgeable about the main leaders, festivals and important events in different faiths. Some older pupils had engaged in research about Christians who had 'made a difference' and were recording their findings through text and graphics. The scrutiny of work showed that pupils have a sound understanding of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism and of how people's faith influences their everyday lives. In conversations with pupils it is apparent that they have a good respect for other people's beliefs.
81. The teaching is satisfactory overall and one lesson seen during the inspection was good. There are good links with personal, health, social and citizenship education when pupils consider why we need rules or as they write about people in the community. There are

very few opportunities, however, for pupils to meet with, and learn about, people from various cultures.

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there is a current action plan in place to improve provision. The resources are satisfactory and the subject manager is planning to increase the range of artefacts for the different religions studied. The assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is in the early stages of development and does not provide a clear picture of their progress. There are good links with the Liverpool City Mission and visits by a representative are very much enjoyed by the pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was observed in design and technology and none in music. It was therefore not possible to make judgements on provision and teaching in these two subjects.

Design and technology

83. Additional evidence was obtained through looking at planning, examining pupils' work and talking to teachers and pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy their design and technology lessons. A satisfactory range of resources is used to develop skills and techniques across the nationally recommended programmes of study. Teachers' plans show that pupils have sound opportunities to investigate products, develop, plan and record their designs and to evaluate their work. Links with personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum help to develop pupils' understanding of healthy eating and food hygiene. In the one lesson observed, pupils examined the variety, structure and content of sandwiches. They drew and labelled their diagrams with care. A discussion with Year 6 pupils shows that they know about what tools, equipment and materials to use and are well aware of safety issues. Photographic records show an interesting range of topics studied, including designing and making moving and controllable vehicles, making types of packaging and three-dimensional construction.
84. The management of design and technology is satisfactory. There has been appropriate training for staff which has improved confidence in teaching the subject. Assessment is an area that the school has identified for development in order to track more precisely the development of skills as pupils move through the school.

Music

85. No music lessons were taught during the three days of the inspection. Judgements are therefore based on video evidence, singing in assemblies, discussion with teachers and pupils, as well as a scrutiny of documentation and parents' comments.
86. Planning documents show that pupils cover all the recommended programme of study for music. They listen and appreciate the work of famous composers. For example, Year 4 pupils listened to Vivaldi's music, saying what they did and did not like about it. Pupils have opportunities to play percussion for their own compositions or to accompany musical performances. Recorder groups start in Year 3 and many pupils then progress to having tuition in their chosen instrument. Several pupils play in a brass group and many others in the school orchestra under the direction of visiting instrumental teachers. Pupils enjoy performing and this is an area that was commended by parents. Through the annual

productions, they have opportunities to play and sing to a good standard. The video of their version of 'Rocky Monster' shows confident performances before an audience.

87. The quality of singing is good. During assemblies pupils sing hymns with good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. The provision for music supports pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development well. For example, at Christmas time the choir sings carols for the community, a visiting musician introduced pupils to African music and pupils listen to a variety of music from around the world in their lessons. Once a year there is a celebration of musical talent where all musicians in the school take part and their work is enjoyed. This enhances the profile of the subject within school and enriches the provision well.
88. The subject manager provides satisfactory leadership. Assessment, which is satisfactory, needs developing further in order to track pupils' progress more accurately as they move through the school. All pupils have full and equal access to the subject and extra-curricular activities, and those with special educational needs are fully involved and often enjoy the opportunity to show their creative talents.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in art and design is above expectations and pupils achieve well.
- The programme of work provides a good range of practical and creative experiences.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the work of artists.
- Teaching is good.
- Procedures to assess pupils' progress in art are satisfactory but in need of further improvement.

Commentary

89. As only three lessons were seen, discussion with teachers and the pupils, as well as evidence from samples of work have been taken into account when making judgements. Attainment in art and design is above expectations. Pupils throughout the school have a good knowledge of the work of famous artists. There were some interesting discussions as Year 6 pupils shared their knowledge about the impressionists and Year 4 pupils were keen to try out the style of Seurat. They showed a good understanding of the techniques he used and showed creativity as they mixed and blended colours. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Because of their intent concentration and attention to detail, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. This was especially evident in a lesson for older pupils when they had the difficult task of enlarging a drawing using a grid. A small number of gifted pupils achieved very good standards, working with very good accuracy and a very good sense of proportion.
90. Pupils cover a good range of work, both in two and three dimensions. Artistic skills are used well in many other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils produced some colourful Aztec headdresses as part of their history studies. Computers are also well used for research and to appreciate artistic works.

91. Teaching is good and lessons are carefully planned and prepared. Whilst pupils are working, praise is given to provide them with the confidence to try out new skills. Skilful questioning prompts their thinking and guides them towards improvement. Teachers demonstrate skills well and provide varied opportunities for pupils to explore and develop their own ideas. There is a good quality of support by teaching assistants which means that pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress in their art lessons. Pupils' work is highly valued and celebrated in some eye-catching displays.
92. The manager for the area provides good leadership. The identified areas for further development include better assessment of pupils' progress and to enhance study by arranging specialist workshops.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above expectations.
- Pupils enjoy games activities and have good standards of sportsmanship.
- Teaching and learning is good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

93. During the inspection, the focus in physical education was mainly on swimming, games activities and gymnastics. Attainment is above national expectations, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. Achievement is good, due mainly to good teaching and the pupils' own eagerness to improve.
94. All lessons commence and end with appropriate warm-up and cool-down exercises. Pupils know and understand the importance of these activities in relation to heart-beat, breathing and muscle relaxation. During team games, pupils are aware of the importance of pace and accuracy in passing the ball. They recognise the benefits of team work and show good tactics when defending or attacking. Pupils learn quickly due to good demonstrations by teachers and their own willingness to persevere and improve. In one lesson, the girls were trying out some new football skills, with particularly good progress seen in dribbling the ball. In gymnastics, pupils show good control in executing their movements. Older ones, for example, created fluent balancing sequences with variations in speed and direction. A very good feature of attainment in the subject is the high level of swimming proficiency. By the time they leave school, almost all pupils swim the expected 25 metres unaided. Many are competent in the water; using a range of different strokes and having a secure understanding of personal survival skills.
95. The school places strong emphasis on physical development and in helping pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. As a result, they adopt a positive and enthusiastic approach.

They benefit greatly from organised coaching sessions by professionals. For example the recent football course has generated the girls' interest in the sport. Other sports played over the year include netball, basketball, cricket, rugby and hockey and in the summer term there is a strong emphasis on athletics. This good provision means that there is something to interest everyone and to encourage participation in competitive sport. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which includes an annual outdoor activity course. Pupils say that this provides them with rich experiences and a sense of achievement.

96. Teaching is good with clear instructions and direction. As pupils work, teachers make suggestions, praise, encourage, question and enable them to evaluate and find ways of improving their performance. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to enable them to succeed.
97. The subject manager provides good leadership. She is supported well by other teachers and outside helpers who are willing to devote time to the promotion of the out-of-school clubs. There are close links with sports staff of local secondary schools who provide expert advice and support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION and citizenship (PHSCE)

Judgements were made on the basis of two dedicated lessons for PHSCE, by talking to pupils, and gathering evidence from completed work and displays in school.

98. The school makes good provision for the teaching of personal and social and health and citizenship education. Themes are taught in PHSCE lessons and are well integrated into other subject areas, such as science, geography or religious education. In food technology, pupils learn and follow hygiene rules and know the importance of clean hands. As part of their religious education lessons, pupils study different religions and are encouraged to have respect for other people's beliefs. In geography, pupils learn about conservation issues whilst in science they gain a good grounding in the delicate balance of nature and of the interdependence between living things.
99. The ethos of the school and the caring attitudes of adults are reflected in pupils' attitudes and promote mutual respect effectively. This enables teachers to plan lessons around complex issues because they know that pupils listen attentively and are able to empathise with people in difficult situations. For example, some Year 4 pupils discussed the issue of prejudice, recognising that this often arises as a result of ignorance. There is a strong spiritual, social and moral element to lessons with very good links to religious education themes.
100. Leadership and management are good; consequently the subject has a high profile. There is a strong emphasis on health education with pupils encouraged to develop sensible habits of diet and exercise and to recognise the harmful effects of some substances.

101. There are good opportunities for pupils of all ages to take responsibility, to act as monitors and to take initiative. Pupils recognise that rights carry responsibilities and consider carefully the effects of their actions on other people. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on their actions and to see situations from other points of view. This is a major strength that underpins the behaviour management strategies in school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

