

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Greasby Merseyside

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105028

Headteacher: Mr G Scholefield

Lead inspector: Mr C Smith

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2005

Inspection number: 266508

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 –11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 242

School address: Escolme Drive
Greasby
Wirral
Merseyside

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr Neil Powell
governors:

Date of previous 24th May 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brookdale is an average size primary school in the residential area of Greasby on the Wirral, Merseyside. Two hundred and forty two children attend the school full time; 119 boys and 123 girls. Almost all of the children are white and all are English speaking. Five children are from Asian or mixed white and Asian backgrounds and there are two children in care. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has fallen slightly reflecting the declining trends in the area. The number of children entitled to free school meals is 18 per cent, which is broadly average. Thirty-two pupils have special educational needs (14 per cent), which is broadly average. The school has a designated unit with 15 places for pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties. These pupils enter the school from Year 3. The ten pupils in the unit, all with statements of educational need are now fully included in mainstream classes and are not taught separately, as they were at the time of the last inspection. After several years of stability, there have been several changes of teachers recently, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The school gained 'Investors in People status and an achievement award in 2001 and received the 'Healthy School's' awards in 2004. Children enter school with a wide range of levels of attainment but for the majority it is broadly at the levels expected for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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			Music
			Design and technology
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30834	Ann Lawson	Team inspector	English
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Physical education
23887	Peter Nettleship	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
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			History
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			English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brookdale is an effective school that provides good value for money. The school is well led and managed and much care and attention is devoted to pupils' personal development. Consequently they develop positive attitudes to learning and behave very responsibly. Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well and standards are above average overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography and physical education.
- Teaching is good overall and consistently good in the reception classes.
- Pupils' personal development is very good because of the caring atmosphere, the strong partnership with parents and the rich curriculum provided.
- Despite the school's good leadership, checking the work of the school is not rigorous enough to eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils are not given targets to enable them to know how to improve.

Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. Leadership and teaching continue to be effective. Pupils' good progress and the above average standards attained have been maintained. After the last inspection, the school was left to improve lesson planning and the assessment of pupils' learning. Lesson planning is better because pupils' different learning needs are carefully considered. Good procedures have been introduced to assess pupils' learning and the information is used well to track their progress. However, pupils are not given individual targets to inform them of how they can reach the next level, which limits their potential to improve their own learning. Following the last inspection, the school was directed to check quality of teaching and learning more thoroughly. Systems to achieve this have been devised, although changes of staff have hampered the effectiveness of the process.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well overall. Reception children make very good progress in their personal development and good progress in their language, mathematical and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In these areas of learning, they exceed the learning goals expected for their age. Their creative development is satisfactory, being limited by lack of space. Infant pupils achieve well. Standards have been rising and are above average in Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils enter the school with statements of special educational needs from Year 3. This affects trends and the standards achieved at the end of Year 6. Although these pupils make good progress, the standards they achieve are low in comparison to attainment nationally. This affects the school's results overall. In the table above,

standards would be a grade higher in each subject, if their results were taken out of the calculation. Given this adjustment, junior pupils make good progress in English and science to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. They make at least satisfactory progress in mathematics to reach the standards expected. The similar schools comparison column above has been adjusted to give a more accurate picture of pupils' achievement over time. Pupils are now making good progress in ICT and achieve good standards in geography and physical education.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils develop good attitudes to learning and behave very well. They take full advantage of the many rich opportunities to accept responsibility and to develop independence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Pupils receive a good education and benefit from effective teaching. Consistently good teaching in the reception classes, through the provision of a wide range of stimulating activities, ensures that children's learning gets off to a good start. Teaching from Years 1 to Year 3 is mainly good and often very good in Year 4. In these classes, the atmosphere for learning is always positive and pupils give of their very best. In Years 5 and 6, there are examples of very good and excellent teaching but there are some inconsistencies in pupils' learning. Although teaching in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory overall, teachers are not equally successful in ensuring pupils' good application and careful presentation of finished work. Consequently, errors are sometimes made through carelessness. In all classes, teachers plan their lessons carefully, taking account of pupils' different learning needs. There is usually a good level of challenge in the work provided. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are able to learn successfully. Much of this reflects the high quality work of the support staff. Teachers use a good range of stimulating methods, such as games, investigations and problem solving. These approaches enable pupils to acquire key skills, in addition to increasing their knowledge and understanding.

The school provides a good curriculum and the very good range of activities outside normal lessons enriches pupils' learning considerably. Members of staff take good care of the pupils and their personal development benefits from very good links with parents, other schools and the community. Pupils have very good opportunities to offer their views and influence how the school operates.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. Governance is very good. Governors are centrally involved in decision-making and ensure that all statutory requirements are fully met. The headteacher has guided the school successfully through a period of change, maintaining pupils' good achievement and a broad and rich curriculum. New members of staff are adjusting to their leadership roles. Increasingly, attention is being given to checking the work of the school. Good systems are in place to analyse pupils' assessment results and identify and strengthen any weaknesses. However, checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, particularly their written work, is not as rigorous as it should be in order to iron out any inconsistencies.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the education provided for their children and appreciate the many extras that the school offers. Pupils enjoy school and relish being invited to help to make the school a better place.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Remove the inconsistencies in teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 to enable the pupils to emulate the good achievement lower down the school.

- Provide targets in English and mathematics to enable pupils to know what they need to do to reach the next level and check the work of the school more rigorously to ensure that the above improvements are made.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average overall throughout the school. Standards are higher in Year 2 than at the time of the last inspection. They are about the same as they were in Year 6, apart from mathematics, which is not as high

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception children achieve well and exceed most of the learning goals expected.
- Standards have been rising more quickly in Year 2 than in Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography and physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- There are some inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in Years 5 and 6.

Commentary

1 Reception children soon become confident and independent learners. They make very good progress in their personal and social development and achieve the learning goals expected within the first term. Their creative development is limited by lack of space to express their ideas and feelings spontaneously, for example through painting or making models. However the standards achieved are satisfactory. Children achieve well in their language, mathematical and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In these areas of learning, children exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception year. This represents good achievement in relation to their starting point, which is broadly typical for their age.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (18.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.8 (17.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.5 (18.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (27.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.9 (27.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.7 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2 The school's results have been rising more quickly than they have nationally in Year 2 because of good teaching and effective leadership. The 2004 Year 2 national assessments were well above average overall and much higher than similar schools in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 2 are above average, rather

than well above, because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in the current group.

3 The trend in the school's results for pupils in Year 6 has not kept pace with national improvements. However, these results include the pupils with statements of special educational needs from the unit. When these pupils are removed from the calculation, standards in Year 6 currently (and in the national tests of 2004) are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Similarly, when allowances are made for the effect of the pupils in the unit, the school's results match those of similar schools and the progress that pupils have made from Year 2 to Year 6 is satisfactory in mathematics and good in English and science. Overall, junior pupils make good progress in English and science and satisfactory progress in mathematics.

4 The headteacher, staff and governors keep a close eye on standards and rigorously check pupils' assessment results each year. This analysis not only revealed the effects of pupils in the unit, but also unearthed weaknesses in pupils' writing and in the number of more able pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics. Introducing handwriting and spelling programmes, teaching pupils how to plan and edit their written work (using ICT) and writing in different styles and for different purposes in other subjects are helping to drive up standards. Standards in writing are now at the levels expected, however, the lack of clear targets for pupils to aim for is preventing standards from rising further. In mathematics, specific teaching of problem solving is improving pupils' calculation and reasoning skills. Raising the level of challenge by setting upper junior pupils for literacy and numeracy is raising the achievement of the more able pupils. Overall the more able pupils are now making good progress and more of them are forecast to reach the higher levels in 2005 than in 2004.

5 Children achieve well in English, science, geography and physical education throughout the school. In these subjects, standards are higher than the levels expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics from Years 1 to 4 and reach above average standards in these year groups. Although standards are at the levels expected in ICT, the imaginative use of the new technologies is accelerating pupils' achievement. Standards are higher than prescribed in the religious education syllabus for Wirral schools in the infant classes, though broadly at the levels expected by the end of Year 6. There is evidence of good achievement in design and technology. Pupils' singing is good. Many pupils achieve very high standards in swimming.

6 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in almost all lessons. Teachers and support staff constantly evaluate their achievement and search for ways to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, such as the early morning ICT sessions. The integration of pupils with statements of special educational need is receiving close attention. For example, the mental mathematics sessions are already being readjusted to make them more relevant to their needs.

7 At first glance it appears that girls are achieving better than boys. However, the difference merely reflects the higher number of boys amongst the pupils with special educational needs. Good progress is maintained from reception to the end of Year 4. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory but there are inconsistencies between the classes. These are noticeable in pupils' books, where work is sometimes left unfinished and not always carefully presented. These factors hamper progress, particularly when errors are caused through carelessness.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are good and behaviour is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attendance supports pupils' rate of learning very well.
- Very good relationships create a very positive learning atmosphere.
- The pupils' very good personal development makes them thoughtful citizens.

Commentary

8 Attendance last year was in the top ten per cent of all schools nationally. Pupils' find lessons interesting and they like to be with their friends and teachers. Over 98 per cent of parents agree that their children are happy at school. There have been no exclusions in the last five years. These factors along with the school's very effective incentives and procedures ensure a high rate of attendance, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.9%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.1
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed - White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Parent/pupil preferred not to say

No of pupils on roll
236
3
2
1

9 Pupils develop a very good understanding of right and wrong and mature social skills in response to the guidance and opportunities provided. Stimulating lessons engage pupils' interests very effectively. The way that teachers encourage pupils to work together is reflected in the high quality of group co-operation. Relationships flourish and most pupils become confident and productive learners. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good from reception to Year 4. In Year 5 and 6, most pupils work hard, but some of them do not pay enough attention to care and accuracy in their written work. Valuable opportunities to share in devising rules means that pupils learn to respect each other and act responsibly. Pupils with different learning needs are integrated into most lessons very well. Pupils say behaviour is improving each year, friendships are stronger and the playground is now a happy place to be.

10 Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is nurtured very effectively through the inclusive ethos of a school in which all pupils are valued. This makes a significant contribution to their increasing confidence and self esteem. Assemblies, acts of worship

and opportunities to discuss concerns and feelings in class, provide good opportunities for pupils to think, to develop empathy and to share their thoughts about the world around them. The school's racial equality policy ensures that all pupils are treated fairly and harmonious relationships are strongly promoted. In religious education lessons, pupils develop insights into, and a respect for, other faiths. Through geography lessons and after school clubs, pupils acquire a very good understanding of other cultures and languages, such as German and French.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Pupils benefit from good teaching, a well-planned curriculum and good levels of personal support. Very effective links with parents enable pupils to make the best of the many worthwhile opportunities provided.

Teaching and learning

Overall teaching is good and pupils learn effectively. The assessment of pupils' learning is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic teaching enables reception children to learn successfully.
- The good level of challenge boosts pupils' learning from Years 1 to 4.
- Inconsistencies in teaching in Year 5 and 6 classes hamper pupils' learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good levels of support.
- Pupils' learning is assessed well but setting targets has not been fully established.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (25%)	6 (13%)	25 (55%)	12 (28%)	1 (2%)	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.

11 The teaching of reception children is consistently good. Despite the lack of classroom space, efficient and creative organisation ensures that children enjoy many rich learning experiences. The reception classrooms are calm and purposeful as children busily engage in stimulating activities. Children's learning is assessed very effectively and the information is used very well to provide activities that are well matched to their different learning needs. This ensures that children get off to a good start, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and their personal development.

12 Effective teaching in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 maintains the strong momentum to pupils' learning. In these classes pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. Teachers explain new ideas very clearly, often using ICT projection screens to help them to understand. Questioning is used particularly well to make them think. Teachers often ask pupils to investigate and find out for themselves and pupils are encouraged to work together and share ideas. These methods stimulate their imagination, increase their organisational skills, encourage independent learning and improve their speaking and listening skills. Lessons are calm and purposeful even when there is a high degree of practical activity.

The success in pupils' learning in these classes is attributable to teachers' good organisation and management skills, thorough preparation and the provision of activities that take account of pupils' different levels of understanding.

13 Teaching is mainly satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. This part of school has been subjected to changes of staff over recent months. This partly explains the inconsistencies in pupils' learning. Some of the teaching is very good, particularly in English and geography. However, teachers are not equally successful in ensuring that pupils' good application and careful presentation of finished work are of a consistently high standard. However, the change of organisation, involving setting pupils according to ability for numeracy and literacy, is paying dividends. The more able pupils are responding well to the higher level of challenge and most of them are now fulfilling their potential.

14 Pupils with statements of special educational needs have been integrated fully into mainstream classes for literacy and numeracy. Teachers and support staff have a wealth of experience of teaching children with moderate to severe learning difficulties. These pupils benefit from skilled teaching and highly effective support. On most occasions, they receive carefully adapted work to meet their particular needs. Careful nurturing of their learning and self-esteem, results in good progress towards their personal targets. Year 5 and 6 teachers are learning daily how best to cater for pupils with special educational needs, whilst at the same time maintaining high level of challenge for other pupils. This is proving to be very demanding in the mental mathematics sessions.

15 Overall, the marking of pupils' work is good, although variable in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are given credit for effort and achievement. Teachers handle their mistakes sensitively and often marking often gives pupils pointers for improvement. Pupils' learning is effectively assessed when a unit of work has been completed. The outcomes help teachers to group pupils and provide work according to their particular needs. However, there is scope to improve the setting of targets to show pupils how they can move on to the next level. For example, because pupils do not have specific targets to enable them to know how to improve their written work their achievement in writing is held back.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum and pupils' learning and personal development is enriched very well through the wide range of additional activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad, rich and well-planned curriculum.
- Pupils' talents and interests are cultivated very well.
- The full integration of pupils with statements of special educational needs has been largely successful.

Commentary

16 The good curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection. Effective provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage through a rich assortment of stimulating activities, although the lack of space means that these activities cannot be offered at all times. Pupils are now very health conscious and environmentally aware because these issues are developed well as they move through school. Pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very systematically taught. For example, in geography, pupils' horizons are broadened on issues such as global warming. The school has also been very creative in adding German to the junior timetable and the initiative is becoming a model for other schools in the authority. Pupils have equal access and opportunity to participate in all activities. The provision made for pupils' different needs and talents has improved and is now good. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and their progress is tracked. Setting according to ability has been introduced to raise the level of challenge in literacy and numeracy. More able pupils are responding well by reaching higher levels.

17 Support for learning outside the school day is very good. Before school begins, pupils with special educational needs meet for 30 minutes to work on the computers and read to support staff. This daily input significantly improves their language and ICT skills. There is a good mix of well-attended sport, music, art and language clubs after school. These activities improve pupils' creative, physical and social skills and develop their interests. The school participates in many competitive sports and organises teams for soccer, netball and cross-country running, through which pupils develop an appreciation of teamwork and fair play.

18 Shortly before Christmas, the Special Educational Needs Unit, known formally as the Busy Bees class, was reorganised and its pupils placed in different junior classes. This decision was reached on educational grounds, though the changeover was forced by staff retirements that necessitated change. The inspection team was asked to review the impact of this decision. These findings are based on team observations and discussions:

19 Pupils from the Busy Bees have made a good transition to their new classes. They continue to benefit from the very good support provided by teachers and learning assistants. Due to this high quality support, pupils' levels of achievement are good. This is still a period of readjustment and teacher and support staff feel that some changes need to be made to ensure that the current provision matches that of the Busy Bees Unit. This is particularly so in the Years 5 and 6 mathematics. The current system of teaching mathematics places a strong emphasis on instruction and much discussion to develop thinking skills. In some lessons pupils from the unit are expected to listen for too long and

there are not enough opportunities for them to work practically. This makes it harder for them to understand new ideas. Older pupils explain that they like working in mainstream classes and feel that they have been well prepared to make the transition into secondary education. Younger pupils spoke more in favour of the unit, seemingly for the security that it provided them. Even so, all were happy with the new arrangement.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good. Staff provide good support and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school council is a very strong voice in school.
- Pupils have good understanding of the value of healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils receive good guidance about how well they have achieved, though targets are not used sufficiently to show them what they should aim for next.

Commentary

20 Participating and contributing towards the very strong school community makes a significant impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils feel that they are an important part in school decision-making and the school council, in particular, is helping to make the school better. Pupils have even been involved in staff recruitment. They feel that members of staff greatly value their opinions. Pupils are strongly encouraged to put forward their ideas or concerns using the 'Think boxes' and these issues are thoroughly examined in circle (discussion) time.

21 The school has received a Healthy School Award for its work in helping pupils to eat healthily and become fitter. Year 5 produced a healthy recipe book for parents to purchase. Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy snacks to school and are aware of which foods they should be eating. Water is available throughout the day and changes have been made to the school lunch menu. The school has appointed an 'Active Playground' worker. Pupils have received tuition in a range of playground games, designed to improve their physical fitness. This has also had a positive influence on the standard of behaviour at lunchtimes.

22 Pupils benefit from the good levels of care and attention they receive to enable them to make the best of the many opportunities provided. Any worries, concerns or anxieties are sensitively handled and the school's very good partnership with parents ensures that pupils' confidence and self-esteem are carefully nurtured. Pupils' academic progress is accurately measured and the marking of their work tells them how well they have achieved. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in setting and reviewing personal targets but this approach is only just being introduced in two classes. Consequently, most pupils do not know what level they are on or how to move to the next step in their learning.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed very good links with parents, the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong partnership between home and school supports pupils' learning.
- Friends of Brookdale make a very good contribution to school.
- Pupils' learning is extended very successfully through outside links.

Commentary

23 The school's partnership with parents has strengthened since the last inspection. Parents have a high regard for the school and most want to be involved. Regular consultation takes place to gather parents' views about future developments. This has led to significant improvements in the design of the playground and that way pupils are supervised at break times. Parents take up numerous opportunities to help in school. For example, making story sacks for the reception class, literacy and numeracy games for home use or training in the Successful Reading Partnership scheme. They receive regular and informative newsletters. Class curriculum letters have been introduced for each term. The best ones are lively, well presented and contain detailed information. As a result, most parents know exactly what their children will be doing and this helps them to support their learning.

24 The Friends of Brookdale is a busy and successful group that organises social and fundraising activities for parents, pupils and staff. The after-school discos are very popular with pupils. The seasonal fayres and events such as 'Millionaire' are very well attended. These events promote the very good relationship with school and make a substantial financial contribution to the school's work and environment. At present the committee is preparing a bid to secure funding for an Arts project.

25 Very good links with local secondary schools provide extra resources, specialist teaching and access to enhanced facilities, particularly in sport and technology. This contributes in part to pupils' good achievement in ICT and physical education. Visitors and visits to places of interest significantly improve pupils' understanding of history, geography and the arts. Joint events with other primary schools, such as music festivals and sporting fixtures, enhance pupils' personal development. Very good liaison with the pre-school class enables children to make a good start in reception.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. Governance of the school is very good. Many of the strong features of leadership have been maintained since the last inspection, such as the headteacher's effective leadership. The contribution made by key members of staff is satisfactory. Many of them are very new to their role. The headteacher and governors capitalise well on the aids to learning, such as good parental involvement and staff commitment. Barriers to learning are minimal because pupils who find learning difficult are very well supported.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are very well informed and key partners in the school's development.
- The Headteacher has a good overview and ensures that pupils receive a rich education.
- There are still some weaknesses in checking the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's financial planning and overall management is very efficient.

Commentary

26 Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

They are very well informed through visits into school and meaningful links with staff. Governors talk to teachers, pupils and liaise effectively with parents. This enables them to respond to different viewpoints when school initiatives are being considered. For example, governors are currently monitoring the full inclusion of those pupils with statements of special educational need who were previously taught in the unit. They are very aware of the emotional and educational issues involved. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. The school operates an effective race equality policy and staff and governors keep a careful eye on the performance of pupils of different abilities, gender and ethnic grouping.

27 The headteacher leads and manages the school well. The headteacher has guided the school well through a period of change, with many key subject leaders leaving due to retirement or promotion. This has been a challenging time, but he has a very positive outlook and welcomes the challenge as an opportunity for the school to move forward. Great importance is attached to recruiting new staff, often by observing the teaching of applicants before the interview. Consequently, good appointments have been made, from which the school is already reaping the benefit, for example, through improving achievement and standards in ICT and dance. The headteacher has been very successful in ensuring that all pupils receive a rich curriculum. Despite the many changes of staff, the standards achieved by the school have not been compromised and pupils have continued to achieve well.

28 Due to staff changes, many subjects have new leaders and this has meant that formal observation of the quality of teaching within each subject has not been a regular feature of the school's monitoring and evaluation process recently. Consequently, weaknesses in pupils' work rate, accuracy and care in presentation in Years 5 and 6 have not been identified and remedied because checking the quality of teaching and learning has not been sufficiently rigorous. As a result, the good rates of achievement in the infant and lower junior classes slow to a satisfactory level in the upper junior classes. This was a key issue for the school from the previous inspection and there is still some work to do in this area. However, the assessment of pupils' learning has improved, particularly with regard to analysing their performance in tests. This has led to concerted action to improve pupils' writing and to raise the level of challenge in mathematics.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	616437	Balance from previous year	13588
Total expenditure	601270	Balance carried forward to the next	28755
Expenditure per pupil	2372		

29 There is a very clear link between development planning and finance. Best value principles are clearly understood and are at the heart of the process. Finances are very well managed and the budget is monitored well by the headteacher, bursar and governors. The school gives good value for money.

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

30 **Provision in the Foundation Stage is good**, as it was at the previous inspection. There are 24 children in the reception class and 10 more in a mixed reception/Year 1 class. Children's attainment on entering school has been typical for their age over recent years. However, this is rising because the adjoining pre-school is preparing children increasingly well. The attainment of current intake of children into reception is higher than expected for their age. Children achieve well because teaching is consistently good. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. A strong team approach ensures that children benefit from a rich and well-planned curriculum in both classes. Children's learning is rigorously assessed and their progress is closely monitored, particularly those with special educational needs, to ensure that their learning needs are fully met. Parents play a significant role in supporting the school by providing extra help, both at home and in the classes. Staff have to work hard to compensate for the lack of space.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to explore and learn independently and behave responsibly.
- Their social skills and self-confidence increase rapidly.

Commentary

31 Strong teaching enables children of all abilities to achieve very well and most surpass the learning goals expected for their age. Teachers and support staff's very high expectations of children's behaviour are reflected in the very well ordered, purposeful and busy atmosphere in lessons. Children are very co-operative. They share equipment, help one another and play together harmoniously. Every opportunity is taken to praise their efforts so that they grow in confidence with each new success. Children are encouraged to explore and learn for themselves. Consequently, they develop independent work habits, for example when using and returning equipment. Their sense of responsibility is fostered very well and apparent in the way they look after the outdoor plants. Other cultures are explored well, such as French life and language. There is a strong sense of community in both classes that provides a strong and secure foundation for learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's speaking and listening skills develop a good rate and reading skills are taught well.
- Children's handwriting skills develop more effectively than their self-expression.

Commentary

32 Teaching is good in this area of learning. Children achieve well and their language and communication skills are higher than expected for their age. Teachers make good use of questioning to extend children's spoken language, develop their thinking skills and

stimulate ideas. Many children already speak in whole sentences – “I wouldn’t mind going in a hot-air balloon because I’m not afraid of heights!” Children who require additional help with spoken language receive very good support from classroom assistants. They make good progress towards their targets through regular opportunities to talk to a partner. Role-play activities are used well in both classes to encourage creative talk. Reading skills are taught well and most children already know key words and the letters of the alphabet. In addition, classrooms are full of words with attractive displays everywhere! As a result, children learn to love books, as sources of information and of entertainment. Skills of writing are not as advanced as other areas of literacy, although letter formation is taught well. Children finger-trace letters in the air then practise them on paper. Teachers regularly write down children’s words in their books for them to copy. However, they are not sufficiently encouraged to express their own ideas on paper, which restricts their creativity.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The tasks provided are well matched to children’s different learning needs.
- Children’s calculation skills are enhanced by using them in everyday situations.

Commentary

33 Children achieve well in this area of learning and standards are good. Half of the children are already on track to exceed the learning goals in their mathematical development. Teaching is good and mathematical discussions play an important part in children’s learning. Teachers’ deliberate mistakes are quickly spotted and eagerly rectified! Teachers probe children’s understanding well through astute questioning. The more able children relish the mental, problem-solving challenges. Classroom assistants provide very good support for children who find mathematics difficult. For example, a child sticking candles into a play dough ‘cake’, calculated mentally that there would be four still lit if three were blown out. This was recognised as a breakthrough and immediately recorded. Such accurate assessment enables staff to set the work at just the right level. Counting and calculating accurately are regarded as priorities. Sitting in a circle at the start of a lesson, children counted to 100 with only a little help. Opportunities for mathematical development are seized upon, such as sorting and counting bulbs and drawing graphs. Such tasks show children how they can apply their mathematics in practical situations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many exciting opportunities for children to explore and investigate.
- Children develop a strong awareness of their locality and beyond.
- Skills in ICT are limited by lack of facilities.

Commentary

34 Children achieve well in this area of learning and many have already reached the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and children benefit

from the provision of a wide selection of first-hand experiences. For example, a rich new addition to the grounds has been the school pond where children can study the life cycle of frogs. Teachers are flexible with their organisation and seize on any opportunity that presents itself to extend children's learning and experiences. For example, when a rare fall of snow occurred last year, all activities were suspended, warm clothes were donned and investigations began! Many visits are made *out* of school, for example to a local shop and a nearby farm. These provide very rich experiences that are developed well in follow-up activities. Studies further afield include exploring aspects of French life including songs, buildings, words and how to travel there. A digital camera was well used on a 'Technology Walk' when satellite dishes and aerials were spotted.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move safely with good co-ordination and control.
- Though improved, opportunities for outdoor play remain limited.

Commentary

35 Teaching is good and children achieve well in most aspects of physical development to reach levels higher than the goals expected. Children gain a good awareness of healthy eating habits and the need for regular exercise. They enjoy dance and movement sessions and show good control and co-ordination. They have a good awareness of space and move about safely. Lessons are well linked to their other studies. Having worked on 'Bubbles' in the previous lesson, they rose, floated, and meandered, before finally ... POPPING! ... in a movement session. Hand-eye co-ordination is developed well in many activities. However, the outdoor space is too small to allow opportunities for moving around on wheeled vehicles or climbing on outdoor apparatus. This restricts the more imaginative aspects of children's physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative activities are often given relevance by being linked to children's other work.
- Some opportunities for creative development are limited due to lack of space.

Commentary

36 Children's achievement is satisfactory and most children are likely to reach the learning goals expected by the end of the reception year. Teachers make the best use of the limited space available by setting up small areas for children to paint, draw and model and by planning creative activities. For example, the outside area was used to construct a landscaped railway line that included Brookdale Station and a tunnel. Musical instruments, such as shakers, blowers, hitters and strummers, were designed, made and used to accompany a song in an assembly. Such good teaching stimulates children's imagination and they respond well. However, some aspects of children's learning are restricted by lack of space. Artistic, musical and imaginative play experiences cannot be provided continuously and materials have to be tidied away to make space for other activities. Consequently, children are not able to spontaneously express their ideas in paint, through modelling or dressing up materials or explore musical sounds. Although satisfactory overall, their achievement in these aspects of creative development is more limited.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading skills are taught well and parents provide effective home support.
- There are no targets to enable pupils to know how to reach the next level.
- The subject leader has begun to tackle the weaknesses identified in pupils' writing successfully, but there is not enough direct, formal observation of teaching.

Commentary

37 Standards in reading are above average throughout the school. Reading is taught well. Consequently, pupils achieve well and become fluent readers and read with good understanding, which enhances their learning in other subjects. Staff have worked hard to involve parents. Parents of younger children are invited to demonstrations of how reading is taught and how they can help at home. This has a positive effect on reading standards. Older pupils have been involved in choosing books for their new library and in deciding how the library should be organised. Computerised monitoring of pupils' choices of books enables teachers to guide and encourage pupils to read from a wider range of materials. Thorough teaching of reading skills ensures that pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

38 Standards in speaking and listening are good in both the infant and juniors classes. This is because teachers have good questioning skills and engage pupils in lively discussions. Good opportunities are given for pupils to talk about their work and older pupils in Year 6 are quite confident when discussing points for and against wearing a school uniform. They counter opposing arguments skilfully and discussions are well balanced. All pupils achieve well and become confident speakers. Pupils with special educational needs, or those who are reluctant speakers, are often paired with a more confident partner. This increases their confidence and improves their spoken language.

39 Standards in writing in Year 2 are above average and have been improving well over recent years. However, by Year 6 standards in writing are only satisfactory. The schools' analysis of results shows that not enough Year 6 pupils have achieved the higher levels in recent national tests and teachers have correctly identified writing as an area to improve. A range of effective strategies has been introduced to raise pupils' achievement in writing, such as pupils planning and editing written work in pairs and using a thesaurus to select more descriptive words. Writing in other subjects is being extended well. Copying from worksheets still happens occasionally and this does little to improve pupils' writing skills. However, in subjects such as science and geography, pupils learn the skills of writing reports and persuasive arguments. Pupils' written work is generally well marked, and the teacher's marking of work in Year 4 is of a particular high standard and is helpful in telling pupils how to improve their skills. However, pupils in most classes do not have individual learning targets and consequently do not know what they need to do next to achieve better results in their writing. Giving pupils clear information on how to improve their work is an area for improvement. ICT skills are now being used as an effective teaching and learning tool and there are some good examples of pupils using their word-processing skills well to present their work imaginatively.

40 The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has analysed pupils' test results critically, looking for strengths and weaknesses. The pupils' work, in their books, has been checked similarly. Effective strategies have been put in place to tackle the weaknesses identified in pupils' writing and these now need time to work. A new handwriting scheme has been introduced and there is clear evidence that this is improving pupils' handwriting skills, particularly in Years 2 and 3. However, the subject leader does not have enough opportunity to formally check the quality of teaching throughout the school. Monitoring of teaching is done, but not regularly enough and, as a result, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in the upper juniors. Teaching of English is good overall. However, in two of the upper junior classes, the pace of learning is slower and pupils do not show the same enthusiasm for writing. Consequently, pupils are not building strongly enough on the good skills that have been established in the infants and in Years 3 and 4.

Language and literacy skills across the curriculum

41 Effective use is made of pupils' good reading skills for them to research topics in other subjects, with older pupils using their skills in identifying key words and phrases when reading Internet sites or when using CD-ROMs in their research. Younger pupils make good written evaluations of their design and technology work and older pupils in Year 4 are beginning to write critical evaluations of their art and design work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of the more able pupils is improving.
- Good teaching in Years 1 to 4 enables pupils to achieve well overall.
- There are inconsistencies in learning in Year 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs usually make good progress.

Commentary

42 Pupils achieve well in mathematics overall. Rising trends in Year 2 led to well above average results in 2004. However, in the current Year 2 class more pupils have special educational needs and standards are above, rather than well above average. In Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 all pupils achieve well and standards are above average in these year groups. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' current achievement is satisfactory and standards are at the levels expected. Results had been declining in Year 6 mainly because the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has been less than in other schools. Underachievement of the more able pupils in the recent past has been recognised and Year 5 and 6 pupils are now taught in sets according to ability. As a result, standards are beginning to rise because the regrouping has raised the level of challenge and more able pupils are responding positively. For example, in one lesson, Year 6 pupils devised a formula to predict the pattern of numbers in a sequence. This is a difficult skill that, through good teaching, pupils were able to master. The new subject leader has made a satisfactory start in analysing pupils' assessments and has already identified weaknesses in problem solving. Pupils' skills are improving because they are now taught how to separate out the different elements of the problem. With increasing numbers of pupils working at higher levels, the 2005 results are expected to be higher than 2004.

43 The good teaching, particularly in Years 1 to 4, is characterised by stimulating and challenging lessons in which pupils' different learning needs are well met. Lessons move along swiftly. Pupils enjoy experimenting with different methods to work out the answers to teachers' questions and their understanding of techniques such as doubling and rounding, develop successfully. Encouragement to explain their strategies to the whole class increases their confidence and improves their speaking and listening skills. Large ICT screens, that pupils can touch and change, are very effectively used to illustrate features of numbers and shapes. Once pupils have grasped new ideas, they have good opportunities to practise and improve their skills. Good procedures have been introduced to assess their learning and teachers use the information well in their lesson planning. However, only a minority of teachers set targets to help pupils to know what they need to do to improve. In Years 5 and 6 particularly, there is scope to encourage pupils to aim higher by knowing what they need to do to reach the next level. Overall, infant and lower junior pupils take more pride in their work than upper junior pupils. There are occasions when errors are made, for example, by not keeping numbers in columns when adding.

44 Pupils with special educational needs benefit from skilled support, which enables them to make good progress. They often work with classroom assistants who know their needs well and make use of wide variety of approaches to help them to understand. The use of mathematical games with these pupils is highly successful, making learning fun and painless. Falling numbers of pupils with statements of the special educational needs in the unit has meant that they have very recently been integrated into mainstream classes for numeracy. Teachers have already encountered a difficulty. The mental mathematics sessions, so enjoyable and essential for most pupils, are not suitable for those who are not able to work out answers in their head. The only unsatisfactory lesson occurred when the teacher spent too long in trying to explain advanced properties of shapes to a very mixed group of pupils, some of whom became progressively more confused.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils' use and develop their mathematical skills satisfactorily across the curriculum. Measuring and recording results are a good feature in science and design and technology. Good use is made of ICT in teaching mathematics but there is limited evidence of data handling using computers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs respond well to skilled teaching.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective teaching methods stimulate pupils' interest and significantly improve their investigation skills.
- There are some weaknesses in the way pupils record their work in Years 5 and 6.

Commentary

45 Pupils achieve well and, excluding those with statements of special educational need, standards in all aspects of science are above average throughout the school, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school's results are above average and have been keeping pace with national trends over recent years. Although pupils with special educational needs are not able to show what they can do in test conditions, they benefit from very good levels of support and make good progress. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the support assistant skilfully developed their understanding of 'living' and 'non-living' things by asking them to sort a selection of items into sets. This activity provided a very good opportunity to talk about different objects, such as bones and seeds, and whether they were, or had ever been, alive.

46 The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good and is very good in Year 4. Teachers' good expertise in science is evident in the quality of investigative work undertaken. In Year 1 pupils learn to make intelligent predictions, for example, about the sounds made by different objects when tapped or shaken. By Year 2, pupils' observation and reasoning skills have moved on significantly. For example, they work out for themselves how to light two or three bulbs in an electric circuit. By Year 4, pupils have learnt to gather and classify information systematically and the principles of fair testing have become well established. The well-planned curriculum enables pupils to acquire a good knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and forces. The investigations provide a stiff intellectual challenge, which helps the more able pupils to reach high levels. Teachers explain and illustrate new ideas very well, often using ICT to project pictures and

diagrams, which pupils can modify by touching the large screen. Pupils respond well to the practical approaches. Their knowledge improves and their interest in the subject increases. Science makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, particularly from Years 1 to 4 where pupils' written work is carefully recorded and well presented.

47 There are good features in the teaching of science in Years 5 and 6, although not enough attention is paid to ensuring that pupils record their work carefully and methodically. In these classes, lessons move along with the same brisk pace and purpose as they do elsewhere in the school. In a Year 5 lesson, very effective use was made of ICT to illustrate how sound could be measured and the data fed into a computer program to show the variation in decibels. This was particularly valuable, since the school's analysis of pupils' performance on previous tests revealed weaknesses in interpreting graphical data. However in these classes of the recording of pupils' completed work is fragmented. Marking is not always helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve and some of their work is left unfinished. There have been recent changes of staff and currently there is no subject leader. Consequently, the inconsistencies in pupils' written work in Year 5 and 6 have gone undetected.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader's support for staff training is improving pupils' learning.
- New resources are being used effectively and pupils are now achieving well.

Commentary

48 The subject leader has only very recently taken over responsibility for the subject and whilst she is still establishing her role in school, she has made a good start. For example:

- Teachers and support staff have benefited from good training in the use of large interactive teaching boards.
- Pupils' work has been checked and an action plan provided to tackle the weaknesses.
- A new assessment system is being piloted to enable the subject leader to check on progress.

49 As a result of this work, teachers' skills in the use of computers as a key teaching and learning tool are improving rapidly. Standards in both the infants and juniors are typical of those found in most schools, but pupils are now achieving well because of the better use of the computer suite to teach new skills and the effective use of new Interactive technology and resources in some classrooms. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some good and very good teaching was observed during the inspection. In the best lessons, new skills are taught thoroughly and teachers' explanations of what pupils are expected to learn are made crystal clear. Consequently, when pupils begin their work in the suite, time is used efficiently and pupils are able to work independently. For example, in a good Year 1 lesson, pupils, who are still very young, were able to log-on to a computer and quickly access the program they needed for their task. Similarly, Year 4 pupils worked skilfully and independently gathering information about Henry VIII from an Internet site. There are still

areas for improvement, for example the reading content on worksheets is sometimes too difficult for pupils to understand.

50 Since the previous inspection, a new computer suite, with new hardware and software to support learning, has been provided. New skills are being taught well by a teaching staff who are themselves learning new skills rapidly. The school is well placed to continue the improvements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

51 This is satisfactory and improving as teachers and their pupils learn new skills. There are some good examples of word-processing to present work, particularly in English. Art and design lessons are made more exciting by encouraging pupils to explore graphical modelling tools and techniques. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly the older pupils, are skilful in their use of 'Powerpoint' and this enables them to work at a good pace and present their work well. Pupils use the Internet well to research topics.

HUMANITIES

52 Only one history lesson was observed and there was insufficient written work to make a judgement on the quality of provision. In religious education and geography there was much to see and talk about from which judgements in provision have been made. In addition, teachers' planning and examples of pupils' work were examined and discussions were held with pupils in all subjects.

53 The teaching of **history** is well structured. Good links are made with other subjects, giving the learning extra vitality. The many visits and visitors create stimulate pupils' interests in the subject. In some classes, there is an over reliance on copying notes and the interpretation of historical evidence is insufficiently undertaken. However, Year 2 pupils speak with great enthusiasm and knowledge about their studies on Florence Nightingale. ICT is used very well to research information, for example to study Henry VIII in Year 4.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching stimulates pupils' interest, particularly in Year 4.
- Environmental concerns arouse strong responses on various global issues.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their studies.

Commentary

54 Teaching is good. Standards of work in geography in both Years 2 and 6 are above the levels expected and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. The subject is well led and managed. As a result, detailed plans and good quality resources, built-up over a number of years, guide and support the teachers very well. Assessment routines are well established, especially in the infant classes.

55 Pupils in Year 2 have a strong awareness of the immediate locality and the surrounding area. They can name the five countries of Great Britain and know they are part of Europe. They were also very quick to point out that Liverpool will be the 'European City of Culture' in 2008! They showed much concern when they asked to talk about the recent 'big wave'. Their enthusiasm for the subject was clear and their environmental concerns were equally strong.

56 Very high quality work is produced in Year 4. Superbly written and illustrated books about the Rainforests captured the unique flora and fauna of these regions. Studies on the environmental dangers, that threaten the very existence of these forests, resulted in some passionately written letters expressing the pupils' deep concerns. Writing as a native Indian of the forests, one pupil pleaded, "Brazilians from the city have already built mines and water dams. If you chop down all of our trees, it will be a disaster for the whole World!"

57 Increasingly good use is being made of ICT. A Year 5/6 class, which includes a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, made very good use of a computer, as it projected information about 'The Water Cycle' on to a large screen. The class showed good levels of understanding because of the very skilled teaching using the new technology. The same class later discussed the tsunami disaster, where they expressed *very* sensitive responses. Geography is making a strong contribution to issues

of 'Citizenship'. Pupils are gaining a growing awareness of their role in the school and local community, as well as their possible future global responsibilities.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the infant classes respond very well to the varied and exciting challenges.
- Junior pupils have had few real experiences of the faiths they are studying.
- Very good links are made with other subjects to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

58 Infant pupils achieve well and standards are above the levels expected. Achievement is satisfactory in the juniors and standards are similar to those expected in Wirral schools. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support throughout the school, enabling them to achieve well in relation to their abilities. Clear guidelines to help teachers have been provided and the quality of resources has significantly improved since the last inspection. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

59 Teachers' high expectations of infant pupils are reflected in the quality of their work. Good comparisons are made between the pupils' *own* experiences and how *other* people think, feel and act. They also use varied and frequently stimulating ways of interesting pupils and developing the depth of their understanding. For example, when learning about Hinduism, the air was scented with incense and filled with the sounds of the sitar and tabla. A full Puja tray gave pupils the chance to examine and draw objects found in every Hindu home. The pupils' books are full of their responses to similar first-hand experiences. Very good assessment procedures are established in the infant classes that are used well to check pupils' progress.

60 By comparison, work in the juniors is rarely as lively or as individual. Rather than express their own ideas, pupils sometimes copy the same texts. These tasks are not as engaging or as creative. The best work was seen in Years 4 and 5. Good discussions helped pupils to interpret stories and to gain new insights into their own lives. Although junior pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of different religions, their studies are not brought to life through visits to places of worship or by listening to the experiences of visitors from faith groups.

61 Topics in religious education are often well linked to work in other subjects. These include literacy (composing stories and poems), drama (on the baptism of Jesus), art (for the many illustrations), ICT (for research) and geography (when studying world faiths). As a result, religious education plays a significant role in establishing an atmosphere in the school of calm and harmony that promotes good learning through settled relationships.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

62 No art and design lessons were seen and only part of a design and technology lesson was observed. Similarly, only one music lesson and a part lesson were observed, which is not enough to judge the quality of provision in these subjects. However, four physical education lessons were observed and the provision has been evaluated. In addition, teachers' planning and records of pupils' progress were examined and discussions were held with pupils in all subjects.

63 In **art and design** pupils experience a broad curriculum. Pupils' work shows that they develop good skills in drawing and they use colour well. Pupils in Year 4 have designed impressive chairs for celebrities and their work not only shows humour, but is also of a good standard, with careful evaluations written. The subject leader has made good progress in auditing resources and there is a clear plan of action to develop the subject further.

64 In **design and technology** much of the good quality work observed at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Pupils' interest and enjoyment is stimulated by the practical tasks. Good links are made with other subjects, such as designing and making Joseph's coat of many colours. Ambitious projects such as making models of fairground rides are undertaken through which pupils learn to study and apply the skills of creating movement using wheels, pulleys and cams. ICT is increasingly being used well to improve pupils' design skills. For example, older pupils benefit from lessons at the local technology college where they use computers, for example to design and control burglar alarms. Pupils' written work improves through frequent opportunities to write evaluatively, suggesting ways of improving the finished product. Pupils do not use folders or books in which to record their plans and experiences. This makes it harder for teachers, the subject leader and the pupils themselves to reflect on the progress made.

65 In **music**, teachers benefit from using a published scheme of work, which includes guidance on how to teach the lesson. This ensures that pupils are able to build on the knowledge and skills they have learnt previously. In a good lesson in Year 3 for example, pupils learnt about ostinato (repeated rhythms) and improvised their own musical patterns. In Year 6, this skill was extended further when pupils learnt to appreciate and replicate the rhythmic structure of Blues music. Pupils enjoy singing and sing well, particularly in assemblies. By Year 6 they are able to hold their part when singing two and three-part rounds. Pupils pick up new melodies quickly and are perceptive in recognising the instrument rhythms involved. However, their knowledge of composers and of different types of music could be better. They often listen to different pieces of music when they enter assembly but they are not always informed about the music or the composer. Children with an interest in music benefit from good opportunities to nurture their talents by learning to play stringed and woodwind instruments. They practise at home and enjoy opportunities to participate in concerts and festivals during the year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Swimming standards are very high.
- The very good range of sporting activities nurtures pupils' talents well.

Commentary

66 Pupils achieve well. Standards are above the levels expected by the end of Year 2 in gymnastics and games. By the end of Year 6, the good standards have been maintained and pupils also develop good skills in athletics. Teaching is good overall. Standards in dance are typical of those seen in most schools but are improving rapidly due to the effective guidance from a new member of staff who is a dance specialist. Older pupils in Year 6 reach standards well above the levels expected in swimming and many of them gain advanced proficiency awards. Pupils with significant special educational needs receive specialist teaching and these pupils achieve great personal success.

67 The school is committed to promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle and provides a very good range of interesting and challenging out of school activities. Activities such as cross-country running, judo, dance, football and rugby are very well supported. The school has effective links with secondary schools with specialist sports status, which increases the range of activities on offer. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in orienteering, canoeing, abseiling, climbing and archery during a residential visit.

68 The subject is led and managed well, by setting a good example of effective teaching and a high level of commitment to the importance of out of school activities. For example, arrangements for pupils to work with specialist coaches significantly improve their skills and achievement in football. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection and the standards that pupils achieve are now better than they were.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

69 Pupils gain in confidence from their earliest times at school and the self-esteem of pupils' with special educational needs is particularly well nurtured. All pupils develop good independent work habits that benefit their learning. Social skills are very well developed. Pupils naturally help one another and older volunteers support younger children well each breaktime. All pupils clearly know that their views are valued. Health education has been developed well since the last inspection and is now good. The 'Healthy School Award' has been gained after much hard work. Pupils are helped to understand the value of exercise and healthy diets. Sex and drug education is now an integral part of PSHCE, taught in every year group. Citizenship education is very good and has a strong impact on learning. Pupils are taught to accept responsibilities from their earliest days in the school. There are good opportunities to discuss issues that matter to them. For example, during an excellent lesson about the recent tsunami pupils' thoughts and fears were impressively handled. Suggestion Boxes are readily available for pupils to contribute ideas about improving the school and major improvements have been made to the playground facilities as a result of School Council discussions.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).