

INSPECTION REPORT

LEASOWE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wallasey

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105055

Headteacher: Roger Flaherty

Lead inspector: George Derby

Dates of inspection: 18th – 20th January 2005

Inspection number: 267197

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	150
School address:	Twickenham Drive Leasowe
Postcode:	CH46 2QF
Telephone number:	0151 638 1126
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Miller
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Leasowe Primary school, situated in Wallasey on the Wirral, draws its pupils from the local area surrounding the school. The area from which pupils come is considerably disadvantaged. There is high unemployment, poor health and social conditions and emotional stress. There is also a high percentage of children looked after by the local authority and families and children supported by the local social services department. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is extremely high. It has been increasing over the past four years and has been as high as 90 per cent. It is currently 80 per cent.

One pupil is learning English as an additional language but is not at an early stage of learning the language. Virtually all pupils are of white-British origin. Thirty-five per cent of pupils have special educational needs; this is well above average. There are many other pupils who are not identified as having such specific needs but who are supported by the school because they have difficulties from time to time, often because of external influences. The pupils' needs are wide ranging, although the largest group of pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are no pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need at present, although there are pupils awaiting formal assessment under this process. A small Year 1 group is designated as a 'nurture' ('discovery') class. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is very low and particularly so in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Since the last inspection, the needs of many pupils on entry to school have become more complex. In addition, a high percentage of pupils join or leave the school, mainly during Years 3 to 6, at other than the usual times. Last year, this amounted to 19 per cent. Those who join often have low attainment or special educational needs and the disruption to their education has a marked effect on their attainment. In Year 6 this year, half of the pupils entered the school after Year 2.

The school received the School Achievement Award in 2000 and 2003 and the BT Citizenship Award in 2004 and 2005. The school was expecting to move to new accommodation, built under a Private Finance Initiative, two years ago. The project has since slowed, although each term since governors have been promised that the site will be ready in the forthcoming months.

. INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language
14141	Ernie Marshall	Lay inspector	
32283	Denis Goodchild	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Personal, social and health education
30362	Jacqui Henshaw	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. The pupils achieve well because of the very good attention to their personal skills and the good teaching which challenges them academically. The attainment of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils is generally well below average. However, the school adds a great deal to pupils' personal development. This is particularly well developed, especially in the Foundation Stage and in the discovery class. The high degree of skilful support for pupils' additional needs means that they do very well. Leadership and management are good overall. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make very good progress.
- The pupils in the Year 1 discovery class also make very good progress.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (reception) is good and they achieve well.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes and put a great deal of effort into their work; however, a small, but significant, number have difficult behaviour which is managed very well.
- Pupils achieve soundly in English, well in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and very well in personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- Marking and target setting are not used well enough to help pupils know how to improve.
- Attendance is poor and punctuality unsatisfactory, despite the considerable efforts of the school.
- The role of subject leaders in checking on aspects of work in their subjects is under-developed.
- The day-to-day work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, in supporting pupils when they have difficulties, reduces the time they have for some aspects of management.

The school's improvement since its last inspection has been satisfactory. There has been a marked improvement in pupils' handwriting and presentation. Pupils' achievements in ICT are satisfactory and standards near the expected level. Staff skills and confidence have improved. Systems to check teachers' effectiveness are sound and staff training is effectively linked to school priorities. Health and safety issues have been addressed, although some issues were noted on the inspection. Marking of pupils' work is still inconsistent, but pupils' listening skills have improved. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills, but these could be more structured, and writing opportunities could be wider.

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	D	C	A
mathematics	C	A	E	B
science	E	B	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils achieve well. This is because teachers' personal knowledge of the pupils' skills is very good and teaching is good. The majority of children enter the school with very low levels of attainment. Currently, standards are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science by Year 6. However, the trend in results by Year 6 over the past four years has been improving and is better than the national picture. High levels of pupil mobility in Years 3 to 6 and some pupils' emotional difficulties affect overall attainment, although pupils often make very good

strides in improving their personal skills. When the school's national test results are compared with schools which have a similar percentage of free school meals, these have ranged from above average to very high (in 2003) over the past four years. Although standards in Year 2 are currently well below average in reading, writing and mathematics, just below the expected level in science and typical for pupils' age in ICT, the pupils have made good progress from their starting points. Standards in the Year 2 tests and assessments compared with similar schools were above or well above average over the last four years. The school's targets for 2004 were exceptionally challenging and not met. Some pupils did not take the tests, however.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Opportunities for self-knowledge and reflection are satisfactory. Respect for the feelings of others is good and supported well by the school's work in PSHE. The school's very strong moral code enables pupils to understand right from wrong, although some have difficulty adhering to it because of their personal difficulties. The school fosters very good relationships and racial harmony. Diversity is celebrated and this makes a sound contribution to pupils' understanding and awareness of cultures other than their own. The pupils are keen learners and most behave well. However, the level of exclusions is high, attendance is poor and a minority of pupils are regularly late, despite the school's tireless efforts. This disrupts their education and their ability to learn effectively.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education is satisfactory; the quality of teaching and learning is good.** This is good across the school but strongest in reception and in Years 1 and 2. All staff value pupils' academic and personal successes highly and give pupils considerable encouragement. As a result, most pupils apply themselves very well. Teaching assistants provide good support, although in Years 3 to 6 they could be better used in whole-class parts of lessons. Assessment is satisfactory and good planning ensures that work is well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities. Other aspects, such as the satisfactory curriculum with adequate opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, the very good quality of care, and the satisfactory links with parents and the community, contribute to the pupils' opportunities and progress. The school works hard to develop links further; despite this some parents find it difficult to support their children's learning. Accommodation is unsatisfactory; the school is waiting to move into a new building.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school, including that of the headteacher is good; management and the work of the governing body are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear view of how the school needs to develop; he knows precisely what needs to be done and supports the pupils and staff well. The deputy headteacher provides very effective leadership of provision for pupils with additional needs, including those with special educational needs. However, because of the day-to-day workload of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, they do not always have sufficient time for aspects of strategic development. Governors are supportive and also know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They fulfil legal requirements, but could challenge the leadership more and be more involved in its strategic development, however. Co-ordinators' roles are improving and are satisfactory overall, although their role in monitoring teaching is under-developed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have mixed views of the school. Pupils spoken with during the inspection were largely positive about its work. Parents' views were satisfactory. No parents attended the parents' meeting. The few parent questionnaires received were critical of pupils' behaviour and bullying. However, the school is very successful in dealing with difficult behaviour or bullying.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Continue to raise academic standards by providing a wider range of speaking and writing opportunities in English, improving attendance and punctuality and reducing exclusions.
- Improve individual target setting and marking to help pupils know how to improve.
- Increase co-ordinators' opportunities for monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Improve strategic planning, especially the detail in the school's development plan and governors' involvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The pupils achieve well overall. Children's achievements are good in the Foundation Stage (reception class), although few will reach the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement is also good in Years 1 to 6. Currently by Year 2 and 6, standards in English and mathematics are well below average, although in science these are below average. The results in the national tests vary, although often these are below or well below average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the results on tests and assessments are often well below average, the picture when compared with similar schools is much better.
- High levels of mobility affect results in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils do well to attain what they do.
- Pupils with additional needs achieve very well.
- Opportunities for speaking and writing in other subjects are not systematic enough.

Commentary

1. When the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are compared with the national results, the picture is often one of below and well below average standards. However, when compared with similar schools (which have a similar percentage of free school meals) the school often does well. The results are affected by the movement of pupils in and out of the school, making comparisons with grades from earlier tests problematic. This movement particularly affects pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school's data shows that often more able pupils leave the school, while less able pupils enter during this period. In the 2004 tests, only two thirds of Year 6 pupils had been present in the school for the Year 2 tests. This year, the proportion has decreased to only a half.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.8 (13.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.0 (11.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.1 (14.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 18 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	26.7 (26.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.5 (29.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.0 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school's results in the Year 6 national tests over the past four years have generally been below or well below the national average. However, the school attained results in mathematics in 2003 which were well above average and were above average in science. In the school's history, these are considered 'exceptional' and are explained by a more able than usual cohort

and the school's ability to fund and provide a very wide range of additional support to help pupils. In addition, a notable achievement for the school was the average standards reached in English in Year 6 in 2004, a subject where pupils often struggle; they often do better in mathematics or science. Standards by Year 6 have been rising at a rate better than the national picture. This is a school which tries hard, in the face of many difficulties, to raise pupils' attainment as far as possible.

3. The pupils' needs have become more complex over the past few years and a significant minority now enter with a range of social and emotional difficulties as well as very low levels of attainment. This is why the results of the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 appear to be falling. These have been well below average in recent years.
4. However, when the school's results are compared with similar schools the picture is somewhat different. In the past few years, the results have generally been above average in the Year 2 national tests, although in 2004 these were average overall. Overall, they were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. Results at the expected level (Level 2) were average and those at the intermediate level (Level 2B) were well above average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. Few pupils attained results at the higher level (Level 3), reflecting the make up of that particular group. Similarly, the results in the Year 6 tests were much better when compared with similar schools and were above average overall. They were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Results at the expected level (Level 4) were average and at the higher level (Level 5) were well above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science.
5. The inspection finds that standards reached by pupils in the current Year 6 are well below average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. Standards in ICT are better and typical for pupils of this age. Standards in music are as expected for their age; pupils often do best in practical and performance activities. In religious education standards are below what pupils of their age are expected to attain.
6. Achievement in English is satisfactory overall, but in Years 1 and 2 the pupils make good progress in their reading, writing and listening skills because of good teaching. The systematic opportunities that pupils have for writing and speaking vary across the junior department and this affects what the pupils can achieve. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, although opportunities to use and reinforce their skills in other subjects are not always specifically planned. In addition, assessment findings are not always used well enough to set targets for pupils to aim at. All pupils achieve well in science. The standards in some lessons seen on the inspection were average or approaching the average in Years 1 and 2. This is because of some very strong teaching there. Achievement in ICT and religious education is good. However, the pupils' recall of facts in religious education is weak, a factor related to many pupils' learning difficulties. This is better when they have picture or other clues to rely on. Pupils achieve very well in PSHE. The formal work is very well linked to informal opportunities which support pupils' personal development. The school works hard to develop links with parents, but has not yet found ways to maximise their support for pupils' learning. A few, for example, do not respond positively to the school's attempts to improve attendance. This has a detrimental effect on learning.
7. Pupils with special educational needs and those who receive nurture support achieve very well. Expert teaching coupled with very good management of the provision mean the youngest pupils with social, emotional and learning difficulties in Year 1 get off to a flying start. Those in other years are very well supported in lessons and by the school special educational needs' co-ordinator. Very good knowledge of pupils' needs and high quality targets, which are taken very good account of in lessons, help the pupils to achieve as much as possible. The school makes a significant impact on the pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance is well below the national average and is poor. A significant minority of pupils do not arrive in school on time at the start of the school day and punctuality overall is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In spite of very challenging circumstances, there are good relationships and a calm atmosphere.
- Most pupils enjoy school and work hard to achieve well.
- Staff know pupils very well and help pupils in learning about how their behaviour affects others.
- The incidence of exclusion is high in spite of the school's best efforts.
- Poor attendance and punctuality by a significant minority of pupils adversely affect their capacity to achieve as well as they are able.
- The school's efforts to promote better attendance and punctuality are consistently applied but improved results are difficult to achieve.

Commentary

8. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and know them extremely well. The school works very hard to promote very good relationships using a variety of strategies matched to pupils' individual circumstances. Therefore, the majority of pupils feel secure, learn successfully and achieve well.
9. As pupils move around school, they are polite and friendly towards visitors and most show respect to staff. This is because staff show the greatest of respect to them and are understanding of their individual emotional needs. For example, when some pupils find problems in relating to others, or problems outside school result in anger or poor behaviour, the school is able to use a wide variety of ways to help them. These might include working quietly with another teacher or spending time talking or calming down in the multi-sensory room. This latter facility is very successful in calming pupils' behaviour. Staff in the Year 1 discovery class successfully support pupils to work and play together and teach moral and social skills necessary to help them learn within a larger class. This nurture successfully builds onto the very good personal, social and emotional development within the Foundation Stage. Older pupils are also supported within smaller nurture groups when this is considered beneficial. Any incidence of bullying is dealt with swiftly and pupils know what to do. They feel supported and safe.
10. However, in spite of these initiatives and very good provision for the large number of pupils with special educational needs, the incidence of exclusion is rising as pupils' behaviour becomes more challenging. Exclusion is only used when all other strategies have failed. These are only for very short periods and only a small number of pupils are excluded more than once. The school wants to reduce the number of exclusions and is exploring further ways of supporting the most difficult pupils on site.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	147	28	1
Mixed – White and Black African	2	9	2

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

11. Lunchtimes and playtimes are usually orderly and most pupils have very good moral and good social development. This is supported by circle times where pupils have opportunities to share, discuss or express their feelings, ideas or understanding of different issues. Circle times are successful because pupils feel safe and understand that they only need to talk about things they want to. The very good relationships developed through mutual trust have also contributed to this success. Pupils showed respect for others' beliefs in discussion about their religious education lessons and are aware of the feelings of others when they collect for different charities or think about others in assemblies.
12. The school works hard to improve pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. There is a good range of rewards and pupils are regularly praised for their efforts. However, some pupils find praise difficult and the school is sensitive in these matters. Pupils with special educational needs are aware of how they are progressing towards their targets and this builds their confidence. Other pupils are not always supported through a formal target-setting approach or improving work or through constructive comments in marking, although teachers do sometimes tell them verbally how to improve and what they must do to achieve a higher level of performance.
13. The pupils' attendance has marginally improved over the past year. However, the school's overall performance is marred by the persistent absence of a significant minority of pupils and the excessively long absence of one pupil in particular. There are also a significant number of pupils who find it difficult to arrive on time at the start of the school day and this disrupts their learning. These pupils sometimes arrive in a distressed state and often appear very tired.
14. The school works hard to improve attendance and punctuality. A part-time member of staff has been appointed specifically to inspect registers daily and attempts to contact all parents or carers of pupils who are absent without notification. She works closely with the education welfare officer and both conduct home visits when necessary. The deputy headteacher, who is well known to parents, also carries out home visits. The school closely monitors class attendance weekly and makes an award during assembly. Certificates are awarded to pupils with 100 per cent attendance each term, and 20 were awarded for the recent autumn term. A special 'attendance week' event was held in the autumn term and this very successfully raised attendance to 96.5 per cent. However, attendance soon fell back to 90 per cent. With poor attendance and punctuality, the pupils affected have difficulty achieving their maximum progress.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	2.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and the range of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning is adequate. The very good quality of care, good welfare and sound procedures for health and safety and the satisfactory links with parents and the community, contribute to the pupils' opportunities and progress. The school works hard to develop links further; despite this some parents find it difficult to support their children's learning. Accommodation is unsatisfactory; the school is waiting to move into a new building. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Assessment is satisfactory although, overall, pupils' understanding of how they can improve is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good because of the teachers' good knowledge of the needs of the children and of how and what they need to learn.
- Expert teaching in the discovery class means that pupils feel safe and secure, and learn how to behave and to respond to others.
- Teaching is best in reception and Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils are given every encouragement and are managed very well.
- Assessment of children's learning in the Foundation Stage and for those with special educational needs is very good because children are involved in their own learning.
- Although staff assess pupils' work regularly and are aware of standards reached in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, checking of standards in other subjects is less well developed.
- Marking and individual target setting are not used well enough to help pupils understand how they are doing and how to improve.

Commentary

15. Teaching is good in the reception class and has some very strong features. The teacher is skilled in identifying the children's needs and in planning work which particularly supports their communication, language and literacy skills and their social, emotional and personal development. These aspects pervade all activities and the individually focused approach means that work is planned to build on what the children have learned previously, in small steps. The teacher and nursery nurse work well to provide a good range of activities which are relevant to the children's needs. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore, try things out and use their imagination, as well as being taught specific skills, such as using a computer keyboard to write their name.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	8 (19%)	18 (43%)	16 (38%)	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.

16. The environment set up by the teacher and assistant in the discovery class balances the need for pupils to feel secure and work together with others, with developing academic skills which are often behind those of others. This is done very successfully and teaching there is very expert. It is supported very well by the teaching assistant who takes a lead role in lessons from time to time. Pupils are admitted based on assessments of their social and emotional needs and these indicate that the pupils are some of the neediest pupils in the school. The caring, but firm, approach ensures that pupils are clear about what is expected. They are given constant reminders about how to behave and how to respond to others, for instance. This is done as a commentary interspersed with praise for positive responses rather than in any oppressive way. A significant feature is the knowledge that the teacher has of the pupils' needs and the positive way that work is matched to these.
17. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good with very good features and is slightly stronger than in Years 3 to 6. Although teaching is good in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not always use their support staff as well as in Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants take a significant and successful role in managing behaviour but in whole-class parts of lessons they are sometimes under-

used, taking on more of a supervisory role. In addition, the planning is much more specific in Years 1 and 2 with clear objectives for the whole lesson. Activities are identified for different groups of pupils and the approach is often quite individual. However, it is rare to find plans which identify specifically what teachers expect the different groups of pupils to learn, although they can often identify this clearly when spoken with. Time is used best in Years 1 and 2 and the pace of lessons is often very swift. This keeps pupils on their toes. In Years 3 to 6 the pace sometimes slows when teachers deal with difficult behaviour or when pupils need reassurance. However, they do their utmost to minimise the disruption to other pupils' learning and to maximise the learning of pupils who find good behaviour difficult.

18. The encouragement that teachers give their pupils is very good. Activities are interesting and pupils are motivated to learn. They work very hard, as a result. Discipline is very strong throughout the school and pupils are clear about how to behave. Most pupils do this well but some enter lessons in an angry mood, either with themselves or with others. Those who find it difficult to conform are managed very effectively and there is a very good range of strategies available to staff. At all times, staff do their very best to keep pupils in the lessons and include them as fully as possible. Teachers follow the pupils' individual education plans well, and also address the targets and strategies in pupils' behaviour plans. They always have a clear focus on the individual needs of pupils and work very effectively with the deputy headteacher, reviewing and updating plans and analysing why things work, why they do not work and how to do things better. This evaluative approach is one of the reasons why the support for pupils' additional needs is so good.
19. The progress and achievement of children in the Foundation Stage are assessed continuously in all six areas of learning. Careful planning and questioning ensure that children are involved in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs have very well constructed and appropriate individual education and behaviour plans. Individual targets are shared with pupils and parents and, consequently, these pupils are aware of how well they have achieved because they know what is expected.
20. The school regularly checks how well pupils are achieving in core subjects, through a variety of testing and marking of books. Staff are aware of the expected standards in the subjects and know how well pupils achieve in relation to expectations. However, the school does not have a well-developed system in place for monitoring pupils' progress and achievement in subjects such as history, geography, art or religious education.
21. Teachers do not consistently develop pupils' own understanding of how they could improve through marking. Teachers comment positively and all work is marked regularly but this rarely leads pupils to the next steps in learning. Although the school has simple tracking systems, which enable staff to successfully monitor the progress of individual pupils across time, no individual targets are set. This means that those pupils who do not have individual plans are not aware of the standards they should be aiming for and how they could reach them.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils with very good opportunities for personal development. Through the organisation of clubs and well-chosen off-site visits, the school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well planned.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school places a very good emphasis on the development of pupils' personal, social and health education.

- The school's effective use of the local community provides pupils with good opportunities to stimulate their interests.
- Good links with other schools and colleges are used well to reinforce work done in lessons and further pupils' learning and skills.
- The state of repair of the building means that at times physical education cannot take place.
- There are missed opportunities for the key skills of speaking, listening, writing, number and ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

22. The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities for its pupils. These are satisfactory across the school. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides religious education in accordance with the local agreed syllabus. The school bases most of its subject planning on local authority guidance as well as on national programmes.
23. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides a good range of activities which is challenging to meet all children's needs, including those with special educational needs or social and emotional difficulties. There is a good balance of teacher and child-led activities, which allows children to grow in independence and maturity.
24. Very good relationships between pupils and adults provide a firm foundation for the development of pupils' personal and social skills. The formally taught programme is very well balanced with other formal and informal opportunities the pupils receive, such as circle time and other sessions to help them with their emotions. Teachers and teaching assistants deal sensitively with pupils' difficulties and provide very good role models. Pupils are given opportunity to discuss a range of issues, such as friendships and anger management. Healthy eating is promoted and the school has a drug and sex education policy in place. A wide range of issues is addressed through visits from external agencies, in circle time and through science work. Pupils have contributed to a wide range of local and international charities and this, combined with work on environmental issues and visits from the police and fire brigades, makes them aware of their responsibilities as citizens. They willingly take on roles of responsibility and thus contribute to school life.
25. The school is spacious and attractive displays enhance the interior. Effective use is made of spare classrooms which provide teaching space for groups of pupils who need additional support. As the school awaits its move to new premises (as it has done for two years) it is naturally cautious in its expenditure. The building is in a poor state of repair and the roof leaks badly when it rains. As a consequence leaks in the hall mean that, at times, it cannot be used for physical education. Resources are overall satisfactory. Again, uncertainty over the move means that computer resources for ICT have not been updated and network facilities are limited. The school is fully staffed and a training programme ensures that staff have a good range of skills to meet the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum.
26. The school organises a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities that take pupils into the local community where they can experience learning that can be more stimulating than the academic material taught in the classroom. The type of activity is varied to ensure pupils of all age groups are involved. Younger pupils visit places such as local farms and the local candle and ice cream factories. They are involved in percussion workshops, pond-dipping and tree and bulb-planting. Older pupils visit such places as 'Chinatown' and the cathedrals in Liverpool. They attend the police open day and enjoy the 'Learning Lighthouse' centre.
27. The school also varies the activities to ensure that there is a satisfactory balance of sporting and arts events. Visits to theatres and museums and sports coaching are also arranged. The school's link with a local sports college provides good opportunities in sports coaching for all age groups. This provision is very popular. The school's own provision of clubs concentrates mainly on mid-day events such as crafts and sewing, board games and the behaviour club. After-school activities are arranged for computer work, cookery and football.

28. Although the school works hard to provide pupils with a broad range of experiences, opportunities to reinforce learning and use the skills they have are sometimes missed. This is because not enough systematic experiences are planned for pupils to use the key skills that are developed in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Despite the problems caused by the delay in the completion of the new school premises, the school's present arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, including child protection measures, are satisfactory overall. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on teachers' monitoring of their academic and personal development, is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory procedures for seeking pupils' views, although there are no formal processes, such as through a school council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between staff and pupils give pupils confidence to seek advice and help from the staff.
- Very good support for pupils with special educational needs helps them to achieve very well.
- Good support and care in the reception class enable children to settle quickly and begin to make progress.

Commentary

29. This is a very caring school where every pupil is known by the staff as an individual with individual needs. The headteacher and deputy headteacher spend a good deal of time in ensuring pupils are cared for and as happy as they can be in school. In addition to the high quality of provision in the Year 1 discovery class, the school has set up a part-time nurture group for older pupils in the juniors, who can often experience emotional and social difficulties. Working in this group means that the pupils are taught separately in a calm environment and learn to respond to the patience and understanding shown by the trained adult member of staff involved. In addition, very good focused PSHE sessions led by the deputy headteacher help older pupils deal with their emotions. A multi-sensory room has been provided and any pupil with a particular behavioural problem is brought into the peaceful and soothing atmosphere the room generates. The headteacher or deputy headteacher make themselves available to give one-to-one support for any pupil in such difficulties. The very good relationships that are developed between the staff and the pupils mean that pupils can have the confidence to readily approach a staff member for help or advice when worried or concerned. The school looks after pupils' welfare well. Child protection procedures are very good and very well managed by the deputy headteacher. Pupils in public care are well supported through care plans and their welfare and attainment are regularly tracked. A small number of health and safety issues were drawn to the school's attention during the inspection.
30. All pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported. They are very carefully assessed and have high quality individual educational plans prepared. Parents are kept fully informed and are involved in the setting of personal targets and in the periodic reviews. The school secures the provision of a wide range of visiting specialists to supplement the support given by the staff. Pupils are included and supported in mainstream activities for the majority of the time and make very good progress as a result.
31. Pastoral care in the reception class is good and justifies the positive view held by parents. Reception staff carry out a thorough assessment of each child's abilities and needs and begin to provide the support identified as soon as possible after entry on roll. The warmth and friendliness shown soon begins to build up children's trust and confidence and enables them to make good early progress. In the rest of the school, opportunities are missed for using assessment information to set personal targets for all pupils and to inform pupils how to improve through the marking of their work.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established satisfactory links with parents and is working hard to develop them further. Links with the community are satisfactory overall. Extended educational support for family and adult learning opportunities are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good and are used well to support learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools and colleges provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning.
- Good communication and relations with parents of children with special educational needs help pupils make very good progress.
- The reluctance of many parents to become active in supporting their children's education inhibits the amount of progress they could make; this is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

32. The school has developed good links with schools and colleges and makes effective use of them to enrich the curriculum for pupils and provide opportunities for staff development. The school is a member of the local education authority's nurture group of schools and this gives the headteacher and deputy headteacher regular opportunities to meet other senior staff to discuss joint problems and share best practice initiatives for emotional and social issues. The local primary schools have regular meetings and are able to share planning development.
33. The links with the secondary schools are used well for joint learning activities. One secondary school is attached to the City Learning Centre and provides good opportunities that extend the learning that pupils already have in lessons. Year 6 pupils have extended work in English and mathematics and the secondary school provides additional tuition in computer use. The local colleges are used effectively to provide adult education and family learning courses for parents. The school secures additional help in the classroom by providing placements for student teachers.
34. The deputy headteacher has very successfully involved parents in their children's learning where their children have special educational needs. The high proportion of these pupils means that there are a corresponding and significant number of parents and carers who are in regular contact with the school. These include matters such as assessment, targets and reviews related to the individual educational plans prepared for the pupils. These parents are very supportive and appreciate what the school provides. Parents' courses are arranged to enable them to develop their own skills and improve the help they can give to enable their children to make better progress.
35. The school provides or arranges a selection of adult and family learning courses, including 'drop-in' sessions to coincide with parents' consultation evenings. However, there is an inability or reluctance on the part of many parents to make a regular commitment to become involved in the work of the school and in support of their children's education. Only one parent helper attends to give support in the classroom and the number of parents actively involved in the work of the parent/teacher group is low. The school is anxious that this situation should be improved and continues to seek additional opportunities to promote parents' abilities and involvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. Leadership of the school, including that of the headteacher is good. Management is satisfactory. The work of the governors is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school meets its aims well, especially in relation to creating a positive ethos and in bringing various elements of the community together.
- The deputy headteacher offers very good support to the headteacher and leads and manages her areas of responsibility very well.
- Teamwork is strong and staff are fully involved in decision making.
- Some aspects of strategic planning are not fully developed.
- Governors are too reliant on the headteacher for information.

Commentary

36. Since his arrival just before the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked hard to improve the school. He recognises the job before him well and has a clear view of how provision should develop and what needs to be done. He is resolute in his approach and supports the staff and pupils well. His highly visible presence around the school each day means that problems are dealt with immediately and staff feel very well supported. Difficult decisions are not shied away from. For instance, falling rolls which resulted in financial difficulties led to governors and the headteacher dealing with redundancy procedures in the past three years. The situation has now eased with the small school's grant which it now receives, but plans for new accommodation, started in 2000, have not yet come to fruition. The headteacher has fought strongly to get firm dates but each one given has passed without the move because the building has not been completed. This has led to some frustration as the school has planned its resources around the move, although both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been successful in keeping staff buoyant.
37. Over the past few years, the needs of many pupils entering the school have become more complex, especially their social and emotional difficulties. Although academic standards are not at all high (but improving), the school successfully tackles the challenges it faces and the deputy headteacher has developed very effective provision for pupils with additional needs, including those with special educational needs. She has a very clear view of the need to help some pupils' fragile emotional states and in linking PSHE provision in school with mental health and other social provision around the child and family. She has successfully overseen the very successful nurture class development and responded to the need for more emphasis on academic, as well as personal development.
38. The deputy headteacher has invested much time, effort and expenditure in working with pupils, families and many external agencies enabling pupils to significantly improve their personal development. This results in pupils who are more ready and willing to learn and who learn to respect adults. The support also extends to staff and very close working arrangements enable teachers to focus on pupils' behaviour and learning targets. Much development in facilities for pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties has meant that difficult behaviour is swiftly dealt with and there is minimal disruption to learning. Although violent behaviour is not tolerated, the rates of exclusion (although now very short term) is high in the school and it is recognised that more internal measures are needed.
39. Strong teamwork is evident and the headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other's skills very well. A cohesive senior management team supports the work of the staff in each department. Senior staff meet regularly with their teams and support them in their planning and in dealing with any practical difficulties. There is a collegiate approach and staff are fully involved in decision making. Staff training is seen as essential to developing staff skills and moving the school forward in line with the priorities in the development plan. Staff have

been on many courses, for instance in behaviour management and social skills development. Despite all the setbacks over the new building, teaching in inadequate accommodation and dealing with some very difficult pupils, morale is high and is a credit to the senior management team. Although the headteacher and deputy headteacher have monitored teaching from time to time, senior staff and co-ordinators have little opportunity to do this, apart from through performance management arrangements. They have a good informal knowledge of the quality in their departments but little formal information which can contribute to further improvement.

40. The day-to-day management of the school runs smoothly and the headteacher is ably assisted by the office staff, including an administrative assistant appointed solely for following up pupil absence and lateness. The 'hands-on' approach of the headteacher each day and the time taken by the deputy headteacher in liaising with agencies and working with behaviour support teams have meant that some aspects of the strategic management of the school have slowed as a result. Although satisfactory, aspects such as improvement planning and self-evaluation are not as strong or as developed as other areas. The school recognises this and particularly the lack of detail in the development plan. Priorities are clear and in tune with the school's vision and needs, although the detail is lacking and criteria are not sharp enough. The plan is not consistently costed, although the school's financial planning overall is satisfactory and the school has been prudent in accruing funds to resource the new building. The headteacher is able to clearly articulate the steps to be taken in moving the school forward but the lack of detail about actions does not leave governors in a position to clearly monitor the success of the plan.
41. The governors offer good support and know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. For instance, they have a clear view that pupils achieve well and that the school effectively supports pupils with special educational needs. They are very reliant on the headteacher for information, however, and their minutes show little in the way of challenging the school to account for its standards or the quality of provision. Although they have identified that certain governors are to be responsible for aspects of the school's work such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, they undertake little first hand gathering of evidence. In this way they are not in as good a position as they could be to support the school's strategic development and to monitor its work. Special educational needs provision is a well-developed area and its strengths and weaknesses well understood by governors.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	736,986
Total expenditure	740,129
Expenditure per pupil	4,934

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	70,922
Balance carried forward to the next	67,779

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children start school in the reception class with very low levels of attainment, especially in their personal development and in their ability to communicate. Most children have attended other pre-school settings but a few have not mixed with other children, except at home. The class size is small and children have settled in well. The children achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Very few, however, will reach the goals expected at the end of reception. Overall, standards are well below average. Accommodation in the school is unsatisfactory and is reflected in an inadequate outside play area for this age group. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. The strong Foundation Stage curriculum and good assessment are well embedded resulting in children's good achievement and their preparation for the next stage of learning. This leader's role could be further developed, however, to reflect the school's recognition of the importance of this stage. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are happy and well cared for and are very successfully helped to develop as individuals.
- Staff have very high expectations of good behaviour.
- There are very good relationships and a calm atmosphere for learning.

Commentary

43. The staff spend a great deal of time settling the children into the class and helping them to become independent. This area is seen as a priority and supports all other areas of learning. A variety of planned activities such as circle time help children to grow in confidence.
44. Standards are below those expected when children reach Year 1 and some find concentration very difficult. However, very good teaching and learning result in very good achievement. For example, brisk changes of activities ensure that children learn to concentrate for lengthening periods of time, co-operate and make choices. Careful planning also ensures that children behave very well because activities are appropriate to their needs. Staff are quietly spoken and have very high expectations of behaviour. This is achieved because of the mutual respect shown in the class.
45. Children are beginning to become independent. Most put on their own coats, peel fruit or select their own activities and resources. They learn each other's full names and greet each other in song. This results in very good relationships and the calm atmosphere which has been created for them to learn in. Children who have specific emotional or social needs are identified as soon as possible and their needs addressed very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is good and children know what they are learning and what they must do next.
- Many activities and learning opportunities are offered for all aspects of this area.
- Some children struggle to communicate effectively but good support is provided for them.

Commentary

46. Throughout the classroom, communication, language and literacy are promoted well to help children make sense of their learning. Children are encouraged to talk about themselves and about what they are learning. Teaching and learning are good because staff are good role models and develop language whenever possible. As a result children achieve well, but because of the high proportion of children who find learning difficult, standards are well below those of children of this age.
47. Some children have a very poor command of language and sometimes it is difficult for them to communicate their ideas or needs. However, because there is continuous assessment, staff are aware of the range of abilities and target questions so that more confident children can also make fuller contributions. They enjoy singing rhymes and songs, which develop vocabulary and pronunciation.
48. Children practise letters using a variety of writing implements. A few write these independently and are proud of their achievements. Children talk about books and are beginning to recognise words or rhymes. They enjoy taking books home and a letter is regularly sent to guide parents in their support of the children. As a result, children are beginning to recognise the words and sounds they need to learn.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exciting, very well timed activities are planned to help children learn.
- Activities and questions are well matched to children's abilities.
- Assessment is used very well.

Commentary

49. Teaching is very good. Very well planned lessons prepare children for learning and revise what they already know. This results in very good learning. For example, in one lesson about weight, children discussed the vocabulary they had learned previously and began to use the words naturally. Children were excited by the activity as the teacher produced three identical bottles filled with different objects for them to weigh. They were encouraged to explain why they thought a particular bottle might weigh more and the teacher's very good questioning skills helped the children to explain their ideas. Although children's attainment is well below that of other children of a similar age, they achieve well because the varied activities take account of the short concentration span of a large proportion of children. They continue learning by using resources on display tables to practise skills, make discoveries or use appropriate language. Children's learning is assessed very well in a variety of ways. This results in challenging tasks and high expectations for different abilities

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role-play activities and visits are successfully linked to this area of learning.
- Planning across the different areas helps the children understand the relevance of what they are learning.
- There are insufficient continuous opportunities for further investigations.

Commentary

50. This area of learning is often linked to other areas such as creative development; for example, children experimented with torches in the 'cave' and recorded pictorially their ideas about night and day. The teacher used time well and reinforced learning by asking children to describe their pictures. This encouraged them to look carefully and think. Other role-play areas have included a 'garden centre' and 'travel agent', encouraging children to use appropriate language and to understand their own experiences of the wider world. During circle time most children made a good contribution to a discussion about the needs of babies because they respond better when talking about something they have experienced. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. By the time children enter Year 1, most children have not reached the goals and their attainment is well below expected levels. However, they have achieved satisfactorily.
51. Visits have included a farm and children have been involved in growing beans, making sandwiches and celebrating Diwali. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop curiosity or to investigate within the classroom. The children's learning in ICT is satisfactory but resources are not always appropriate to their age and stage. The very limited outside area does not offer further opportunities to learn but the school is very close to the beach and this is used to help children understand their environment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children work hard in their physical education lessons because they are enthusiastic about learning.
- The lack of appropriate outside play space limits opportunities in this area.
- A variety of opportunities are offered for children to develop fine motor skills.

Commentary

52. Children come to school with slightly higher attainment in this area of learning than in the other areas of learning and generally reach standards which are below expectations. Teaching and learning are good and result in good achievement. Teaching is good in this area of learning because lessons are planned well. In one lesson the children listened carefully and volunteered to demonstrate movements and to place small equipment in the hall. This successfully developed their self-confidence and esteem. High expectations of good behaviour resulted in good learning. For example, children responded rapidly to a new activity. They showed a good awareness of space and control of their bodies. However, little use was made of support staff in this lesson.
53. Although there is a small play area outside and equipment is used to support skills such as balance, this is not adequate to contribute to physical development. The school hopes to rectify the situation within the new school. However, in light of the considerable delay in

moving it is important that the school makes renewed efforts to provide more opportunities for children to learn outside within all areas of learning.

54. Fine motor skills are generally less well developed than large motor skills but are improving through activities such as jigsaws, baking, and using pencils and brushes. Children use a variety of construction kits or small world activities and enjoy modelling with dough. Consequently, these skills are beginning to develop as a few children begin to draw recognisable objects and to form letters. Overall, most children reach standards which are below the early learning goals when they enter Year 1 but have achieved well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff recognise well the children's limited experiences and skills in this area and plan an adequate range of opportunities to meet these.
- Children are not given sufficient opportunities to select their own materials and media.

Commentary

55. Teaching, learning and children's achievement are satisfactory. Children use a variety of media, which is often prepared for them. This is necessary at this early stage because many do not have the skills to use tools and materials proficiently. However, better-organised storage would allow children to choose materials to develop their own creative ideas. At other times, children create their own pictures and develop ideas from books and discussion such as chalk night-time pictures or bubble prints. Vegetable prints demonstrated that children are beginning to understand patterns and design.
56. Children used limited imagination in the 'dark cave' and are just beginning to talk about their models. However, they do not easily assume roles or use language to support creativity. Children enjoy listening to music and learn to play instruments and compose sounds. Children are aware of other faiths and use creative development such as Rangoli patterns to link this to mathematical development. By Year 1 children reach standards which are well below those expected because of their weak fine motor and communication skills on entry and the slow development of imagination.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in developing reading and spelling skills; there are missed opportunities to develop writing or formal speaking skills in other subjects, however.
- High expectations of behaviour and very good relationships make sure pupils work hard in lessons.
- Assessment identifies groups of pupils who need additional support; however, it is not used effectively to set individual targets and to track pupils' progress sufficiently.
- The subject leader knows her subject well but has not had sufficient time to check on teaching and learning.

Commentary

57. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well below the national average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their reading, writing and listening skills because of good teaching in these years. This represents good achievement from very low standards on entry. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. It is good in reading and spelling and satisfactory in speaking and writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their targets because of the good support they receive in lessons. Standards are similar to those seen at the last inspection.
58. Teaching is satisfactory overall with good teaching in Years 1, 2 and 5. In Years 1 and 2 very effective teaching of letter sounds helps pupils make good progress in their reading and spelling. This is because teachers match activities to pupils' needs and use a range of teaching and learning styles which sustains interest. Teachers are also adept at addressing all elements of English within lessons. Role-play, shared reading, discussing in pairs and dictionary work all based on 'ck' helped a group of Year 1 pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and reading. The spelling skills of higher attaining pupils were developed as they created two syllable words with the 'ck' sound. In a Year 2 lesson where the teaching was good, the well-matched group activities addressed the needs of all the pupils. Focused teaching, by both the teacher and assistant, developed pupils' reading and spelling skills well. For example, a well-led discussion by the teaching assistant helped pupils to begin to understand the features of non-fiction text. In a Year 5 lesson, effective demonstration and explanation by the teacher helped pupils understand how to write brief notes from a given text. Regular handwriting practice in Years 3 to 6 helps pupils to develop good habits and there is clear improvement over time.
59. Throughout the school relationships are very good and teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Teachers know their pupils well and respond appropriately when individuals experience difficulties. This ensures that an appropriate working ethos is sustained and pupils work hard in lessons. Assessment information is used to form different teaching groups and the least able groups are supported well by teaching assistants and, therefore, make good progress. However, assessment information and marking do not consistently lead to the setting of individual targets and identifying to pupils what they need to do to improve. Assessment, therefore, is not as effective as it could be to raise standards.
60. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and in her teaching leads by example. She understands national data and knows the subject's strengths and weaknesses. However, she has not had sufficient opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching. This means that strengths and weaknesses are not evaluated and pursued rigorously and the subject's action plan does not sufficiently focus on raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The promotion and use of language and literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils have opportunity to practise and use their literacy skills to help with their learning in other subjects. They write captions, label diagrams and map similarities and differences in their science and design and technology work. They create mind maps and leaflets and write reports in geography and history. Too often, however, these are copying exercises and there are missed opportunities to develop their factual and creative writing skills. Word-processing skills are used soundly to present their writing in different formats. Circle time, in which they express views in turn, is used well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, although there are few formal, systematically planned opportunities for developing these skills in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall because there is very good support for the high percentage of pupils who find learning difficult and tasks are usually well matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Pupils have a good attitude to mathematics.
- There are comprehensive systems for assessing standards reached but insufficient systems to track individual pupils' progress across time.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, due to weaknesses in marking.
- The use of mathematical language by pupils is limited.

Commentary

62. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards were well below the average of all schools but above those of similar schools. As children's attainment on entry to the school is very low this represents good achievement overall. In the current Years 2 and 6, half of the pupils have individual plans for their special educational or behavioural needs and attainment, therefore, is well below expectations, although the pupils' achievement is good.
63. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 but includes good teaching. For example, good teaching in Year 1 featured focused questioning and good assessment of the pupils' learning. Children were asked to state whether their 'snakes' were heavier or lighter and to explain their reasons for their estimations of weights. As a result, pupils needed to think carefully to explain their reasoning and their teacher was able to check whether they had understood. Behaviour was good and pupils co-operated well because the lesson was planned well and tasks were appropriate to abilities. This good teaching builds successfully on what the pupils have learned in their Foundation Stage year.
64. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. Good relationships between staff and pupils and teachers' good subject knowledge result in orderly lessons, even when relationships between pupils are occasionally difficult. Pupils enjoy mathematics because they are well supported and tasks are usually well matched to their abilities. For example, in one lesson in Year 5 in which pupils practised and selected different strategies for calculations, more able pupils were able to explain clearly what they were doing and could apply their understanding to challenges. Pupils are, therefore, improving their use of mental strategies and regularly practise multiplication tables.
65. Pupils do not achieve quite as well when opportunities are missed to develop their mathematical language or to explain what they are doing. Some pupils find it difficult to apply their skills and helping them to talk about their work would help. Sometimes written work reflects a lack of confidence. However, the pupils' accuracy and confidence are sometimes insufficiently supported. There is occasionally a lack of detail in marking which could help pupils understand the next step more effectively or challenge them to think about a problem in another way.
66. Teaching assistants are well trained. They offer very good support for both pupils and teachers in lessons. Consequently, pupils gained in confidence and were happy to ask for help. Teaching assistants particularly assist pupils who find learning difficult and these pupils achieve well and often very well.
67. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed, although there are weaknesses in the use of assessment to help pupils understand how they can improve. This aspect of assessment is unsatisfactory. Standards are regularly checked and data is analysed. The school, therefore,

knows how well pupils are doing in relation to other schools and against national expectations. However, there is no sophisticated tracking of individual pupils' progress or setting of individual targets. It is, therefore, difficult for pupils to become involved in raising their own attainment. There is little time available for the subject leader to develop her role in monitoring teaching, sharing good practice or looking at pupils' books throughout the school.

68. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The school has placed increased emphasis on mental strategies and investigation. Teaching is generally enthusiastic and has resulted in pupils' good attitudes towards the subject. Resources are generally used imaginatively and support the need for practical and investigative activities. There remains a need for a greater use of ICT to support learning. It is recognised that the school has particular difficulties with hardware at present because this has not been updated as it has been planned for when the school eventually moves to new premises.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. This is satisfactory overall. There is a reasonable range of opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in subjects such as science where data handling is used, in ICT for constructing graphs or tables and in history when producing time-lines to record events. It is also used in design and technology when measuring, such as in the making of 'thrones' for queens. However, these opportunities are not always specifically planned. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is not included in the mathematics policy and links are, therefore, not formally included in the planning of other subjects. This is a weakness.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average; however, pupils enjoy science and are enthusiastic learners.
- Good attention to vocabulary helps pupils understand key ideas, though they find it hard to recall previous learning.
- Teachers' good questioning helps pupils explore why things are as they are in science.
- Recording methods are narrow and there are too few chances for pupils to write.

Commentary

70. All pupils achieve well in science, despite the low standards in the 2004 national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Overall, the standards seen on the inspection were below average by Year 2 and Year 6. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who have entered the school late in Years 3 to 6 with a disrupted education. The standards in some lessons seen on the inspection were average or approaching the average in Years 1 and 2. The small number of pupils in the discovery class in Year 1 achieve very well in science due to a very positive start and very close attention to their needs.
71. This helps to significantly lift their standards. They are very keen to learn about science and are fascinated about scientific ideas.
72. The work in pupils' books, especially for those in Years 3 to 6, does not do justice to their knowledge, skills and understanding. It is often text copied from the board or a passage with missing key words for pupils to complete. There are a few good examples of pupils' written work on display. Teachers minimise the recording that pupils have to do in order to compensate for their weaknesses in literacy. Pupils develop a keen interest in science. In lessons, pupils undertake a wide range of work, including practical investigation, but this does not always get recorded in their books. It is often recorded in charts and graphs for classroom

display. In addition, when talking with pupils about their scientific knowledge, they found it difficult to talk out of context and recall what they knew. When talking about their work in lessons, they showed a good scientific understanding about what they were doing and what they were learning. It is clearly evident in lessons that the school emphasises pupils' spoken responses and the use of key words and vocabulary well. Nevertheless, the school needs to encourage a wider range of ways of recording which support literacy and help to reinforce pupils' scientific knowledge.

73. From their starting points in Year 1, pupils gain a good knowledge of scientific features of simple objects. In a lesson on the body the good attention to detail ensured that the pupils really thought about what they saw and discussed this thoroughly with a partner. In Year 2 they develop a good knowledge about medicines, although some are surprised that these are classified as drugs. Good quality teaching throughout the school (which is sometimes very good) helps pupils focus on the understanding of key vocabulary, both spoken and written. In Year 3, the pupils increasingly use words such as 'transparent', 'solid' and 'opaque' and are challenged to explain why such materials are used in everyday life. By Year 6, the pupils have developed a broad knowledge, although those with special educational needs, because of their difficulties, often struggle to remember what they have learned previously. Teachers, consequently, spend much time going over earlier work and reinforcing their ideas. Computers are used well to support pupils' spellings and ideas, although they could be used much more for recording.
74. Key strengths in the teaching are the teachers' good questioning and the way questions are targeted well at different pupils. Staff know their pupils very well and, as a result, match work and activities closely to the pupils' needs. They emphasise well the need for pupils to extend their spoken responses in lessons, as some give only short answers. Teachers manage the pupils very well and provide activities which are interesting and exciting; as a result, pupils work very hard and productively. However, despite teachers' best efforts, some pupils misbehave, often for no apparent reason. When this happens, skilful support staff often intervene and senior staff are called in if matters cannot be resolved immediately. Any disruptive behaviour, therefore, has a minimal effect on the learning of others, although pupils with the most complex problems do miss out occasionally because of their own behaviour. The school tries to ensure that work started in class is carried on elsewhere, thus aiming to minimise the loss of learning.
75. The school is trialling a new published local education authority scheme which clearly identifies the outcomes for the different ability groups of pupils. It is too early for the school to identify the impact it is having on pupils' learning and attainment. However, the planning is helping teachers to be clear about all aspects of a topic which need to be covered and ways in which the pupils' work can be assessed. In this way, it is strengthening the programme offered and improving assessment.
76. The subject is competently led and managed by a relatively new co-ordinator who has been leading the subject for one term. She has a clear view of what needs to be done and has written a suitable action plan, based on an audit of provision. Pupils' progress is now being recorded term by term as new planning is being trialled; previously it was recorded only at the end of the school year. The co-ordinator has been allocated two 'release days' and plans to monitor teaching during this time. The time for learning in Year 6 is slightly short of recommendations and plans are in place to increase this. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite the limited resources and accommodation, the provision has improved well and standards have risen.
- The computer club provides good, additional, opportunities for junior pupils.
- Lessons are well organised and pupils often work very productively; however, there is limited practical demonstration.
- There is a clear view of how the subject needs to develop and good plans for ICT usage in the new building.

Commentary

77. Standards by Year 6 are typical for the pupils' age. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain the level expected (Level 4) and this is good achievement given their starting points and the fact that many do not have access to a computer at home to practise their skills. They readily import pictures into their text and are aware of the needs of their intended audience; they have a good understanding of how layout and presentation are important when producing documents. They are mostly confident when editing their work, such as changing font size and colour and relocating text and pictures, and some are beginning to use shortcuts to quickly navigate around the desktop. Younger pupils in Years 4 are confident in using commands to control a simple 'robot' and transfer their skills to using simple procedures to create shapes on the computer screen.
78. The younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 show considerable confidence in using a computer and in many respects an even greater confidence than the pupils in Year 6. Their achievement is also good. The good range of opportunities they have for using ICT is having a positive effect on their attainment and achievement. In a Year 1 lesson in the discovery class, pupils showed remarkable concentration when working on a mathematical program in which they had to respond to spoken questions about simple subtraction. They competently used the mouse, moving the pointer accurately, and selected menus from the icons/toolbar. By the end of Year 2, the pupils enter and save their work with relative ease and a growing awareness of how ICT can be used to present information, such as through graphs and charts.
79. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to improve provision, despite some slowing of development because the school thought it was moving to new premises and the hardware and software planned for the new building have not yet been purchased. In the last two inspections ICT was an area of considerable weakness. Leadership and management are good. The planning has been improved to ensure that pupils have a broad and balanced range of opportunities and the subject now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The pupils' opportunities are further enhanced by the regular use of the local education authority 'Learning Lighthouse' ICT facility. Staff skills have vastly improved. Occasionally, the school's programme could provide work to a greater depth for the higher attaining pupils. The plans for the subject are good, including the updating of old PCs, network access for the whole building and the installation and use of interactive whiteboard technology. Staff's knowledge has improved. Most show a real enthusiasm for using ICT and are keen to use the newer technology. They are frustrated by the old equipment that will not run some software and the fact that there is no local network or Internet access in the classrooms. Staff assess pupils' skills using a checklist but the co-ordinator is planning a simpler system which has an element of pupil self-assessment. Plans for this are good. The co-ordinator has not had time set aside for monitoring teaching of ICT, although there is close contact with colleagues about their teaching and support is given as to how ICT can be taught.

80. The school's computer club is over-subscribed and offers the opportunity for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to significantly enhance their skills and capability. The co-ordinator organises projects for pupils to take part in and pupils do have the freedom to use the PCs for e-mail and Internet access as well. Links with work undertaken in lessons also occur and the pupils can use the time to complete work or practise skills learned in lessons. The computer suite (part of the library) is used well and at times to support learning in other subjects. It is an adequate facility but has poor ventilation. However, for the youngest pupils, the furniture is unsuitable and pupils sit too high on chairs and their feet are unsupported. This is a health and safety concern.
81. Only a small number of lessons could be seen. Although overall the quality of teaching is good, it ranged from satisfactory to very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and value the school's efforts to help them become competent ICT users. Lessons are well organised and pupils clearly know what they are to learn. Teachers' knowledge is sound overall and they readily give pupils good support when they are working on an activity. In the best lessons work is very well matched to the pupils' needs with a clear view of what different groups/individuals should attain. Teachers ensure that pupils gain success and have plenty of praise for their efforts; this helps to build their self-esteem. Some equipment is old and occasionally does not work. However, staff are not fazed by this and have alternative strategies or arrange for pupils to use different equipment when this is the case. This results in minimal loss of time. At present, it is difficult for staff to undertake demonstrations at the beginning of lessons and most instructions are verbal. The school has a multimedia projector and this is occasionally set up and used; however, it could be used more. Some pupils are not always able to retain all the verbal information from the start of a lesson and are reliant on a lot of help during the practical part. This is usually quickly forthcoming but staff could organise lessons more efficiently so that pupils are better supported in working as independently as possible.

Information and computer technology across the curriculum

82. Given the school's circumstances, this is satisfactory and there are plans to use it more extensively in the new building. Staff provide opportunities by taking pupils to the computer suite and often combine work in ICT with other subjects, such as when pupils in Year 6 created a poem in the style of Ted Hughes. Staff make adequate use of laptops in science and PSHE for pupils to practise their spellings and complete surveys about their feelings. In some other subjects not enough use is made of ICT. In many cases, however, the equipment in the classrooms is inadequate for doing this and staff have to wait their turn to use the ICT suite.

HUMANITIES

83. Although religious education is reported in full, it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make judgements in geography and history about overall provision, standards, achievement and teaching and learning.
84. **Geography** has a high focus in the school and makes significant links to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 study islands and this supports their understanding of the story of Katie Morag in literacy. This study also relates to science when categorising objects found on the seashore, on a cliff or in mud, and to design and technology when pupils constructed their own islands. Pupils identify where most Hindus live in the world and have visited 'Chinatown' in Liverpool. The school makes good use of its coastal location to develop pupils' geographical skills.
85. There is some use of ICT within the subject. For example, pupils have e-mailed schools in other countries and pupils in the computer club use e-mail to contact other schools in the UK. Geography was the focus for a visit to the 'Learning Lighthouse' where pupils enjoyed a day as pirates. Displays for geography are generally informative and show a good breadth of study.

86. Assessment is a weakness in the subject and the new assessment procedures need to be reconsidered as to their usefulness in raising standards. Marking of work does not sufficiently inform pupils as to how well they have succeeded and how they could improve.
87. Year 6 pupils enjoy **history** and talk with interest about their current period of study which is World War II. However, opportunities to research the period independently and to organise and present their findings are limited. This is partly because of limitations of ICT resources, but other methods are fairly narrow. There are some links with other subjects, which helps pupils to make sense of their learning. For example, pupils made 'thrones' in design and technology for the wives of Henry VIII and three-dimensional model houses to illustrate the Great fire of London. Pupils in Year 4 successfully linked literacy to history through letter writing. These pupils also showed a good understanding of the use of evidence such as portraits. Some pupils have been involved in making an animated film at the City Learning Centre when studying the Egyptians. Photographs of displays show that history is valued and work is well presented. The hall display shows a good pictorial time-line, which represents a lot of hard work and care by the staff and pupils.
88. The school is trying a new form of assessment but this has yet to be linked to planning and, at present, its usefulness is limited. Marking of books does not inform pupils about their learning and, therefore, does not support their understanding of how they can improve. The subject leader has little time to monitor the quality of teaching.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is effective use of artefacts and display.
- Assessment of the subject is limited, as it is not used well enough to plan appropriate work for groups or individuals.
- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are generally good.

Commentary

89. Pupils' attainment is generally below that expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2. However, some work of the current Year 1 pupils shows a good understanding and meets expectations outlined. This is because the teacher is enthusiastic and involves the pupils in her story telling. Consequently, the pupils are engrossed and very well behaved. In a lesson observed, because it was planned well, pupils were able to relate the stories from the Bible to their own lives. They were well supported in their group work and, consequently, achieved well. Pupils in Year 2 show great interest in their work, especially when this is related to the theme in assembly. In work on the Hindu religion, they talked enthusiastically about the stories and recalled their own parts in a presentation. However, the pupils find it difficult to recall past learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is generally good because teachers use practical activities and resources to stimulate interest. Pupils who find learning difficult are very well supported. The pupils, therefore, achieve well from a very low start.
90. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are generally satisfactory, although there is some good teaching. Discussion with Year 6 pupils showed that their lessons made good use of artefacts and display which supported their understanding of Judaism, Holy Books and places of worship. More able pupils understand that different faiths have different rituals but they are often confused between them. Less able pupils of this age group could recall very little of their learning unless the example was very concrete. In spite of class discussions and good use of resources, too much work for these oldest pupils is copied from the board and does not reflect any research by the pupils or planning for different abilities. Teachers usually offer activities such as a quiz to stimulate interest and learning but need to make more effective use of

support staff in these lessons. Pupils' standards are below the level expected for their age but there is a large number of pupils who find learning difficult. However, overall they have achieved well over time.

91. When it is possible, teachers plan visits and stimulate interest through the use of artefacts, display or drama in assemblies or class. One child in Year 2 talked with great excitement about his visit to Liverpool Cathedral and how the teacher had lit candles for the Asian Tsunami victims. Photographs show that all religions are given equal respect and value. Colourful displays demonstrate the importance that the school places on respect and understanding of other faiths. The pupils remember their learning from these events because they were actively involved. This is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when there were few resources and support material and the curriculum coverage was insufficient in some classes. Religious education makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
92. Assessment of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory and this limits informed decisions about the kinds of activities to provide for different abilities. In addition, pupils do not know how well they are doing. Religious education requires a range of assessments because much work is verbal and pupils respond in a variety of ways. Some teachers are not entirely confident in their knowledge of other religions but research enough to teach these at least satisfactorily. Currently, there is also no formal monitoring of teaching and learning which would enable the subject leader to support planning more effectively.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

93. Too few lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology and physical education to make judgements about pupils' achievement, teaching and learning or provision overall.
94. The quality of the pupils' work in **design and technology** and **art and design** displayed around the school is often high and work is clearly linked to other subjects, such as history and geography, as well as design work which includes aspects of both subjects. In design and technology the youngest pupils in Year 1 have decorated and constructed simple boxes to produce window and roof detail in a winter scene. Well-made three-dimensional pyramids enhance a display on the pharaohs of Egypt in Year 3. Pupils have painted figures of the Tudor queens of England in art in Year 4, although this shows little creativity as they have coloured in an existing image. Portraits made from toilet rolls of pupils in Year 5 have a high impact on the viewer and show a variety of fixings. Year 5 work is particularly strong; an excellent display of model 'Thrones' created by the pupils, shows that they understand the design and technology process very well. As part of a project linked to Henry VIII in history, pupils looked at the style and construction of real chairs and carefully measured and constructed strong frameworks for their own thrones. In Year 6, in a topic on art and the human body, pupils produced well-drawn faces to demonstrate symmetry and asymmetry of facial features. Jointed puppets and skeletons in design and technology show a strong understanding of positioning and movement of the body.
95. Discussions with the subject leader, pupils and scrutiny of planning indicate that all elements of the **physical education** programme are taught. Pupils appreciate the contribution that exercise makes to a healthy lifestyle. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim and the large majority are able to swim 25 metres before leaving school. Visiting coaches from local football clubs help to develop and extend pupils' football skills. Good links with the local sports college provide opportunity to extend the range of activities to include outside adventure sports. A valuable contribution to pupils' physical development is the 'active playground' initiative. Here, a trained supervisor encourages older pupils to lead younger pupils in games activities. Appropriate documentation is in place to support teachers' planning. The subject leader has produced a suitable action plan and is now involved in the local cluster of schools' Sport Scheme which seeks to develop further provision in physical education.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good emphasis on pupils' singing skills.
- Very good relationships and behaviour management help teachers to remain focused on the teaching.
- There is insufficient opportunity for evaluating and improving performance.
- Pupils' musical vocabulary is not developed well.

Commentary

96. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are typical of what is expected for their age. This is similar to the last inspection. Pupils sing enthusiastically and in tune and sustain rhythm and tempo. In lessons seen, pupils had opportunity to listen, perform, play instruments and sing. They respond well to practical and performance subjects, such as music. Overall, their achievements are satisfactory.
97. Teaching overall is satisfactory with some very good teaching seen in Year 1. Because of clear explanation and demonstration Year 1 pupils were able to repeat and sustain a rhythm by clapping and playing various percussion instruments. They were then able to transpose the pattern and sing a three-line song. Pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and achieved well.
98. Teachers work extremely hard, and despite some challenging behaviour from individuals remain very focused on the teaching. This is because of very good relationships and the very effective range of behaviour management strategies that keep pupils focused. In a Year 4 lesson pupils made satisfactory progress in their singing in the jazz genre. However, there was insufficient opportunity for pupils to review and evaluate their own performance and to reflect on how music is used to create different effects. Year 5 pupils listened carefully to a performance of *Peter and the Wolf*. While they were beginning to recognise different instruments there was insufficient emphasis on musical terminology which would have helped them to describe differences, similarities and how the instruments were used to represent characters in the story.
99. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Resources are adequate and documentation is in place to support teachers' planning in all elements of music. The school provides opportunities for pupils to listen to outside performers and a visiting teacher provides tuition in playing brass instruments.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good support to help pupils through difficulties.
- Very good relationships underpin the school's work and pupils know staff will listen.
- Pupils take responsibility well, although a lack of a school council narrows opportunities.
- Staff training and support materials make sure staff have the necessary skills to support pupils.

Commentary

100. The strong formal PSHE programme, together with the considerable number of other opportunities to support pupils' personal development, results in pupils achieving very well. These come in the form of activities such as circle time, themed PSHE sessions taught by the

deputy headteacher, anger management and counselling. Teaching is good in the taught programme; in the circle time sessions it ranged from satisfactory to very good and in the one formal PSHE session observed it was very good.

101. The school places a great emphasis on the development of mutual support and the raising of pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. This is seen in attractive displays throughout the school, which value pupils' work, and in the many commendations recognising the school's contributions to local and international charities. A 'nurture' room, the discovery class and activities at lunchtime help pupils overcome difficulties of anger management and learning problems and channel pupils' energies in a positive direction.
102. Staff present very good role models and have very good relationships with the pupils. They are very sensitive and responsive to pupils' needs during all lessons and pupils know they will not be demeaned. During circle time pupils know they have a safe place to talk about their feelings and things which are important to them. There are opportunities to reflect about relationships, on what is right and wrong and on the acceptance of personal responsibility. In the lessons seen, the Year 6 pupils talked with maturity about issues with which they were concerned and were skilfully guided through some very sensitive areas. Year 1 pupils' understanding of the qualities of friendship was developed through well-led discussions.
103. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities around the school and this contributes to their understanding of citizenship. They develop an awareness of their part in the wider community through their work and contribution to local and international charities. However, there is no school council and this weakens the contribution that pupils make to the future development of the school.
104. The subject is well led and managed and the provision overall is very well led and managed. Every effort is made to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to teach the subject. They have access to a multitude of agencies and receive appropriate training, for example in the use of circle time. There is a good range of resources to help teachers in their planning. The school's monitoring of circle time indicates that it is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and relationships. Outside visitors help teachers to teach sex and drugs education though aspects of these are taught through the science curriculum.

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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
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	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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