

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Runcorn

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111359

Headteacher: Mr D Harvey

Lead inspector: Mrs E R Greensides

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th June 2005

Inspection number: 267741

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Roman Catholic Primary School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	114
School address:	Nigel Walk Castlefields Runcorn Cheshire
Postcode:	WA7 2JJ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Marnell
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Augustine's Catholic Primary school is a school for boys and girls aged between 4 and 11. With 114 pupils on roll, it is smaller than the average primary school, and, due to a rapidly falling roll, is becoming smaller. This is mainly because of local regeneration, which may, in turn, cause a rising roll within the next few years. As a result, the school is currently undersubscribed. It is organised into 5 classes, with no nursery. Younger pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, but Years 5 and 6 are currently taught in very small classes of single age group (16 and 18 pupils respectively). The school serves the immediate local area, drawing mainly from two wards in which there is significant social and economic disadvantage. A small minority of pupils come from other wards where there is a higher percentage of positive socio-economic indicators.

When pupils first arrive at the school in Reception, their attainment is well below average. As a result of local regeneration, a higher than average number of pupils enter and leave the school after the beginning of the school year, although this percentage is slowly decreasing. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. There are very few pupils with a minority ethnic background, and none whose first language is not English, or who are at an early stage of learning English. However, more than 30 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is well above the national average.

The school has received the Artsmark Gold Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM [- note F3]

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
33225	Elizabeth R Greensides	Lead inspector	English Information Technology Communication Special Educational Needs English as Additional Language
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards are well below national expectations in both English and mathematics. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with strengths in reception and in the infants. The new head teacher has high aspirations for the school, and, as a team, staff have helped to create a very caring ethos where pupils are valued and well cared for. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the new head teacher is good and he has been swift in identifying and addressing the major areas for improvement.
- Management systems and procedures are unsatisfactory.
- The school's inadequate focus on raising standards in recent years has led to unsatisfactory achievement for some groups of pupils.
- Provision for the youngest children is very good.
- Provision and standards in mathematics are unsatisfactory.
- Provision in science and information and communication technology is good.
- The curriculum is satisfactory, with good enrichment activities and extra curricular provision
- The pupils of the school are looked after well
- The governance of the school is unsatisfactory

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since its previous inspection. However, it has recently appointed a new head teacher who has been swift to identify and tackle remaining management issues which have restricted pupil achievement. These include the unsatisfactory use of assessment to raise attainment and the unsatisfactory performance management arrangements for staff. However, improvement in information and communication technology has been good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall even though national test results have been well below average. When children first start school they have personal and academic skills that are well below those expected for their age. Good teaching early on (between reception and Year 2) leads to good progress which helps pupils to attain in line with national expectations in national tests for Year 2 pupils. Teaching for the oldest pupils is satisfactory, with pockets of inconsistency. Although achievement is satisfactory overall for Year 6, in relation to pupils' starting points, some groups of pupils underachieve between Years 3 and 6. The inconsistencies in national test results since 2002 are shown in the table below.

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

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

Girls achieve significantly better than boys in English, and better in mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but there is not enough challenge for more able pupils, and because the needs of some average attaining pupils are not always met, their progress is slower than it should be. In science pupils achieve well, and standards in information technology are good, because pupils benefit from the recent good improvements in provision.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are well looked after. They show interest in school and are beginning to show a willingness to take responsibility for themselves and others. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good. They have positive attitudes to their work, and they try hard in their relationships with one another, encouraged by the ethos of the school. They have been encouraged to develop positive attitudes to learning, and leadership has ensured that they have a safe and secure environment in which to learn. Attendance rates are broadly in line with those nationally, and there have been no incidences of unauthorized absence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, and is at its best for the youngest children, who are given a very good start to their education. However, a lack of monitoring and little focus on learning have led to inconsistencies of progress in some year groups and subjects. Teachers do not always fully use what they know about the pupils to plan lessons which meet the needs of all, or identify what they need to do next to improve. This results in underachievement for some groups of pupils, especially boys and the most able. The curriculum is satisfactory, and pupils have good opportunities for extra activities. The good pastoral care provided for pupils helps them to learn in a secure and safe environment. The school has good links with the local high school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although current management systems at the school are unsatisfactory, the leadership provided by the new head teacher is good, and he has already made a huge impact on what the school needs to do to improve. He has quickly recognized the urgent need to focus upon raising standards, and has high aspirations for the future development of the school. Although governance is unsatisfactory, and governors have had too little information about the school, the governing body is now more aware of its responsibilities to call the school to account, and supports the new action plans designed to raise attainment. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The new head teacher has also recognized the importance of the role of the subject leader in evaluating the quality of provision, and is taking action to develop this role.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents support the school well, and the majority have positive views of the way in which the school is run. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a place they enjoy attending. There is a general agreement that most pupils behave well and are well looked after. Most parents are happy with the progress that their children are making, and with the quality of information which the school provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve self evaluation procedures and systems, including those for assessment and monitoring, in order to focus clearly on raising pupils' achievement.
- Improve provision and standards in mathematics across the school.
- Raise attainment by making the best possible use of all teaching staff
- Develop embedded leadership systems for senior management and subject leadership.
- Ensure appropriate and supportive training for the governing body.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are well below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Achievement in Reception and Years 1 and 2 is good. Achievement for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, despite some inconsistencies in achievement for some groups of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are well below average.
- Pupils achieve well by the time they are 7 years old.
- Achievement for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is unsatisfactory achievement in basic skills for some groups of pupils in Years 3 to 6
- Pupils achieve well in ICT and science, and attain high standards in art.

Commentary

1. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, even though national test results have been well below average. The vast majority of pupils enter the school with personal and academic skills which are well below those expected for their age, particularly in speaking and listening and social skills. Attainment in reading and writing for pupils aged seven has shown a rising trend, with reading showing the greatest progress. Fewer pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing than in reading. For pupils aged eleven, results have been uneven over the last four years. However, too many pupils are failing to reach the level expected for their age. This is especially relevant in the case of boys, who significantly under perform when compared with the girls. In mathematics, there has been a marked improvement for pupils aged seven in national tests, and fewer pupils are failing to reach average levels of attainment. However, by Year 6 too many pupils fail to gain expected levels, and too few gain the higher levels of attainment. Against the national trend, girls also outperform boys in mathematics. In science, pupils have performed in line with national averages for the last two years, and well above similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16 (14.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15 (14.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.7 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pockets of inconsistency in the provision for older pupils have slowed progress for some groups, although achievement remains satisfactory overall by the time pupils leave school aged eleven. Girls achieve significantly better than boys in English, and better in mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but there is not enough challenge for more able pupils, and as the needs of some average attaining pupils are not always met, their progress is slower than it should be. As a result, standards in English and mathematics are well below average, although pupils achieve well in science, attaining levels in line with national averages. There have been inconsistencies in national test results since 2002. In science, pupils achieve well, and standards in information technology are good because pupils benefit from the recent good improvements in provision. The table below shows standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24 (27.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	23.6 (24.4)	27 (26.8)
science	28.4 (28.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets within their individual education plans. This is because good attention is paid to their needs, and work in lessons is carefully and specifically matched to their needs. Class teachers ensure that support staff are well briefed, and together with the special educational needs coordinators, they play a significant role in meeting the individual needs of these pupils, enabling them to make largely good progress.
- Pupils' achievement from entry to the age of seven is good, and by the time they leave the school it is satisfactory. A number of factors come into play: there has been a lack of any effective tracking systems to target areas of underachievement for both individuals and groups. The school suffers from high levels of pupils who enter and leave the school at other than the usual times. School targets are based on performance in national tests for seven year olds, but from this age to the age of eleven, pupils are not tracked through, or monitored for progress. As a result, some teachers have low expectations of progress, and there is a lack of challenge for the more able. Absence of any rigorous monitoring procedures until the recent appointment of the new head teacher means that causes for lower achievement and attainment have not been clearly identified. As a result, measures designed to raise standards have been largely ineffective and have concentrated on external support rather than a rigorous approach to raising the quality of teaching and learning. This in turn has led to a lack of focus on the real needs of the school.
- Standards in science and information technology have risen, and indicate higher expectations of achievement and progress. Throughout the school, standards in art are good, and pupils display skill in a wide variety of different media. As a result, the school has recently been awarded the Artsmark Gold Award.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure pupils attend school
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and they enjoy school.
- Pupils' social, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Relationships are good throughout the school.

Commentary

- Attendance, whilst below the national average in the last reporting year, is above the general level in the area; has shown an increase in the current year, and is now satisfactory. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory although a few pupils are late on a regular basis. The level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average as parents are conscientious at notifying the school regarding absence. The school has satisfactory

procedures to promote attendance and monitor patterns in pupils' absences. Registers at the start of morning and afternoon sessions are taken promptly and efficiently.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-2004 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.0	School data :	0.0
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.

7. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes towards learning. They generally work well together and have a good level of trust in the adults at the school. Pupils feel that they can discuss problems with members of staff and they know that any problems will be dealt with promptly. As a result, relationships throughout the school are good.
8. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good, encouraged by whole school rewards for good behaviour and by individual pupil and class awards. The school holds an achievement assembly every Friday when pupils are rewarded for their achievements. The Behaviour Improvement Programme leads to better behaviour, with the Emmaus room for withdrawal being used less frequently. Pupils report that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. No inappropriate behaviour was observed during the inspection. The school has had three fixed-term exclusions involving two pupils, both for violent behaviour. The school carried out the process correctly and, in the case of one pupil, it had a positive outcome with the pupil responding well.

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	110	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0

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

9. Pupils know what is right and wrong and generally have a good sense of moral and social responsibility. They know the school rules and understand the rewards and sanctions. The school invites a variety of visitors in to reinforce this and recently had in players from the Liverpool Football Club to talk about drugs, bullying and racism. The pupils are enthusiastic about the recently formed school council. They see this as an opportunity to be involved in the school's work and have already had their first success by instigating a change in the school uniform. Pupils on the school council were voted for on a democratic basis. They work on full council lines, supported by a member of staff, as one or two members are still learning how to conduct themselves in meetings.
10. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in many areas of the curriculum. The school welcomes visitors and the staff and pupils are friendly and courteous towards them. The pupils are confident when talking in a one-to-one situation but are less confident when group situations exist. Some pupils reported that they felt embarrassed when their friend said nice things about them. The pupils' understanding of other cultures is good but the preparation for living in a multicultural society is less well developed. The school studies different religions and cultures, and pupils have recently visited a Hindu temple, which they found to be an

exciting and memorable experience. The use of drama in a science lesson gave the lesson a spiritual dimension. The pupils have started a prayer box into which they can put their private prayers.

11. Across the school, pupils' participation in fund-raising, both locally and nationally, gives them a clear sense of social responsibility. Pupils' social development is good, and has been promoted well through such initiatives as the Junior Play Leaders.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although assessment systems are unsatisfactory. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory, with good opportunities for enrichment and good links with the high school.

Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall with significant examples of good and very good teaching and very little unsatisfactory teaching. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall in reception and in Years 1, 2 and 3, with examples of very good teaching.
 - The quality of teaching is less consistent throughout the rest of the school and this restricts pupils' progress and achievement.
 - Assessment systems are unsatisfactory, and most teachers do not make enough use of what they know about pupils to help them to improve.
 - Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs.
 - As relationships between pupils and teachers are good, pupils are keen to do well.
12. As the table below shows, the majority of lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory, with a significant number being good or very good. Most of this good and very good teaching was in the Foundation Stage and Years 1, 2 and 3. In English, mathematics, science and ICT, teaching and learning vary from unsatisfactory to very good. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use the frameworks to plan activities for the class. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning in art and design, citizenship, design and technology, geography, history, music, and physical education.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	3	4	1	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.

13. In the best lessons, pupils learn well because teachers use a wide range of strategies which impact well on progress and which help to raise attainment. For example, some teachers make very good use of questioning, and use a wide range of effective resources to support their lessons. These lessons are lively, and pupils have good opportunities for interaction, investigation, collaboration and development of skills. The quality of teaching in the reception is good, and often very good, which gives the youngest children a good start to their education. The support of teaching assistants and other adults contributes

well to the children's overall achievement. Work in all six areas of learning is regularly assessed and good records of progress are kept.

14. However, inconsistencies in teaching, from class to class and lesson to lesson, limit the impact of other good practice. This uneven quality of teaching has a negative effect on pupils' progress and achievement. Teaching in the juniors, whilst satisfactory overall, is not good enough to raise standards to expected levels, despite some examples of good teaching. The level of progress within lessons is often limited by a lack of challenge in what the pupils are expected to do, and there is an over reliance on worksheets, especially in history and geography. These weaknesses lead to a lack of independence in learning and insufficient development of key skills. Time is not always used effectively, and teachers sometimes spend too long on the initial delivery.
15. There is too much disruption in the pattern of lessons. This can be, for example, from too much support, which becomes ineffective. The over use of student teachers, booster classes and withdrawal sessions hinders learning at times. Areas of weakness such as these, and other issues of teaching methodology, persist because the school's approach to checking the quality of teaching and learning has not been systematic or rigorous enough. This has been swiftly identified by the new head teacher, who has been quick to devise and implement a programme of lesson monitoring to ensure a greater consistency in the quality of teaching.
16. Assessment systems are unsatisfactory, apart from in the Foundation Stage. The school's tracking system has not been kept up to date, and does not have enough information to help teachers to plan lessons or units of work which match the levels of pupils' abilities. On occasion the pitch of whole lessons is not appropriate, because it is not taken from a secure assessment of pupils' abilities. This has led to low expectations and aspirations for some groups of pupils. In particular, the middle and higher achievers, are not always sufficiently challenged and do not always make enough progress. Marking of pupils' work does not relate to their own targets, and gives little indication of what pupils need to do to improve. In some instances books have not been marked for a significant length of time.
17. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs, and the lower attainers, is good. They are well supported by teaching assistants, and appropriate learning targets are set for individual needs. As a result pupils' attitudes are good, and they are interested and keen to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that planning takes into account the specific individual targets of these pupils. This means that support staff are well briefed and provide good support for these pupils, both in whole- class sessions and in group work. They effectively clarify instructions and help pupils to stay on task, thus enabling them to be fully included in all activities. As a result of this good support, these pupils make good progress and achieve well.
18. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, and so pupils are keen to do well. Pupils are generally interested in lessons because teachers relate work to real-life situations. Teachers and pupils show respect for each other, and there is little tension in classrooms. Pupils respond particularly well to opportunities to do challenging practical work and investigations and show real enthusiasm for their tasks. This was particularly noticeable in science and information and communication technology, where there is a stronger emphasis on investigative and practical work.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements in full. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The accommodation and resources to support teaching are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and gives children a good start to their school life.
- The provision for pupils who have special needs is good.
- Provision in science, art and ICT is good
- Pupils have good opportunities to enrich their learning through visits, visitors and participation in the arts.
- Support staff are well deployed and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- The accommodation for older pupils has been successfully adapted, but the accommodation for younger pupils and for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

19. Under the good leadership of the new head teacher, the school is in the process of thoroughly reviewing and developing the curriculum.
20. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and provides rich and exciting opportunities in all six areas of learning. As a result, the children achieve well and are prepared well for their work in Year 1.
21. The breadth of curricular opportunities throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory, with an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout. Most staff are beginning to provide more innovative and exciting learning opportunities by making links between subjects to enable pupils to use and enhance their speaking, listening, reading writing and mathematical skills. This is at its best in history and geography, which are often planned together. For example, when pupils study settlements in geography, they also learn about Romans settlers in history. Good provision for science, ICT and art have led to good standards and progress. ICT often supports work in other subjects, as when pupils' new skill in adding sound was effectively linked to an English lesson. The curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat the same work unnecessarily. An appropriate programme of personal, social and health education is in place.
22. The school makes good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants have a wide range of skills, and are well deployed to support these pupils in class. Their work makes a strong contribution to the learning of all pupils throughout the school. The way the school promotes equal opportunities is satisfactory overall, but is less successful in some areas. Older boys do not achieve as well as the girls, and the work planned for different groups of pupils, particularly those who are more able, does not always ensure they are working to the best of their capability.
23. The curriculum is successfully enriched in a variety of ways. Over the year, pupils participate in a good variety of visits that enliven their learning in different subjects. Older pupils recently visited Dunham Massey House and spent the day dressed as Victorian servants, washing and ironing the laundry or working outside as gamekeepers. Younger pupils walked to the local library and used their observations of landmarks to map their route. A residential visit contributes well to pupils' personal and social development by helping them to become more independent and mature. The school is proud to have achieved the Artsmark Gold award in 2005, and vibrant displays enhance the internal environment very effectively.
24. There are sufficient teachers and support staff deployed appropriately to teach the whole curriculum. However, the decision to create two small classes for the older pupils has not achieved the aim of raising standards, because teachers have not taken sufficient advantage of such small numbers through targeted and focused teaching of individuals and groups. The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. The building and site are very clean and well maintained, and provide a welcoming environment for the

pupils. Since the previous inspection, extensive remodelling of the way the building is used has provided separate classrooms for the older pupils and created quiet surroundings that are more conducive to learning. However, the accommodation for younger pupils has not yet been improved. The two classes share a large open area that acts as a thoroughfare, can become noisy and has various areas where staff cannot easily supervise their pupils. Outside, there are extensive and attractive grounds, used for some science work and for PE. The school has yet to provide a separate, secure outdoor area specifically for the Foundation Stage children and this limits their learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

The school's care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are good. There is satisfactory provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring. The school ensures good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very effective.
- All pupils are well known to the head teacher, class teachers and class support assistants.
- Induction for the Foundation Stage and for pupils joining the school at different times in the year is very good
- The school tracking system does not give sufficient information for guidance

Commentary

25. The school provides a very safe environment and all staff supervise pupils well throughout the school day. The head teacher and other senior staff ensure that systems and procedures for health and safety are well monitored in the school. Pupils learn about their own health and safety through the science and personal and social education curriculum. Child protection is very well monitored with well trained staff and effective procedures are in place to ensure that each child is well cared for.
26. In the classroom and throughout the school teachers and support staff know their pupils well and are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited or expressed, and take prompt and effective action. The head teacher has good personal knowledge of pupils through his direct involvement with them and with their parents. All pupils feel secure and confident as a result of how well known they are to the adults in the school. They also speak appreciatively of the opportunities offered to them through 'Bubble Time' to talk to any member of staff about any problems they may be experiencing.
27. Although all staff know their pupils well personally, tracking systems do not give teachers enough information on how well pupils are progressing in their learning. This results in a lack of guidance on how to do better in lessons, and a lack of challenge or focused support.
28. For pupils with special educational needs there is a high degree of support. The school is effective in enabling pupils with special educational needs to become independent in their personal and social skills. The personal development of all pupils is well monitored by teachers, who are thorough in their identification of individual problems and respond quickly with appropriate support. A very good example of this is the close working relationship the school has with the local secondary school to ensure that the transition from primary to secondary school is both smooth and exciting. Lessons are prepared and delivered by staff from both schools to ensure that pupils know how to deal with issues such as loneliness and bullying. All pupils respond extremely well to these lessons and make gains in their confidence to handle difficult situations.
29. The school has very good induction procedures for children when they start school in the Foundation Stage. By the time they join, teachers and classroom support assistant have a

good knowledge of them and are able to plan for their different needs. Because of the good provision and the well-planned introduction to routines, children feel very secure and quickly develop independence. Similarly, when pupils join the school at other points, they are very well cared for. Established pupils are appointed to care for them by introducing them to friends and the school's routines.

30. The newly-formed School Council, circle time, and lessons in personal, social and health education all give pupils very good opportunities to express ideas and make suggestions about how the school should improve. Pupils value these opportunities and feel that they use them to make a relevant contribution to the development of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with other schools, colleges and the local community. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good links with other schools and community partnerships.
- The school has good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the local secondary school.
- The school's work with parents is satisfactory.

Commentary

31. The school had a poor response to the parental questionnaire, with only 10 per cent returning the forms. The attendance at the parents meeting was also poor with only 2 parents attending. From this limited response and by talking to parents when they were bringing their children into school, there is clear evidence that parents are happy with the school. The school sends out regular newsletters and has an open-door policy for parents to speak to staff. The school's prospectus and annual report to parents meet statutory requirements and are both helpful and informative.
32. The school provides family-learning workshops for parents in literacy and numeracy, with very focused maths workshop sessions. The school sends out each half term a brief outline of the topic work that is being done. Consultation evenings with parents are held in the autumn and spring terms, with a further meeting if required after the pupil report in the summer term. Attendance at these consultations is good in the infant classes but less good in the juniors. The reports to parents are satisfactory and give a clear picture of what the child can do, but do not include mention of achievement or what needs to be done next to improve.
33. The pupils' transition to the secondary stage of their education is good, and close links have been forged with the High School. The schools have worked together on initiatives that include the Behaviour Improvement Programme. The pupils have a day in the school they are to attend to help them familiarise themselves with the school. They benefit from French lessons provided by the High School.
34. Both the local community and the parish use the school and it enjoys good links with the parish. The school provides work-experience places for pupils from the local High school, and Initial Teacher Training placements in partnership with Liverpool Hope University. However, the high number of students accepted has not proved beneficial to the pupils. The school also has on site a pre-school playgroup, which uses the school's facilities. The school is actively involved in the Creative Action Zone; has recently gained the Gold Arts Mark and is currently working towards Healthy School status.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the head teacher is good. The leadership of the governing body is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new head teacher gives good leadership and a clear sense of direction.
- Recent rapid improvements in staff morale have led to a shared determination to succeed and to move forward in raising standards.
- The effect of management is unsatisfactory.
- Governance is unsatisfactory because until very recently governors have had only a very limited supply of information to act on.
- Subject leadership, although satisfactory, is underdeveloped
- The ethos of the school is very well promoted by the head teacher and all staff have a very caring approach to the welfare of children

Commentary

35. The good leadership of the new head teacher focuses strongly on the main issues which the school faces. He has high expectations and is dedicated to ensuring swift and effective school improvement. He has made realistic and appropriate initial evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has quickly recognised the need to improve standards throughout the school. The new school improvement plan has identified appropriate priorities for development, and suitable reorganisation of staff delegation and deployment.
36. The head teacher has worked hard with all staff to make rapid improvements in staff morale, and together they are now working to address and strengthen areas of weakness. As a result, the head teacher receives very good support from a committed and hard-working staff. The high level of commitment of the staff has begun to improve the quality of provision. This strongly positive approach to improvement from all staff means that the school is in a good position to move forward.
37. The effect of management systems within the school is unsatisfactory. Lack of any clear or cohesive system for monitoring throughout the school has significantly contributed to low standards. For example, very small classes, intended to raise standards at the upper end of the school, have had a detrimental effect on the budget but very little positive effect on standards. A wealth of performance data is available, but this has not been collated or used in teaching in order to impact on standards. Results of assessments have not been analysed carefully enough to influence grouping or future planning, or to make an early identification of weaknesses which can be remedied. Teaching and learning within the classroom have also suffered from a lack of monitoring, and so staff have not had sufficient feedback on their work to help them to improve their performance. The new head teacher has been swift to introduce an interim monitoring schedule and to devise a tracking system which can easily be used by all staff to monitor individual and group progress.
38. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Governors have not been kept sufficiently aware of the school's priorities for development, or the issues which it faces. Until very recently, the supply of information has been so limited that governors have not been able to challenge or fully understand the management of the school or its systems. As a result, governors play a largely supportive role, and have only recently become aware of the negative effect of some management decisions and the low standards which the school attains. The governing body has little understanding of performance management, but meets its statutory obligations in full. It has recently become aware of deficiencies in its

practice, and has very quickly begun to improve the way that it both supports and challenges the school.

39. The role of individual subject leaders is underdeveloped. Staff have had until very recently no ownership of their subjects, and have not been facilitated in their role with time or training. Senior staff have not been able to monitor their subjects or to make development plans to improve standards and provision. This has led to a school curriculum which, although satisfactory, lacks co ordination and cohesion. Subject development from the analysis of data is weak and does not make appropriate links to the quality of teaching and learning. As a result leaders of English and mathematics do not have a good overview of the reasons behind the low standards and there has been insufficient drive to raise standards.
40. All staff care for the needs of pupils. The school is particularly good at including pupils with special educational needs and incorporating them fully in its life and work, although it is less good at including some other groups. The provision for these pupils is well managed and as a result they make good progress. Staff show respect to each other and to pupils, and this sets a very good example as to how they should behave towards others.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	350,195
Total expenditure	319,355
Expenditure per pupil	2801

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8691
Balance carried forward to the next	30,840

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. The provision for children under five is very good. As at the time of the previous inspection, it is a strength of the school
42. Children in the reception class achieve well. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment in all areas of learning that are well below those expected for children of this age. This is particularly evident in their ability to communicate with each other and adults. They make rapid progress because of the consistently high quality of teaching and many reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. All members of staff give the children a range of rich and varied activities that provide very well for their developing needs. The systems for monitoring children's progress are good and staff use the data effectively to identify individual needs and to plan for future learning. This ensures that children build very successfully on what they already know, understand and can do.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults place a very strong emphasis on this area of learning.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning and relate very well to each other and adults.
- Routines are established quickly and are understood by children.

Commentary

43. The quality of teaching in this area is very good because there is a right and proper emphasis to personal and social development as a means to accessing all other areas of learning. As a result, children achieve very well. Specific lesson time is used for discussion of issues affecting personal, social and emotional development. On occasions it is done extremely well through role play and dramatised story telling of fairy tales such as Cinderella, where children act out roles and talk about feelings. All staff use their observations of children well and reinforce learning through praise and interaction. Children are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and others and to recognise the effect of their actions. Children's dialogue shows that they appreciate the value of behaviour like sharing and taking turns. They work well together and form sociable relationships. Progress is very good and most children are likely to reach the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision for communication, language and literacy is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children have very limited communication skills when they enter the Foundation Stage.
- Adults are skilled in ensuring that children listen to what they and others are saying.
- Very skilful teaching ensures that children become interested in and enjoy books.

Commentary

44. Although many children on entry to the Foundation Stage have limited communication skills and find it difficult to listen to what others are saying, they achieve well in this area of learning. The very good quality of teaching and a calm atmosphere ensure that children learn to listen carefully. This was evident when the children became immersed in the session they spent with two Community Service Officers on a visit to the local library. It is also evident in the way they respond to questions in the school assembly and join in with the dramatised periods of story telling. All adults use questioning very skilfully to encourage children to speak clearly and in sentences. This increases their ability to communicate with each other and adults.
45. The very good use of big books successfully promotes their early reading skills and a small but significant number of children are able to identify words beginning with the sound 'sh'. Careful teaching ensures that children learn to hold pencils correctly. This enables children to write recognisable and correctly formed letters. Their achievement is good overall, although most children are unlikely to reach the required Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned practical activities and good teaching promote good learning.
- All adults take every opportunity to develop children's number skills.
- Many children have limited number skills when they enter the Foundation Stage.
- There is good use of mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

46. Many children on entry to the Foundation Stage have limited counting experiences. The skilful and sensitive teaching ensures that they develop an awareness of number and enjoy solving simple problems. For example, the reception teacher uses registration time for children to work out the number of absent children. Teachers plan a good range of practical activities that cover all aspects of mathematical development. The children are beginning to recognise and order numbers to 10 and use mathematical vocabulary such as 'full'/'empty', 'greater'/'smaller' and 'more than'/'less than'. Children quickly develop very positive attitudes to learning and become enthusiastic about their work. All children achieve well because teaching is very good and independent activities are well matched to individual needs. Children show good attitudes to their work and behave well because they are well motivated. The very good support they receive from the teaching assistants impacts very positively on the children's learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD.

The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Appropriate features of early geography, history and science skills are established.
- The very good quality of teaching ensures that children develop confident use of information and communication technology.

Commentary

47. The very good teaching and the wide range of imaginative and progressive activities linked to exciting educational visits promote good learning. Attractive displays celebrate children's work and further stimulate their curiosity. Children develop an awareness of place by exploration of their own locality and learn, for example, the roles of valued members of the community such as Community Police Officers and important public buildings such as the library. Through visits, visitors, photographs and role-play activities where they dress in historical costume, children are able to explore simple everyday events such as 'washing days'. At these times they learn about differences between their own lives and those of their parents and grandparents, and begin to get a feel for the past.
48. Teachers encourage children to use everyday materials in unusual contexts to create, for example, sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy so that they can explore size and texture. Teachers also make good use of the school environment for early investigation of living things such as trees and plants. All children develop their computer skills effectively. They use the computer to play games, to manipulate images and patterns and begin to word process. They show good mouse control. Although all children make good progress and achieve well, a significant minority of children are not likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for physical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor play area is underdeveloped.
- Children enjoy activities and show good levels of concentration for their age.

Commentary

49. All children develop their manipulative skills well through the good opportunities presented to them to use, for example, scissors, pencils, paintbrushes, small construction equipment, small equipment and musical instruments. Children enjoy the well-planned and exciting activities. They respond well to adults and show good levels of concentration and enjoyment.
50. As at the time of the previous inspection, the outdoor play area is underdeveloped. As a result children in the Foundation Stage have limited opportunities to further develop their physical skills, imaginative play and levels of cooperation and collaboration by using large play and climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Despite the lack of an appropriately equipped outdoor play area, children still make good progress and achieve well. However, this shortcoming does hinder their development and, as a result, a significant minority of children are not likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for creative development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The integration of imaginative topics into the whole curriculum provides opportunities for creativity.
- The teaching and support staff use dialogue well to promote role-play.

Commentary

51. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is never less than good. Role-play is integrated into many activities and this enables children to develop speaking and listening skills, and improves their imaginative language as well as their social skills. Good use is made of the dedicated areas for painting, modelling and water play. Children have very good opportunities to draw paint and make pictures and models from a variety of media. The children's work is linked well to other areas of learning as, for example, the use of Venn diagrams to sort and classify 'junk' found on the beach at Formby and the beach sculptures created in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Children enjoy their creative activities. As a result of the very good provision, children make very good progress and are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 1 to 3 because of good and sometimes very good teaching.
- Teaching is still too inconsistent in other years to raise standards further.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently in some classes when work is being planned.
- Pupils' skills in speaking and listening hold them back in English and in other subjects.
- Teachers place good emphasis on writing across other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

52. Standards in reading and writing for seven year olds are in line with expectations nationally, and are above average levels for similar schools. This is part of a rising trend, with reading showing the greatest progress. Fewer pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing than in reading. Pupils' reading skills are developed in a variety of ways. Most are beginning to use the skills of inference and deduction by the end of Year 2 and can compare and contrast a variety of styles of writing by different authors, using a variety of good quality children's books. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and pupils' books show that they have the opportunity to study a good range of topics and styles of reading and writing. Analysis of work and results of tests reveal that a significant number of pupils made good progress last year and achievement is good.
53. Results in English for eleven year olds have been inconsistent over the last four years, and too many pupils are failing to reach national averages. This is especially relevant in the case of boys, who significantly under perform when compared with girls. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 lack many of the basic skills of punctuation and spelling, although presentation is generally acceptable, and this slows down achievement in writing overall. The more able can write grammatically complex sentences with some imaginative vocabulary and a variety of forms. "He had a face like a 200 year old man, wizened and wrinkled and wise, with a gentle smiling mouth." However, the majority of pupils lack structure in their writing. Their style is repetitive and very much reflects a speaking style, with limited vocabulary and little imaginative flair. Basic grammatical structures are generally correct, but connectives are few and far between. Although spelling is consistently and regularly practised, these skills are not often carried over into creative writing.
54. Whilst the overall quality of teaching in English is satisfactory, some lessons are good, and occasionally very good, especially for younger pupils. In better lessons teaching is lively and engaging, and teachers use a variety of teaching aids such as computers, puppets, and artefacts. Pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability are ably supported by well-trained teaching assistants, and the achievement of these pupils is good. In some lessons, especially in Year 5 and 6, teachers talk too much at the start whilst pupils play a largely inactive role, and lack opportunities to ask questions about the skills they are being taught. Teachers sometimes have limited strategies for interacting with pupils and reinforcing their understanding as the lesson moves on, and this limits the level of achievement for a significant minority of pupils. For example, in some lessons, teachers focus too much on what they want pupils to do, and not enough on what pupils are learning. Overall, the quality of teaching remains too inconsistent to raise standards further.
55. Assessment procedures are inconsistent and mostly unsatisfactory. They do not give enough information to detail exactly what each pupil can and cannot do, and there is no effective tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school. Because of this there is a lack of targeting and challenge and not enough pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their own targets for improvement. Marking is often

cursory, sometimes completely absent, and does not give enough information on areas for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Teachers throughout school are beginning to give more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects. This is proving effective, especially in history and geography, where pupils are encouraged to apply writing skills in a variety of ways to develop their own understanding and knowledge. However, although writing skills themselves are developed in this way, pupils' basic writing skills are still insufficiently developed to fully support work in other subjects. This slows down progress and some teachers resort to an overuse of worksheets in efforts to remedy this.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement throughout the infant years is good.
- Standards are average by the end of Year 2.
- Achievement in the upper juniors is unsatisfactory
- Standards are well below average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is variable, but unsatisfactory overall
- Junior teachers do not use assessment information systematically enough to inform their planning.

Commentary

57. Despite the good progress children make during the Foundation Stage, their understanding of mathematical ideas when they enter Year 1 is still below that expected for pupils of this age.
58. In the 2004 tests for seven year olds, the school's results were in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that these standards have been maintained. This means that pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well throughout Years 1 and 2. Here work is matched well to pupils' needs and abilities and is, as confirmed by the work seen in lessons and pupils' workbooks, appropriately challenging and stimulating.
59. In the 2004 tests for eleven year olds, the school's results were very low when compared with the national average and well below the average for similar schools. These results reflect current inspection evidence, which shows that a smaller proportion of pupils are likely to achieve the above average level than in other schools. This is because the work set for a significant number of average pupils and the vast majority of the higher attaining pupils is not challenging enough to move them on to the higher levels.
60. There are inconsistencies in teaching which lead to unsatisfactory teaching overall. In the junior classes teaching does not impact enough on pupil achievement or their standards of attainment. This is because teachers do not make enough use of the assessment information gained from test data and marking to adapt work to meet the needs of all pupils. This is unsatisfactory because it limits pupils' learning and significantly restricts the progress that those with the potential for higher attainment make. This factor is reflected in the very low proportion of pupils who achieve the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests. In the best lessons, as seen in Year 4, the teacher constantly assesses pupils' learning and presents them with challenging work which the pupils enjoy; reinforces

those areas where pupils display misconceptions and misunderstandings, and ensures that the pace of the lesson is lively and enjoyable. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good support from informed and skilful teaching assistants.

61. Leadership and management of mathematics has been unsatisfactory. However, changes in leadership mean that the subject is now led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who, because of changes in staffing, has only recently been presented with opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. As a result the co-ordinator now has a clearer understanding of the subject within the school and is well placed to improve standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Pupils' mathematical skills are not yet sufficient to support their work in other subjects, although teaching staff do give satisfactory opportunities to use mathematics as part of their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science or measure materials in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils have plenty of good opportunities to carry out scientific investigations.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well, although progress is slower in Year 6.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behave well because they find their work interesting and enjoyable.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

63. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national averages. This is an improvement for older pupils since the previous inspection, when standards were well below average. For younger pupils, however, standards have declined somewhat from above average at the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is now good overall. Together with the provision of plenty of opportunities to learn through scientific investigations, this has led to the improvement in achievement, which is now good overall. Pupils achieve well from Year 1 to Year 5. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Year 6, because these pupils are not given neither enough opportunities to plan investigations and build on their knowledge and understanding, nor sufficient guidance to help them improve their work. Pupils who have special educational needs progress well because they receive good support, particularly from the classroom assistants.
64. Good teaching places a strong emphasis on providing plenty of opportunities for pupils to carry out scientific investigations and as a result learning is meaningful and practical. Pupils really enjoy these investigations, which make a positive impact on their knowledge and achievement. They are encouraged to use a scientific format to record their work, including predictions and conclusions. Year 2 pupils showed good understanding of the life cycle of dandelions when they acted it out in an innovative lesson that reinforced their scientific knowledge through drama. Pupils in Year 5 eagerly watched for their chrysalises to turn into butterflies, and there was a real moment of wonder when the first ones emerged.
65. Other features of good teaching include using resources well, for example using the interactive whiteboard to record and add a musical accompaniment to the movements of

the emerging butterfly. The teaching assistants are well deployed, know their tasks well and provide good support for learning. Challenging and probing questions encourage pupils to think hard and organise information.

66. However, in some classes pupils often complete many worksheets, which do not encourage them to develop their knowledge or use their literacy skills to record their work. Older pupils are not given opportunities to plan investigations and thus build on their knowledge, or to take some responsibility for their own learning, and this slows their achievement. Pupils use the whiteboards and electronic microscopes well, but are not given opportunities to use ICT for recording.
67. The curriculum for science is good, and is covered well through teacher's planning. It is enriched well by the practical investigative work, and by the use of drama and ICT. Ways of linking with other subjects are beginning to be explored, for example the project to monitor the environment, linked with geography. Good attention is paid to pupils' health and safety. Year 6 wore goggles to protect their eyes when carrying out a forensic investigation in the transition project that prepares them for High School. Science results have been better than in the other subjects, but until the new head teacher was appointed, there has been no action to raise standards further. Assessment systems are minimal, and staff have not analysed pupils' work to track their progress and identify where improvement is needed. Consequently, pupils do not have targets to aim for. Marking is not thorough, and does not give pupils guidance to help them improve their work.
68. Science contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development. They are often enthralled by what happens, for example when the butterflies emerged, and they gather information about their studies, and work happily together. Good displays celebrate their work and create interest. A new co-ordinator has recently taken over leadership and management of science. Leadership is satisfactory, but the lack of assessment systems or evaluation makes management unsatisfactory. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in ICT is good.
- Subject leadership of ICT is good.
- Teachers have good knowledge, skills and understanding.
- ICT supports many lessons across the curriculum.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in science.

Commentary

69. There has been good improvement in the provision for ICT since the previous inspection. Standards have risen significantly, and the range and quality of resources are much improved. Standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2, and above expectations by the end of Year 6 in the majority of different skills, including word processing and graphics. Younger pupils are developing good practical skills in using the mouse, and can store and retrieve their own work with ease. By Year 2 they can enhance text by changing font, colour and size. By Year 6 pupils are confident to use a wide combination of skills to produce a range of work. They can, for example, produce multi-media presentations, add photographs and pictures from the internet, and record and add appropriate sounds to enhance their work.

70. Much of this improvement has been brought about by good subject leadership which has identified the causes of lower standards. There is now a clear progression of skills throughout the school across all strands of the subject. Since the previous inspection, staff have improved their confidence and ability to teach across the full breadth of information and communication technology. This has redressed the previous imbalance in provision, and pupils' work shows good understanding of data-handling, multi-media presentations and control. Teachers make good use of the new interactive whiteboards in lessons, and are well supported by knowledgeable teaching assistants.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have been taught to support learning in other subjects. This also helps them to consolidate and improve their basic skills and to raise achievement. However, opportunities to use ICT in science are more limited; although pupils use computers to help them to research, they do not use the computer enough to help them to create tables, charts and graphs.

HUMANITIES

72. It was not possible to make firm judgements about teaching or provision in history or geography because of insufficient lesson evidence during the inspection. In both subjects, evidence was gathered from looking at pupils' work and displays, and from talking to pupils and staff. History and geography are appropriately planned to ensure full coverage of the curriculum, and plans are often based on a nationally recognised scheme of work. No lessons were seen in history, and only one lesson was observed in geography, in Year 1. In both subjects, pupils complete many worksheets. This slows their learning because it does not encourage them to select different ways to recording information. There is no evidence that pupils are encouraged to research using books, the library or the Internet.
73. In geography, younger pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and standards are similar to those expected nationally. Year 1 pupils enjoyed a very good lesson following their walk to the library. Lively teaching matched well-planned practical activities to the learning objectives very well. Pupils read large maps, located landmarks and made simple plans. Year 2 pupils build on their mapping skills when comparing Runcorn with rural Wales. The standards and achievement of older pupils are below expectations, and the work in their books is not at an appropriate level. They study topical events, but could not say where the recent Tsunami had occurred, or suggest why earthquakes happen.
74. In history, pupils study a suitable range of topics that cover British and world history. However, pupils of all ages are given many worksheets, and this does not stimulate learning. By Year 6 pupils are not equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to begin to understand and interpret the causes for events in history. Pupils respond well to "hands on" activities and were very animated when describing their day as Victorians at Dunham Massey Hall. The school has good links with the local Norton Priory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education. These subjects were, therefore, sampled and it is not possible to judge provision.
76. An examination of the range of art on display indicates that standards in art and design are very high. Throughout the school pupils have a rich and exciting range of experiences and opportunities to develop their imaginations and techniques. The creative and exciting use of textiles and natural materials in making pictures, wall-hangings and sculptures is a particular strength of the art and design curriculum. Valuable contributions are made to the art curriculum by visiting artists, who clearly inspire the pupils to produce pottery of exceptional quality and clay figures which have both a life and character of their own.

Indeed, the quality of art in the school was recognised in 2002, when it received the prestigious Artsmark Gold award.

77. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that a suitable programme in design and technology is undertaken. Appropriate emphasis is given to the development of pupils' understanding of the design and make process. However, evidence indicates that pupils have too few opportunities to evaluate and modify their work and so improve their design.
78. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and also discussion with pupils indicate that suitable programmes of physical education and music are undertaken. In music, pupils sing tunelessly and are presented with good opportunities to play and learn a variety of musical instruments through the local authority's music service.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. Not enough lessons were seen in personal, social and health education and citizenship to make a secure overall judgement on provision. However, it is clear from the behaviour of pupils, from discussions with staff, and from photographic and other records, that the school puts a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. There is an emerging school council and the staff are working hard to promote this aspect of the school's work.
80. An appropriate programme of personal, social and health education is in place. Topics such as sex and relationships and the dangers of drugs and substance abuse are included in science or in specific lessons. Pupils consider moral and social issues, often through activities provided in the "Here I am" religious education programme. The work of the school council is beginning to contribute to the life of the school. For example, they have successfully persuaded the school governors to allow girls to wear trousers as part of their school uniform. Children in the reception class and pupils in Year 2 are well prepared for the next stage of their school life. However, many pupils are at a disadvantage when they move to secondary education because the standards they reach in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are well below the standards needed to meet the demands of the Year 7 curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
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	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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